



Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) & the September 2010 UN review summit

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Author: Ian Townsend

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The September 2000 UN Millennium Summit adopted the Millennium Declaration aimed at reducing world poverty and improving lives by 2015. This was translated into a set of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with more than 40 indicators established to assess progress towards them. The MDGs are central to UK and international development policy.

September 2005's [UN World Summit](#) renewed the commitment to eradicate poverty and promote growth and sustainable development, but acknowledged that progress towards the MDGs had been slow and uneven.

More recent assessments, in the aftermath of the global financial and economic crisis, draw a similar conclusion. There is a broad consensus that while progress is being made towards the MDGs, this has been uneven and more work needs to be done.

2010 is an important year for the MDGs: at their tenth anniversary they are two-thirds of the way through their lifespan, with only five years remain to achieve them.

A major [UN MDG review summit](#) is to be held in New York on 20-22 September 2010. There will be a stock-take of progress and a chance to adopt a plan for meeting the MDGs by 2015.

Related notes include [the UK and the 0.7% of national income as aid target \(SN/EP/3714\)](#), [international comparisons of aid \(SN/EP/1769\)](#), economic growth in [emerging economies: Brazil, China, India & Russia \(BRICs\)](#), and aid to [India](#) and [China](#). For other Library material see the [development subject page](#), and for Library research and other Parliamentary reports see the Parliament website [development page](#).

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1 MDG origins

1.1 UN Millennium Summit & Declaration (Sep 2000)

At the September 2000 [UN Millennium Summit](#) leaders of 189 member states unanimously adopted the [Millennium Declaration](#): a “statement of values, principles and objectives for the international agenda for the twenty-first century”.¹ The declaration said:

We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.

This acknowledged governments’ collective responsibility to uphold human dignity; recognised equality and equity; and accepted a duty to all people worldwide, including the young and the vulnerable. Leaders pledged to eliminate extreme world poverty, with commitments to an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system, good governance at an international level, and an enhanced programme of debt relief for the most indebted countries.

1.2 What are the MDGs?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established as a way of implementing the promises of the Millennium Declaration.

¹ [“World leaders adopt ‘United Nations Millennium Declaration’ at conclusion of extraordinary three-day summit”](#), UN press release, 8 September 2000

The MDGs built on various UN conferences' proposals over several years, having first been adopted as concrete targets by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) in 1996.²

Drawing on the Declaration – and the work of governments, the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other experts – the goals were refined and published in 2001.³

The MDGs provide common, clear targets, the majority of which are to be achieved by 2015, mostly measured against a 1990 baseline. In 2008, *four new targets were added* bringing the total number of targets to 22, as summarised below (the four new targets are in italics).⁴

Progress on these measures is based on assessment of more than 40 statistical indicators, as listed in the UN's [Millennium Development Goal Indicators Database](#).

² “[Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation](#)”, Development Assistance Committee, OECD; see also [The Birth of the MDGs](#), DAC News, Sep-Oct 2005

³ [Roadmap towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly](#), UN GA A/56/326, September 2001

⁴ The official list of targets for each goal is at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/MDGsOfficialList2008.pdf>

Millennium Development Goals

Goal	Targets (for 2015 unless stated)
1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger. <i>Full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</i>
2 Achieve universal primary education	Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
3 Promote gender equality and empower women	Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4 Reduce child mortality	Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
5 Improve maternal health	Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth. <i>Universal access to reproductive health.</i>
6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Target for 2015: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. <i>Universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment for all who need it by 2010.</i>
7 Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources. • By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. • By 2020 achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. <i>Significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss, by 2010.</i>
8 Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop further an open trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally • Address the least developed countries' special needs, and the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States • Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems • Develop decent and productive work for youth • In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.

2 UK policy towards the MDGs

2.1 Previous Government

The MDGs were central to the previous Government's approach to development and poverty reduction.

DFID was the lead department for Public Service Agreement (PSA) 29 to "Reduce poverty in poorer countries through quicker progress towards the MDGs", in partnership with HM Treasury, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the Department for Energy and Climate Change and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

PSA29 performance was measured through progress in 22 developing countries where UK aid was focused, and therefore expected to have its greatest effect, with each country assessed on eight indicators (one for each MDG) from the international indicator set.⁵

The [2009 DFID White Paper "Building our Common Future"](#) made several references to the MDGs, including in relation to the global economic crisis and growth, climate change, fragile states and development cooperation, with the commitment to reach 0.7% of national income as aid by 2013 and "press others to live up to their commitments on financing and support to the MDGs."⁶

In March 2010, the previous Government proposed a new 'Global Development Action Plan' for the September 2010 UN Summit, "to get the Millennium Development Goals back on track to be achieved by 2015".⁷ Specifically this would:⁸

- Double aid for basic education and for health services for mothers and children, including a strategy targeting "six countries that are home to half of all undernourished children in the world", from \$3 billion to \$6 billion a year in low income countries;
- A global programme to tackle malnutrition (targeting 12 million undernourished children);
- Aid to fragile countries to rise from 30% currently to 50% by 2015; and
- Double global aid for maternal, newborn and child health (from \$4 billion to \$8 billion a year).

DFID held a development experts conference, focusing on the MDGs that were looking most likely to be missed: [Agenda 2010: The turning point on poverty](#). At the conference, then International Development Secretary, Douglas Alexander, said:⁹

Business as usual is not enough. We need leaders from all countries around the table in September to endorse a global action plan which will benefit hundreds of millions of people in the developing world.

We are now five years from the end of the MDGs – it's not too late but time is short.

⁵ DFID [Autumn Performance Report, 2009](#) edition (see also other [Autumn Performance Reports](#))

⁶ "Building our Common Future", DFID White Paper, 2009

⁷ "UK calls for bold new plan to get MDGs back on track", DFID release, 11 March 2010

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*

2.2 Coalition Government

Under the Coalition Government, the focus on the MDGs looks likely to continue. DFID's website states that the MDGs "lie at the heart of DFID's work".¹⁰ It has pages on each MDG: www.dfid.gov.uk/Global-Issues/Millennium-Development-Goals/.

The Coalition Government agreement document states:¹¹

We will support actions to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, we will prioritise aid spending on programmes to ensure that everyone has access to clean water, sanitation, healthcare and education; to reduce maternal and infant mortality; and to restrict the spread of major diseases like HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. We will recognise the vital role of women in development, promote gender equality and focus on the rights of women, children and disabled people to access services.

On the themes of MDGs 4 and 5 it added:¹²

We will push hard in 2010 to make greater progress in tackling maternal and infant mortality.

The International Development Secretary, Andrew Mitchell, has stated that DFID's aid programme is under review "to determine how we can achieve better value for money for the taxpayer and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)".¹³ The International Development Secretary has also said that:¹⁴

The UK will remain at the forefront of international efforts to achieve the MDGs and our commitment to results-focused, transparent development is part of our duty to British taxpayers to ensure we get the maximum value from every pound we spend.

In relation to the September 2010 UN Summit, the Government is:¹⁵

[...] calling on world leaders to come together at the UN to agree in concrete terms a global development action plan to meet the millennium promise to halve global poverty once and for all.

In order to achieve this plan, we will need three things: accountability, credibility and political will. [...] Everyone will have a role to play to ensure that the summit generates the political will necessary to make 2010 a real turning point on poverty.

3 UN MDG review summit (Sep 2010)

"With only five years left to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), much remains to be done." (OECD, Development Co-operation Report, 2010)

With five years remaining until the MDGs are due to be met in 2015, a major [UN MDG review summit](#) (officially the 'High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly') is to be held in New York on 20-22 September 2010. Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute

¹⁰ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Global-Issues/Millennium-Development-Goals/Introduction-to-the-Millennium-Development-Goals/>

¹¹ [Coalition Government agreement](#), p22

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ [HC Deb 15 June 2010 c394W](#)

¹⁴ "[International assessment sets out action to meet MDGs](#)", DFID release, 18 June 2010

¹⁵ "[2010 UN MDG Summit](#)", DFID website (accessed 28 June 2010)

and Professor of Health Policy and Management at Columbia University, has called the summit and the months leading up to it “the last chance for the world to get it right”.¹⁶

This will allow stock-take of progress so far, and gives “an opportunity to build agreement on a global action plan to meet the MDGs” by the 2015 deadline.¹⁷ There will be six plenary meetings and six roundtable sessions over the three days of the Summit.

The UN’s useful summit [FAQ](#) states that:¹⁸

A successful summit should generate **a renewed political commitment** to achieve the MDGs and lead to **a global action agenda** for accelerating progress towards the Goals.

Several reports are being issued in the run up to the UN Summit, including:

- [2010 edition of annual Millennium Development Goals Report](#), showing latest data on progress (see part 4);
- UN Secretary-General’s report “[Keeping the Promise: A forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the MDGs by 2015](#)”, the summit report (with sections on the Millennium Declaration and the UN’s development agenda, a review of MDG progress, lessons learned and specific recommendations); and
- The UN Development Programme issued its [International Assessment on the MDGs](#) report on what is needed to make MDG progress over the next five years (with [eight action points](#) based on what has worked using evidence from 50 countries).

An updated MDG Gap Task Force report is expected in September 2010;¹⁹ a March 2010 preview [presentation](#) focused on the ‘delivery gap’ for MDG8.²⁰

From the EU, the European Commission issued an assessment of MDG progress as part of its development ‘Spring Package’ in April 2010.²¹ The European Council’s June 2010 Conclusions stated on the MDGs:²²

The forthcoming UN High Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals constitutes a unique opportunity to strengthen our collective endeavours and our partnerships with developing countries to eliminate global poverty, hunger and inequality. The conclusions adopted by the Council on 14 June provide the European Union with a strong position for this meeting.

The European Union remains determined to support the achievement of the MDGs globally by 2015. This is possible if all partners demonstrate firm political commitment, implement necessary policy changes and take concrete action. The European Union calls on the High Level Plenary Meeting to agree on concrete actions aimed at: increasing ownership by developing countries; focusing efforts; improving the impact of

¹⁶ “[Informal Summary](#), Second Committee, 64th General Assembly, Panel Discussion, ‘Achieving the MDGs by 2015: Preparing for the 2010 UN MDG Summit’”, United Nations, 12 October 2009

¹⁷ UNDP ‘key issues’; <http://www.undp.org/mdg/summit.shtml>

¹⁸ UNDP FAQ; <http://www.undp.org/mdg/summit.shtml#faq> (emphasis in original)

¹⁹ When it will be available from <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/mdggap/>.

²⁰ Rob Vos (Director Development Policy Analysis Division UN-DESA), “[MDG Gap Task Force Report 2010: a preview](#)”, UN, 18 March 2010

²¹ European Commission Staff Working Document, “[Progress made on the Millennium Development Goals and key challenges for the road ahead](#)”, 21 April 2010

²² [European Council conclusions](#), 17 June 2010 (EUCO 13/10), paras 19-20

policies; mobilising more and predictable financing for development, including innovative sources of financing; and making more effective use of development resources. The European Council reaffirms its commitment to achieve development aid targets by 2015 as set out in its June 2005 conclusions. The European Council agrees to return to this annually on the basis of a report by the Council.

4 Progress towards the MDGs: Will they be met by 2015?

A lack of timely data makes assessments of progress towards meeting the MDGs difficult. Statistics are collected and collated by the UN and the World Bank. The UN's [Millennium Indicators Database](#) gives a world region and country analyses of MDG progress.

DFID's 2009 White Paper noted that "on present rates of progress the MDGs will not be met", with "education, and maternal mortality, the most off-track of the MDGs."²³ In March 2010, the then Government highlighted that a UN study of 30 countries had found:²⁴

Just 11 of the 30 countries are on track to meet MDG1 (Halving poverty and hunger). In 2007 there were 923 million undernourished people in the world, an increase of 80 million people since 1990/92;

20 of those 30 countries are either off track or require additional, strengthened or corrective action to achieve MDG2 (education) despite an increase in enrolment in primary education from 83 per cent in 2000 to 88 per cent in 2007; and,

Only 7 of the 30 countries are on track to meet MDG 5 (maternal health). This is the goal that the UN recognises has seen the least progress.

Below are selected excerpts from the summaries of recent assessments of overall MDG progress. There is a broad consensus that while progress is being made, this has been uneven and more work needs to be done.

June 2010's UN MDG report said:²⁵

Many countries are moving forward, including some of the poorest, demonstrating that setting bold, collective goals in the fight against poverty yields results. For every life that has benefited from the establishment of a quantitative, time-bound framework of accountability, the MDGs have made a real difference.

But unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, and insufficient dedication to sustainable development have created shortfalls in many areas. Some of these shortfalls were aggravated by the global food and economic and financial crises. Nevertheless, the data and analysis on the following pages provide clear evidence that targeted interventions, sustained by adequate funding and political commitment, have resulted in rapid progress in some areas. In others, the poorest groups, those without education or living in more remote areas, have been neglected and not provided the conditions to improve their lives. [...]

Though progress has been made, it is uneven. And without a major push forward, many of the MDG targets are likely to be missed in most regions.

The UNDP's 'key messages' for the UN summit said:²⁶

²³ "Building our Common Future", DFID White Paper, 2009, paras 5.29 & 5.35

²⁴ "UK calls for bold new plan to get MDGs back on track", DFID release, 11 March 2010

²⁵ UN, *MDG Report 2010*, June 2010, p4

²⁶ <http://www.undp.org/mdg/summit.shtml>

We can achieve the MDGs. The evidence is there. [...]

With political will, adequate resources and concerted efforts, the MDGs can be met even in the poorest and most disadvantaged countries. [...]

Progress has been uneven across the MDGs and across regions, as well as between and within countries. [...]

No country in sub-Saharan Africa is on course to achieve all the Goals by 2015. [...]

The economic crisis has deepened the challenge. Estimates suggest that progress in reducing poverty has slowed last year and that progress on the hunger target may have reversed.

The European Commission saw: “Some significant progress, but insufficient and highly uneven”:²⁷

Over the last two decades, the world has made strong and sustained progress in reducing extreme poverty as well as on other goals such as universal primary education, gender equality in primary education, and access to water.

However, recent analyses and reports from the UN and the World Bank, together with the EU's own analysis, show that progress has been highly uneven among regions, countries and population groups, and that we are still off-track at global level on several targets such as maternal mortality, child mortality and access to sanitation. Sub-Saharan Africa in particular is off-track on all MDG targets.

The verdict of the UN Secretary General's draft report was similar; that:²⁸

A number of countries have achieved major successes in combating extreme poverty and hunger, improving school enrolment and child health, and expanding access to clean water, control of malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases, and access to HIV treatment. This has happened in some of the poorest countries, demonstrating that the MDGs are indeed achievable with the right policies, adequate levels of investment, and international support. Considering their historical experience, some poor countries and whole regions have made remarkable progress. For example, Sub-Saharan Africa has made huge improvements in child health and in primary school enrolment over the last two decades. Between 1999 and 2004, Sub-Saharan Africa achieved one of the largest reductions in measles' deaths worldwide ever.

Yet, progress has been uneven and – without additional efforts – several of the MDGs are likely to be missed in many countries. The challenges are most severe in the least developed countries (LDCs), land-locked developing countries (LLDCs), some small island developing states (SIDS) and those vulnerable to natural hazards. Countries in or emerging from conflict are more likely to be poor and face greater constraints as basic infrastructure, institutions and adequate human resources are often absent while lack of security hampers economic development.

At the 2010 Muskoka summit, the G8 said:²⁹

To achieve the MDGs the effort needs to be truly global, encompassing a comprehensive, whole-of-country approach, including actions not only from all

²⁷ European Commission Staff Working Document, “[Progress made on the Millennium Development Goals and key challenges for the road ahead](#)”, 21 April 2010

²⁸ UN Report of the Secretary-General, “[Keeping the Promise: A forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the MDGs by 2015](#)” (un-dated), paras 8-9

²⁹ “[G8 Muskoka Declaration Recovery and New Beginnings](#)”, G8 25-26 June 2010

governments, but also from the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, as well as international organizations, focussing more on the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities to improve human security. [...] We call on all development partners, at the September 2010 UN High-Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs, to strengthen the collective resolve to accelerate progress towards these targets and call for an action-oriented outcome. Consequently, all public and private financial resources should be mobilized efficiently, and enabling conditions created for private and financial sector development and investment and resource flows.

The G8 also stated that progress on MDG5, on maternal health “has been unacceptably slow”, and progress on MDG4, on child mortality, “is also too slow.”³⁰ The G8 launched the Muskoka Initiative: “a comprehensive and integrated approach to accelerate progress towards MDGs 4 and 5 that will significantly reduce the number of maternal, newborn and under five child deaths in developing countries.” The G8 stated that they would make \$5.0 billion of catalytic funding available over 2010-2015, which they said would mobilise “significantly greater than \$10 billion” of funds:³¹

Our collective undertaking will support strengthened country-led national health systems in developing countries, in order to enable delivery on key interventions along the continuum of care, i.e., pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, childbirth, infancy and early childhood.

4.1 Progress on the MDG1 target: “Halving global poverty”

While the MDGs cover a broad range of themes, there has been particular focus on one aspect, the overarching MDG1 target reducing the proportion of people in extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015.

The June 2010 UN MDG report said that progress on this target was “still being made, despite significant setbacks due to the 2008-2009 economic downturn, and food and energy crises.”³² It said that, taken as a whole, the developing world “remains on track to achieve the poverty reduction target by 2015.”³³

The World Bank’s *Global Monitoring Report 2010* reported that number of people living below the international poverty line (of \$1.25 a day) had fallen from 1.8 billion in 1990 to 1.4 billion in 2005 (a 22% reduction). The report’s projections to 2015, below, are for numbers in poverty to fall to 920 million by 2015, around half 1990’s 1.8 billion (about 49%).³⁴

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ *ibid.*

³² UN, [MDG Report 2010](#), June 2010, p4

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ World Bank, [Global Monitoring Report 2010: The MDGs after the Crisis](#), May 2010: [MDG1 page](#) & [full table](#)

Alternate scenarios for poverty reduction, based on a poverty line of \$1.25 a day, by region									
Scenario	Region	1990	2005	2015	2020	1990	2005	2015	2020
Postcrisis		Percentage of the population living on less than \$1.25 a day				Number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day (millions)			
	East Asia and Pacific	54.7	16.8	5.9	4.0	873	317	120	83
	China	60.2	15.9	5.1	4.0	683	208	70	56
	Europe and Central Asia	2.0	3.7	1.7	1.2	9	16	7	5
	Latin America and the Caribbean	11.3	8.2	5.0	4.3	50	45	30	27
	Middle East and North Africa	4.3	3.6	1.8	1.5	10	11	6	6
	South Asia	51.7	40.3	22.8	19.4	579	595	388	352
	India	51.3	41.6	23.6	20.3	435	456	295	268
	Sub-Saharan Africa	57.6	50.9	38.0	32.8	296	387	366	352
	Total	41.7	25.2	15.0	12.8	1,817	1,371	918	826

Source: World Bank staff calculations.

However, the MDG1 target is based a halving of the proportion of people in poverty, from 41.7% in 1990 to just below 21%. The World Bank's projections are for the proportion to fall to 15%, further than required to meet the target.

The World Bank found that the global economic crisis had "slowed the pace of poverty reduction in developing countries, and is hampering progress toward the other Millennium Development Goals".³⁵ The crisis meant that an additional 53 million would remain in poverty in 2015 than would have otherwise been the case (with the proportion in poverty being only 14.1% rather than 15%).

However, regional performance is uneven:³⁶

Much of the global progress in poverty reduction is attributable to East Asia, which reduced its incidence of poverty from 55 percent in 1990 to 17 percent in 2005. China reduced it from 60 percent to 16 percent, as the absolute number of extreme poor people fell from 683 million to 208 million. India reduced it from 51 percent to 42 percent, but the number of poor people rose from 436 million to 456 million because of a growing population.

In sub-Saharan Africa, while the proportion of people in poverty fell from 57.6% in 1990 to 50.9% in 2005, the number of people in poverty increased from 296 million in 1990 to 387 million in 2005. The World Bank forecasts this to fall back to 366 million in 2015.

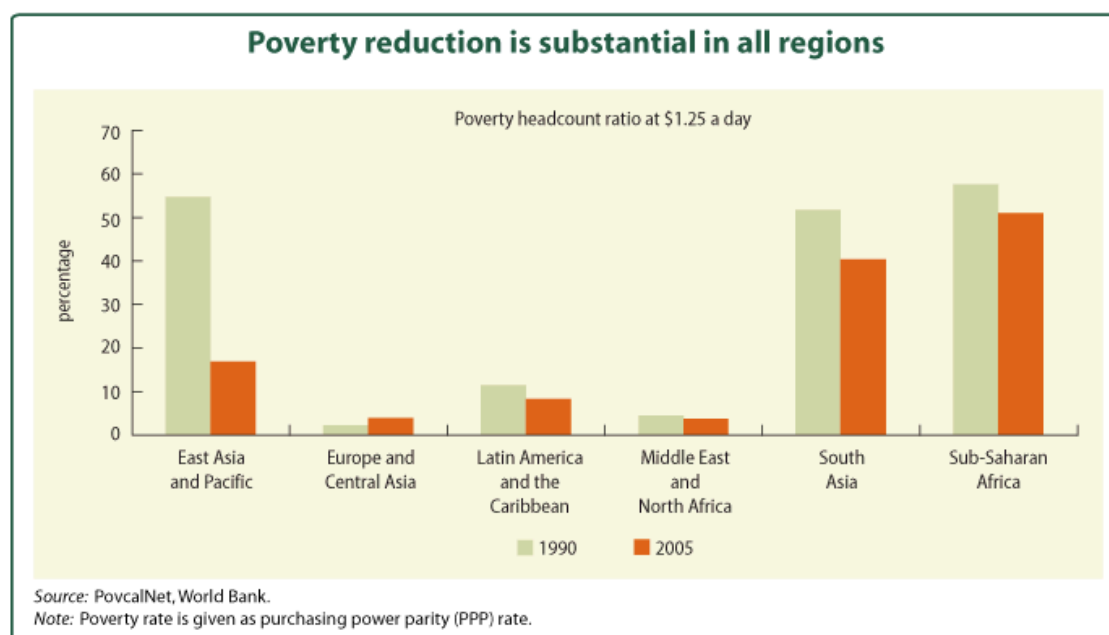
The UNDP also noted that:³⁷

Even though the percentage of people living in poverty globally has gone down, outside of China, the absolute number of people living in extreme poverty is estimated to have increased by 36 million between 1990 and 2005.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ UNDP Key Messages; <http://www.undp.org/mdg/summit.shtml>



5 After the MDGs? Development policy post-2015

Although there are five years of the MDGs still to run, there has been some discussion about what might follow them.

The 2009 DFID White Paper said:³⁸

As the UN prepares for a review of the MDGs in 2010, thoughts will turn to what a post 2015 framework should be. The question is important and the UK expects to engage in a debate over a range of options. But this should not distract us or others from the primary task – over the next five years – to step up and pursue the delivery of the MDG goals as quickly as we can.

Andy Sumner, Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies (Sussex University) notes that the 2010 UN MDG review summit “will not focus directly on is what should replace the MDGs in 2015”, adding:³⁹

Despite some cautiousness of discussing the issue publically (based on a sense that it might detract from MDG efforts to 2015) debates on the issue are beginning to emerge. For example in [academic writings](#), [research hubs](#) and [reviews](#), in global CSO meetings and privately in donor agencies and elsewhere.

There are good reasons why such post-2015 debates are useful and consistent with supporting poverty reduction efforts via the MDGs and the current context allows us to take stock, discuss what the MDGs have achieved and why, and start thinking about what (if anything) should be the 'MDG-Plus' (post-MDG) architecture. For example, the core concerns of the MDGs - nutrition, health, education - are likely to remain valid after 2015 in some way; there is still considerable time to set in place a global process of deliberation (and the political momentum to build such compacts is enormous – at

³⁸ “Building our Common Future”, DFID White Paper, 2009, para 5.16

³⁹ Andy Sumner, “The Millennium Development Goals: Moving towards a post 2015 agenda”, IDS (Sussex University), 23 March 2010, see also: Sumner, A. & Tiwari, M. “After 2015: What are the ingredients of an MDG-PLUS agenda for poverty reduction?”, *Journal of International Development* 21:6, pp834-843; Sumner, A. & Tiwari, M “After 2015: International Development Policy at a Crossroads”(2009); and Sumner, A. and Melamed, C. “The MDGs and Beyond”, *IDS Bulletin* 41.1, January 2010

present we can't even take for granted there will be any post-2015 framework) and the economic crisis and its aftermath present an opportunity to rethink progress and indicators as the [Sarkozy Commission](#) noted recently.

The debate around what, if anything, should succeed the MDGs is still in its very early stages. There is only limited empirical evidence around the impact of the MDGs so far on which to base any conclusions, and the parameters of what we want the MDGs to do, and for whom, are not yet set. It is also a debate which may prove to be purely theoretical unless strong political momentum develops behind the assertion that there is a need for any successor agreement to the MDGs. [...]

What is needed next is a global discussion facilitated by an independent commission that will: coordinate a genuinely global process of roundtables and voices of the poor; develop an evidence-base for what works and how to proceed and a review on the economics or cost of global poverty. But with less than five years to go until the deadline, it's a discussion that needs to happen soon.

In a blog piece, Oxfam GB's Director of Research, Duncan Green, outlined some possibilities for 'what comes next' ahead of the September 2010 UN summit.⁴⁰

The obvious one is – **the MDGs**. Why not stick with a winning formula that, according to [Salil Shetty](#), director of the [UN Millennium Campaign](#), is getting significant traction in many developing countries? At some point the 2015 deadline would have to be extended or dropped, and maybe the targets deepened, or expanded to include more attention to issues such as equity, eg in access to education, healthcare or water and sanitation.

Social Protection: The increased attention to SP as a result of the crisis has given extra importance to some excellent academic work, eg the [Chronic Poverty Report](#), and some high level support from the ILO and UN system via their proposal for a world-wide 'Universal Social Floor'. Is this the moment to push for something akin to a minimal, but global, welfare state?

Low Carbon Growth/Transition: anyone who reads [this blog](#) knows that this is an issue whose prominence will only grow. Improving global carbon efficiency by x% a year is essential to averting catastrophic global warming, and could be unpacked into a series of sectoral targets (energy, cement, agriculture etc) that would achieve it.

Aid targets: the MDGs have always had more impact on aid than on development per se, so why not make that explicit and ramp up the international commitments to improve the quality of aid ([Paris Declaration](#), [Accra Agenda for Action](#) etc) and while we're at it, sort out a process for rationalizing the proliferation of vertical funds?

Wellbeing: The spate of international activity on this (see [previous blog](#)) could result in a shift to explicitly wellbeing-based indicators for, say 2020

Politics: The issue of 'states with adjectives' (fragile, failing, weak, failed etc) has become one of the biggest challenges in development – how could we use the post-2015 international spotlight to promote this agenda?

The problem is that although some of these ideas have some degree of institutional backing, others are just the clever thoughts of sundry policy entrepreneurs, and none have the level of momentum and consensus generated by the series of UN conferences in the 1990s that led to the MDGs. Nor are they likely to, as the danger of talking about plan B too early is that it could sap the momentum behind the MDG effort.

⁴⁰ ["What comes after the MDGs?"](#), Duncan Green 'From Poverty to Power' blog, 8 October 2009

Any discussion has to be part of an inevitable, but complex two track strategy of pushing the MDGs while thinking about what comes next. MDGs 2.0 are likely to be messier than the original.

Annex I: Further resources

- United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
- UN September 2010 MDG review summit <http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/>
- UN *Millennium Development Goals Reports*, 2010, 2009, 2008 (addendum), 2007, 2006, 2005 (regional progress reports from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml>)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) <http://www.undp.org/mdg/>
- UNDP September 2010 summit pages www.undp.org/mdg/summit.shtml & [International Assessment on the MDGs](#) report
- UNDP, *Human Development Reports*, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/>
- UNDP page on national MDG progress reports <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=87>
- UN [MDG Gap Task Force Reports: 2009](#) and [2008](#) (main focus on MDG8)
- UN MDG indicators database <http://millenniumindicators.un.org/>
- World Bank/IMF [Global Monitoring Reports: 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004](#)
- World Bank MDGs pages www.developmentgoals.org
- IMF MDG factsheet <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/mdg.htm>
- DFID MDG pages <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/mdg/>
- ELDIS MDG resources <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/aid/mdgs> with sections on [meeting](#) and [financing](#) the MDGS, and the MDGS and [health](#), [HIV](#) and [education](#)
- BBC World Service Trust MDG portal <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/mdg>
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- UN Secretary-General, [In Larger Freedom: Towards Security, Development and Human Rights for All](#), March 2005
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Annex II: 2009 UN progress summary

Progress chart taken from [UN 2009 MDG report](#):

Goals and Targets	Africa		Asia				Oceania	Latin America & Caribbean	Commonwealth of Independent States	
	Northern	Sub-Saharan	Eastern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western			Europe	Asia

GOAL 1 | Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Reduce extreme poverty by half	low poverty	very high poverty	high poverty	high poverty	very high poverty	low poverty	---	moderate poverty	low poverty	high poverty
Productive and decent employment	very large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	moderate deficit in decent work	small deficit in decent work	moderate deficit in decent work
Reduce hunger by half	low hunger	very high hunger	moderate hunger	high hunger	high hunger	moderate hunger	moderate hunger	moderate hunger	low hunger	moderate hunger

GOAL 2 | Achieve universal primary education

Universal primary schooling	high enrolment	low enrolment	high enrolment	high enrolment	moderate enrolment	moderate enrolment	---	high enrolment	high enrolment	high enrolment
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GOAL 3 | Promote gender equality and empower women

Equal girls' enrolment in primary school	close to parity	close to parity	parity	parity	parity	close to parity	almost close to parity	parity	parity	parity
Women's share of paid employment	low share	low share	high share	medium share	low share	low share	medium share	high share	high share	high share
Women's equal representation in national parliaments	very low representation	low representation	moderate representation	low representation	low representation	very low representation	very low representation	moderate representation	low representation	low representation

GOAL 4 | Reduce child mortality

Reduce mortality of under-five-year-olds by two thirds	low mortality	very high mortality	low mortality	low mortality	high mortality	low mortality	moderate mortality	low mortality	low mortality	moderate mortality
Measles immunization	high coverage	moderate coverage	high coverage	moderate coverage	moderate coverage	moderate coverage	low coverage	high coverage	high coverage	high coverage

GOAL 5 | Improve maternal health

Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters *	moderate mortality	very high mortality	low mortality	high mortality	high mortality	moderate mortality	high mortality	moderate mortality	low mortality	low mortality
Access to reproductive health	moderate access	low access	high access	moderate access	moderate access	moderate access	low access	high access	high access	moderate access

GOAL 6 | Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Halt and reverse spread of HIV/AIDS	low prevalence	high prevalence	low prevalence	low prevalence	low prevalence	low prevalence	moderate prevalence	moderate prevalence	moderate prevalence	low prevalence
Halt and reverse spread of tuberculosis	low mortality	high mortality	moderate mortality	high mortality	moderate mortality	low mortality	high mortality	low mortality	moderate mortality	moderate mortality

GOAL 7 | Ensure environmental sustainability

Reverse loss of forests	low forest cover	medium forest cover	medium forest cover	high forest cover	medium forest cover	low forest cover	high forest cover	high forest cover	high forest cover	low forest cover
Halve proportion without improved drinking water	high coverage	low coverage	moderate coverage	moderate coverage	moderate coverage	high coverage	low coverage	high coverage	high coverage	moderate coverage
Halve proportion without sanitation	moderate coverage	very low coverage	low coverage	low coverage	very low coverage	moderate coverage	low coverage	moderate coverage	moderate coverage	high coverage
Improve the lives of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	very high proportion of slum-dwellers	high proportion of slum-dwellers	high proportion of slum-dwellers	high proportion of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	---	---

GOAL 8 | Develop a global partnership for development

Internet users	moderate usage	very low usage	high usage	moderate usage	low usage	moderate usage	low usage	high usage	high usage	low usage
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The progress chart operates on two levels. The words in each box indicate the present degree of compliance with the target. The colours show progress towards the target according to the legend below:

- Already met the target or very close to meeting the target.
- Progress sufficient to reach the target if prevailing trends persist.
- Progress insufficient to reach the target if prevailing trends persist.
- No progress or deterioration.
- Missing or insufficient data.

* The available data for maternal mortality do not allow a trend analysis. Progress in the chart has been assessed by the responsible agencies on the basis of proxy indicators.

For the regional groupings and country data, see [mdgs.un.org](#). Country experiences in each region may differ significantly from the regional average. Due to new data and revised methodologies, this Progress Chart is not comparable with previous versions.

Sources: United Nations, based on data and estimates provided by: Food and Agriculture Organization; Inter-Parliamentary Union; International Labour Organization; International Telecommunication Union; UNAIDS; UNESCO; UN-Habitat; UNICEF; UN Population Division; World Bank; World Health Organization - based on statistics available as of June 2009.

Compiled by Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations.