

Chapter 4: Addressing Global Poverty - The Work of International Organisations

In September 2000, 189 heads of state gathered at the UN's Millennium Summit in New York. UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, called on the international community "to adopt the target of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015." World leaders committed their countries to reducing extreme poverty through a series of targets that became known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The US economist, Dr Jeffrey Sachs, one of the world's leading experts on economic development and the fight against poverty, was appointed as special adviser to Kofi Annan on the MDGs.

The UN Millennium Declaration

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

The eight MDGs incorporated 21 targets to be achieved by the end of 2015. The UN, with 189 member states and its many associated agencies, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), had a crucial role to play in global poverty reduction.

In addition, 23 global organisations, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), declared themselves committed to achieving the MDGs. This marked the largest ever international attempt to rid the world of extreme poverty.

To accelerate progress with the MDGs, finance ministers from the **G8** nations agreed, in 2005, to cancel an extra \$40-55 billion of debt owed by members of the **Heavily Indebted Poor Countries** (HIPC). This promise built on the **HIPC Initiative** of 1996, which aimed to provide debt relief and low-interest loans to cancel or reduce external debt repayments to sustainable levels. Most of this debt was owed to the World Bank, IMF and the African Development Bank, institutions that receive significant funding from the governments of the G8 nations. However, the HIPC countries were required to demonstrate good financial management, and a lack of corruption before receiving the debt relief, as well as a commitment to divert more resources into improving health and education and tackling their poverty.

Debt reduction packages under the HIPC Initiative have benefitted 36 of the 38 HIPC countries, 30 of them in Africa, by providing \$76 billion in debt-service relief over time. Nevertheless, despite paying out more than \$25 billion in loan repayments annually, African countries still owe more than \$300 billion, and many have little chance of being able to repay their debts.

The World Bank and the IMF:

*The **World Bank** describes its mission as “a world free of poverty”, and works in more than 145 countries to help promote their economic and social progress. It supports the UN’s goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030, and has also set an interim target of reducing extreme poverty to below 9% by 2020.*

The World Bank comprises two development institutions. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) provides loans and assistance to middle-income countries. The International Development Association (IDA) focuses more exclusively on the world’s

77 poorest countries. It also provides significant levels of debt relief through the HIPC Initiative.

Both institutions are owned by the governments of the 188 member countries of the World Bank, with each country contributing an amount proportional to its wealth.

The World Bank uses its cash deposits to lend money at affordable rates of interest to governments in support of projects that are likely to have development potential. The very poorest countries may even receive interest-free loans with repayment periods of more than 25 years. Since 2013, it has focussed more attention on supporting projects that will help create income growth for the bottom 40% of a poor country's population, rather than simply achieve standard GDP growth. This is to ensure economic growth lifts people out of poverty, rather than merely exacerbating the level of inequality.

The World Bank also assists governments through its teams of experts who study the financial and economic conditions of member countries, identifying challenges and priorities, as well as targets for poverty reduction.

Criticisms of the World Bank's approach include its focus on 'western models of development' to reduce poverty, such as lending vast amounts of money for large infrastructure projects (power stations and motorways), as well as promoting foreign investment and international trade. Its free-market policies result from the fact that much of the power and influence within the World Bank lies with the G7 nations. Some critics go as far as suggesting that the World Bank operates in an imperialist manner.

The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to carry out transactions with each other. By doing this, it helps to keep track of the global economy and the economies of member countries.

The IMF also acts as 'the lender of last resort' for countries whose economies are in financial turmoil due to balance of payments

problems. Loans from the IMF enable countries to rebuild their international reserves, stabilise their currencies, continue paying for imports, and restore conditions for future economic growth. In addition, teams of experts from the IMF help member governments design economic policies and manage their financial affairs. Unlike the World Bank, the IMF does not lend for specific projects.

Criticisms of the IMF's approach include the fact that it imposes conditionality on its loans, by requiring the government seeking assistance to reform its economic policies. If the conditions are not met, the funds are withheld. Furthermore, IMF-demanded budget cuts often impact severely on health, education and social security, potentially hitting the poorest groups hardest. Mirroring the World Bank, its promotion of market-oriented policies, such as the privatisation of strategic state-owned industries, has also attracted criticism.

Assistance to the poorest countries has come in more forms than simply debt relief. In 2002, **The Global Fund**, a partnership involving governments and the private sector, was set up with a 'war chest' of funds to fight the world's three deadliest infectious diseases - AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. These diseases accounted at the time for 6 million deaths annually, and were seen as major contributors to both moderate and extreme poverty. Non-governmental supporters include ONE (RED), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Coca-Cola and the United Methodist Church. The Global Fund's fight against AIDS has included the dramatic expansion of antiretroviral therapy to help 5.3 million people, while the distribution of 340 million insecticide-treated nets has helped to cut malaria infections.

In 2010, The Global Fund partnership promised to step up its worldwide campaign against these three deadly diseases by pledging an extra £7 billion to try to complete MDG6 by 2015. AIDS deaths, in countries where the Global Fund invests, fell from 2 million in 2004 to 1.1 m in 2014, a reduction of more than 40%. TB and malaria deaths fell by 29% and 48% respectively between 2000 and 2014. The organisation claims that by the end of 2016 it will have supported countries in saving 22 million lives, with more than 2 million lives being saved each year.

Other Development Initiatives

As well as the work of the UN, The Global Fund, World Bank, IMF, WTO and G8 nations to tackle global poverty, there have been many other initiatives to help people living in the poorest countries:

a) Government initiatives usually involve multilateral or bilateral aid projects.

Multilateral Aid Projects - aid given by a donor country to an international organisation, such as the UN or World Bank, which uses the money for programmes in developing countries. An example is the work of International Health Partnerships (IHPs) involving groups of developed countries helping to improve health in poor countries

Bilateral Aid Projects - aid given directly by the government of a donor country to a recipient country. An example is aid to Bangladesh managed by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID)

Department for International Development:

The Department for International Development (DFID) is a ministerial department of the UK government. It was set up in 1997 to lead the UK's work to end extreme poverty, as well as honouring the country's international commitments to help the UN achieve its development goals - MDGs (2000-2015) and SDGs (2015-2030).

DFID works directly in 28 countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Its priorities include strengthening global peace, security and governance, strengthening resilience and response to crisis, tackling extreme poverty and helping the most vulnerable, often girls and women. For the 2016-2017 financial year, the top five countries receiving DFID money are Pakistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, DR Congo and Tanzania.

DFID is responsible for the majority of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA). Its budget has increased in recent years to help meet the UK government's commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national

income on ODA. For 2015-2016, the UK spent £12.2 billion on ODA, an increase of £500 million on the previous year.

DFID funds high quality research to help build effective development programmes. Its Research4Development (R4D) project has funded over 40,000 projects, many involving new technologies to help the world's poorest. These technologies include vaccines for diseases affecting African cattle, new drugs for combating malaria, and developing drought-resistant crops.

Critics of the UK government approach to ODI claim that the 0.7% target encourages spending by necessity rather than need, inviting waste by increasing the likelihood of funding risky projects that are prone to corruption.

One accusation of waste and corruption relates to the £700 million of DFID money supporting education in Pakistan. It is claimed that thousands of teaching jobs in government schools do not exist, but have been created by corrupt officials so that they can pocket the salaries. Where DFID has given money instead to support low-cost private schools, an accusation is that the salaries paid to teachers, particularly women teachers, are below the official minimum wage. DFID's response has been to acknowledge the enormous challenge of providing education in Pakistan, hence the need for UK assistance, and it claims that UK support is enabling more than 6 million children in Pakistan to receive a decent education.

Complaints have also been directed at the DFID, following the discovery that the UK overspent its foreign aid budget by £172 million in 2015, money that opponents to aid believe could have been better used to support UK jobs, schools or hospitals.

UK aid: recent results and achievements

By 2015 UK aid:
Demonstrating progress towards our commitments between 2011-2015

Helped 11 million children get a good quality education including 5.3 million girls

Picture: Adam Patterson/ Panos/ DFID 05/04/16 @DFID_UK

The infographic features a central photograph of a young girl in a white hijab and a school uniform, focused on writing in a notebook. Other students are visible in the background, also working at their desks. The background is a vibrant purple and pink geometric pattern. The UKaid logo, featuring the Union Jack and the text 'UKaid from the British people', is positioned in the top right corner.

DFID's support for education programmes in developing countries (Source: DFID)

b) Non-governmental and non-profit organisations, campaigns, private foundations and many other development initiatives have also helped the poorest countries.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) & Non-Profit Organisations
e.g. World Vision, Oxfam, ActionAid, Save the Children, Africa Aid and Millennium Promise

Campaigns, usually involving a coalition of organisations e.g. ONE and Make Poverty History (part of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty)

Private foundations e.g. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Microfinance initiatives e.g. Grameen Bank

The Millennium Villages Project:

The Millennium Villages Project (MVP) is the brainchild of Dr Jeffrey Sachs who co-founded Millennium Promise, a leading international non-governmental organisation committed to accelerating achievement of the MDGs, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty, hunger, and preventable disease.

Between 2005 and 2015, Millennium Promise provided the expertise and resources to support the MVP, which uses an all-inclusive, community-based approach that has benefitted more than half a million people living in a wide range of agro-ecological zones across sub-Saharan Africa.

At the core of the MVP approach is the identification of remote and rural communities where extreme poverty remains deeply embedded. Here, the poverty trap prevents local people from making the investments in human capital and infrastructure required to achieve self-sustaining economic growth. Through the MVP, these communities receive targeted investment in agriculture, education, health, infrastructure, gender equality and business development over a period of at least 5 years.

Map showing the countries in sub-Saharan Africa where the MVP operates (Source: Millennium Promise - www.millenniumvillages.org)

Specific interventions through the MVP include the local population gaining access to high-yield seeds, fertilisers, antiretroviral drugs, insecticide-treated bed nets, drinking wells, mobile phones and schools with free dinners for the children. Funding and implementing a Millennium Village is a shared effort among the MVP, other NGOs, donors, the village community, local and national governments. Each Millennium Village budgets an investment of \$120 per person per year, of which the MVP contributes \$60.

By the end of the 5-year period, local people are expected to have seen their incomes and savings increase, ensuring that the cycle of poverty has been broken for good, and sustainable growth has been achieved.

The first and largest of the Millennium Villages sites is the Sauri cluster of 11 villages in Western Kenya, with a population of 70,000. The humid climate supports arable farming (mainly maize and beans) and a high population density. However, with just 0.6 hectares of land per household and low yields, food production prior to the MVP was insufficient, and more than half the children under 5 severely malnourished.

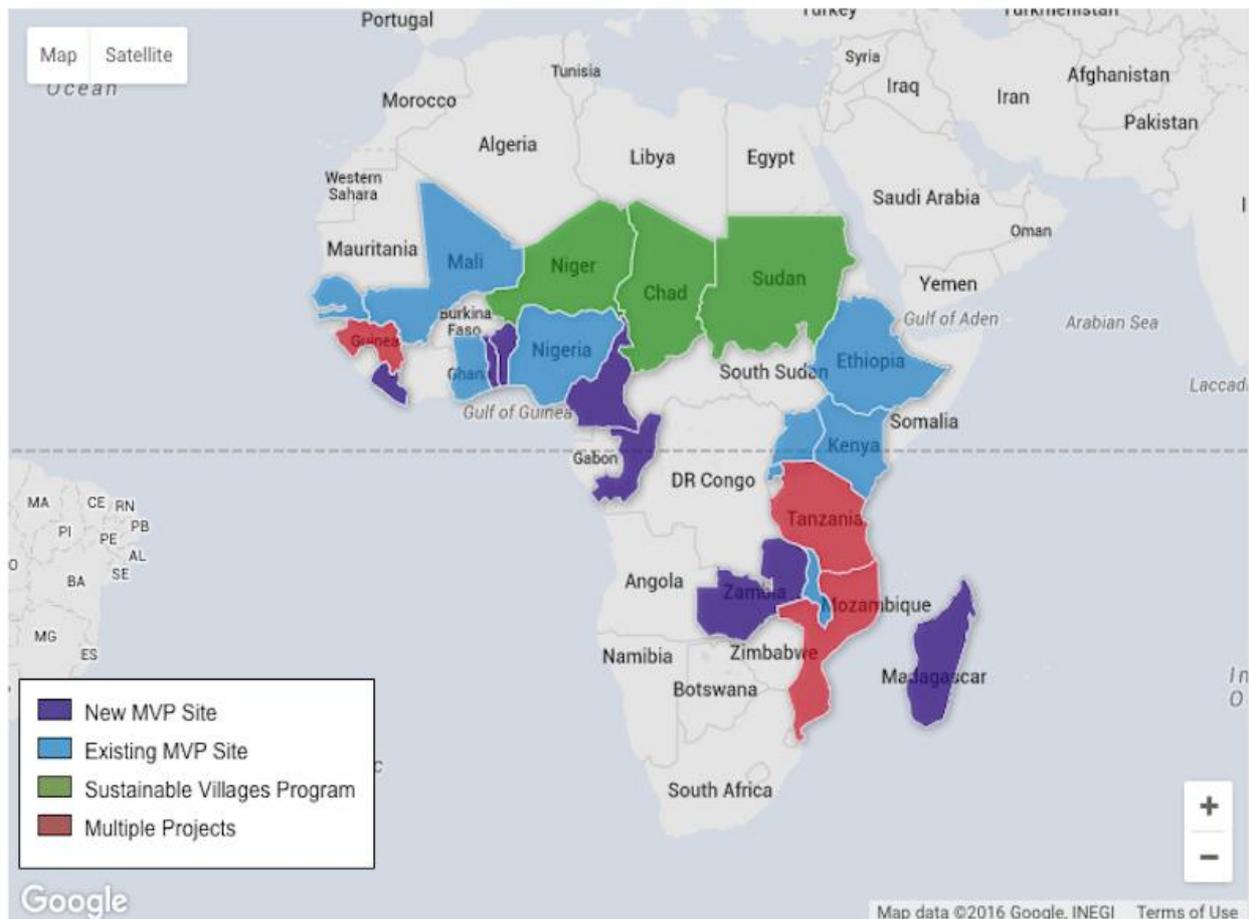
Millennium Promise claims that the implementation of the MVP in Sauri saw the maize yield increase from 1.7 to 4.5 tonnes per hectare, allowing surplus food to be stored and then sold to the World Food Programme. Bee-keeping and fish farms have brought opportunities for income diversification. In addition, school attendance has increased, with more than 21,000 children also receiving a daily meal that improves their nutrition. Infant immunisation rates and HIV testing rates for pregnant women have also improved.

The MVP is an example of the 'big-push' approach, with large sums of money spent on intervention strategies to improve agriculture, infrastructure, energy, education and health. Jeffrey Sachs believes that the results of the MVP show that, despite poverty being a complicated problem, it is solvable through targeted investment in high return areas. The key to self-sustaining growth is increased agricultural productivity which enables people to save and accumulate wealth. This stimulates further investment, as well as diversification away from agriculture, allowing communities to break free from the poverty trap for good.

Critics of the MVP point to the fact that this approach is top-down rather than bottom-up, relying heavily on outside aid and decision-making, with minimal consultation taking place at village level. Most of the key inputs also come from overseas, particularly Millennium Promise's partners, such as Agrium Inc. (fertilisers), Sumitomo Chemical (insecticide-treated nets) and Ericsson (3G networks and mobile phones).

In addition, concern has been expressed that the MVP approach simply creates pockets of prosperity within predominantly poor rural

communities, thereby increasing inequality and friction. There is the problem of scale too, and some doubt whether the programme can be up-scaled to larger size communities. Most crucially, a major challenge lies in ensuring that the Millennium Villages are economically self-sustaining after their five years of funding has ended.



Map showing the countries in sub-Saharan Africa where the MVP operates (Source: Millennium Promise - www.millenniumvillages.org)

Grameen Bank:

For the many poor people unable to access the traditional banking system due to a lack of collateral, improving their economic circumstances is incredibly difficult. Without the means to access loans to purchase equipment and other assets that can be used to increase productivity, escaping the poverty trap becomes near impossible.

In 1976, Bangladeshi Professor Muhammad Yunus recognised this problem and founded the Grameen Bank to provide 'micro-credit' to the poorest people in Bangladesh, without any collateral. He believed that if

financial resources can be made available to the poor people on terms and conditions that are reasonable and appropriate, "these millions of small people with their millions of small pursuits can add up to create the biggest development wonder."

In 2006, Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his pioneering work in the fight against poverty through the micro-credit system.

By late-2011, Grameen Bank had over 8 million borrowers, 97% of whom are women. Its 2,500 branches were providing services in 81,000 villages across Bangladesh, more than 97% of the country's villages. The average loan is just over £100, money that can be invested in livestock and other material needed to start making money. The loans have helped to empower women, enabling them to take ownership of family finances, as well as meeting the costs of medicines and education.

Muhammad Yunus was forced to end his leadership of the Grameen Bank in 2011 after falling out with the government of Bangladesh. The bank continues to lend money to the poor, with borrowers owning more than 90% of its shares (remaining shares are owned by the government). In addition, the Grameen Foundation has adopted the Grameen Bank's philosophy, and supports microfinance institutions in many poor countries, including India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bolivia, Haiti, Ethiopia and Rwanda.

Critics of the Grameen Bank question the success of micro-credit in recent years. Although it works on a small scale, where borrowers can be monitored and even protected from falling too far into debt, when that model is used on a large scale, it can be damaging.

In particular, doubt has been cast on the 95%+ repayment rates claimed by the Grameen Bank. Others believe that interest rates on loans from the Grameen Bank are too high, and that borrowers take too long to repay them, making the model of micro-credit financing unsustainable.

Nevertheless, micro-credit initiatives continue to thrive across the world in countries with contrasting government systems - communist, socialist and capitalist.

Progress in Achieving the MDGs

It was hoped that the MDG targets would be achieved by the end of 2015. During the first six years of the millennium, there was evidence of significant progress in some parts of the world. Noticeable reductions in infant mortality and the number of people living in extreme poverty, and large increases in the proportion of people gaining access to clean water and sanitation were promising signs. However, closer scrutiny of the global averages revealed major disparities between the progress of different continents. Although many Asian countries had made good progress, much of Africa had seen conditions barely change. The next few years brought even more testing circumstances, with all parts of the world affected by the adverse economic fallout from the 2007-2008 **Global Financial Crisis** that triggered a global recession.

In its MDG Report for 2015, the UN claims success in meeting a number of the 21 MDG targets, but slower than hoped for progress with others. Equally, progress towards reaching the MDG targets has been geographically uneven. Some countries have achieved many, while others have achieved none. The state of play with a selection of the MDG targets is outlined below:

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Achieved (and 5 years early) - Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015, with most progress occurring since 2000. However, much of the reduction has been the result of economic growth in China and India. The rate of poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa lags behind other regions.

Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Almost Achieved - The proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions has fallen by almost half since 1990, from 23.3% in 1990–1992 to 12.9% in 2014–2016. Yet, 795 million remain

undernourished. Slower progress in recent years has been due to economic recession and political instability.

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education

Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Considerable Progress - The primary school net enrolment rate in the developing regions reached 91% in 2015, up from 83% in 2000. This represents a fall in the number of out-of-school children from 100 million to 57 million in 15 years. Recent years have seen progress stall, although the target of universal enrolment (measured at 97%+) is close to being met in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa.

Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Considerable Progress - Many more girls are now in primary and secondary schools compared to 15 years ago. Two thirds of countries in the developing regions have achieved gender parity in primary education. The most substantial progress has been achieved in Southern Asia, where in 1990 only 74 girls were enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys. Today, 103 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys. Tertiary education shows the largest gender disparities in enrolment.

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Considerable Progress - The global under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2015. This represents a fall from 12.7 million under-five deaths to under 6 million deaths. Measles vaccination helped prevent nearly 15.6 million deaths between 2000 and 2013. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen the largest decline in under-five mortality, but

is still where half of the global deaths occur. At the current rate of progress, it will take 10 more years to reach the target of a two-thirds reduction in child mortality.

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Some Progress - Since 1990, the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45% worldwide, and most of the reduction has occurred since 2000. In Southern Asia, the maternal mortality ratio declined by 64% between 1990 and 2013, and in sub-Saharan Africa it fell by 49%. Yet, these two regions still account for around 85% of global maternal deaths, the outcome of nearly half their births occurring without skilled health personnel in attendance. The greatest number of maternal deaths is caused by haemorrhage.

Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Almost Achieved - Globally, new HIV infections fell by approximately 40% between 2000 and 2013, from an estimated 3.5 million cases to 2.1 million. AIDS-related deaths also declined, with an estimated 1.5 million people dying of AIDS-related illnesses in 2013, a 35% decline from the peak of 2.4 million deaths recorded in 2005. An estimated 35 million are living with HIV, with the number rising as more people live longer due to antiretroviral therapy (ART).

Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

Considerable Progress - By 2014, 13.6 million people living with HIV were receiving ART globally, a huge increase from just 800,000 in 2003. ART prevented 7.6 million deaths from AIDS between 1995 and 2013, including 4.8 million deaths in sub-Saharan Africa.

Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Achieved - Over 6.2 million malaria deaths have been prevented between 2000 and 2015, primarily of children under five years of age in sub-Saharan Africa. The global malaria incidence rate has fallen by an estimated 37% and the mortality rate by 58%. Between 2000 and 2013, tuberculosis prevention and treatment saved an estimated 37 million lives. The tuberculosis mortality rate fell by 45% and the prevalence rate by 41% between 1990 and 2013.

Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Reasonable Progress - In 2015, 91% of the global population were using an improved drinking water source, compared to 76% in 1990. The proportion of the global population with access to improved sanitation increased from 54% to 68%, representing an additional 2.1 billion people. The proportion of people practising open defecation has fallen by nearly half since 1990, from 24% to 13%. Globally, 147 countries have met the drinking water target, 95 countries have met the sanitation target and 77 countries have met both. Rural areas are most likely to be without safe drinking water and improved sanitation.

Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Achieved - The proportion of urban population living in slums in the developing regions fell from approximately 39% in 2000 to 30% in 2014, although absolute numbers continue to grow. 880 million urban residents are estimated to live in slum conditions today. Of these, more than 320 million people gained access to either improved water, improved sanitation or more substantial housing.



Progress towards achieving selected MDGs by number of countries. The slow progress with increasing access to improved sanitation, and reducing the rates for maternal mortality and infant mortality is evident (Source: World Bank)

Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

Some Progress - In 2014, 79% of imports from developing to developed countries were admitted duty free, up from 65% in 2000. Furthermore, 84% of imports from least developed countries were admitted duty free by developed countries. Agricultural tariffs have also fallen. In 2014, where tariffs were imposed on agricultural products, the average was 8% from developing countries and under 1% from least developed countries. For clothing, the respective average figures were 8% and 6%.

Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries

Reasonable Progress - Official development assistance (ODA) from developed countries increased by 66% in real terms between 2000 and

2014, reaching \$135.2 billion. Approximately one-third of this ODA is directed towards the 48 least developed countries. In 2014, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the UK continued to exceed the UN's ODA target of 0.7% of gross national income. However, on average, ODA to the least developed countries represents just 0.1% of the gross income of donor countries.

Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Considerable Progress - In 2013, the debt burden of developing countries was 3.1%, measured as a proportion of external debt service to export revenue. This was a major improvement over the 2000 figure of 12%. However, most of this dramatic reduction took place between 2000 and 2007. The debt burden has since stabilised, and is expected to rise due to slack demand for commodities from developing countries, an outcome of the slowdown in China and the fragile global outlook. More positive is that 35 of the HIPC countries have fulfilled all conditions, and are receiving full debt relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative.

Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Achieved - As of 2015, 95% of the world's population is covered by a mobile-cellular signal. The number of mobile-cellular subscriptions has grown almost tenfold in the last 15 years, from 738 million in 2000 to over 7 billion in 2015. Internet penetration has grown from just over 6% of the world's population in 2000 to 43% in 2015, enabling 3.2 billion people to be linked to a global network of content and services.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda: The Sustainable Development Goals

2015 brought to an end the 15-year cycle of the anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals. The beginning of 2016 saw world leaders adopt the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At

the heart of this agenda is an even more ambitious set of goals, officially known as the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** or Global Goals. These are a set of 17 goals and 169 targets to combat poverty, hunger, inequality, climate change and environmental degradation by 2030 – with ending extreme poverty for all people everywhere, a key target.



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Source: United Nations)

The SDGs include more demanding targets than the MDGs on poverty, health, education and gender equality, as well as including issues that were not in the MDGs, such as action on climate change, and achieving peace and justice for all.

Although global poverty is still predominantly a rural problem, and most entrenched in sub-Saharan Africa, addressing the factors that bring about poverty must take into account the hugely varied natural and human environments that shape the poverty experienced worldwide. Cities throughout the developing world are experiencing rapid growth

because of rural-urban migration, as many poor families see them as the only way to escape poverty. The growth of squatter settlements has increased the amount of poverty in urban areas, and achieving “global zero poverty” by 2030 will require international organisations to provide strategies that tackle poverty successfully in very contrasting situations.

Furthermore, conflict remains the biggest threat to human development, and therefore poverty reduction. By the end of 2014, conflicts had displaced almost 60 million people, with children accounting for half of the global refugee population. In countries affected by conflict, absence from education is one of the most serious obstacles to child development, health and well-being.