



Interaction
international development
toolkit

International Development and the MDGs

Although there is no simple definition, 'International development' involves a range of actors, policies, processes and activities that try to reduce poverty, build sustainable prosperity and improve the wellbeing of people who live in the world's poorest countries.

In September 2000 at the United Nations for the Millennium Summit, world leaders committed to fight together against global poverty, hunger, gender inequality, environmental degradation, and HIV/AIDS, while improving access to education, health care and clean water, all by 2015. These commitments are encompassed in the **eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**.

The Millennium Development Goals

 <small>ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER</small>	Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
 <small>ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION</small>	Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
 <small>PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN</small>	Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
 <small>REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY</small>	Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
 <small>IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH</small>	Goal 5: Improve maternal health
 <small>COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES</small>	Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
 <small>ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</small>	Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
 <small>GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT</small>	Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the most broadly supported, comprehensive and specific development goals the world has ever agreed upon. These eight time-bound goals are broken down into 21 targets and measured by 60 indicators, providing concrete, numerical benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty in its many dimensions. The MDGs are both global and local, tailored by each country to suit specific development needs. They provide a framework for the entire international community to work together towards a common end – making sure that human development reaches everyone, everywhere.

In 2004, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness committed governments to improve the performance of development initiatives. This focused on 5 elements: ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability. It is clear however, that aid is a catalyst. Aid alone will not achieve the MDGs. Trade, investment, commercial and financial flows, including remittances sent home by migrant communities, are extremely important.

In September 2010 global leaders met again to assess progress on the MDGs over the last ten years and how they will be achieved and even exceeded by the 2015 deadline. It was recognised that greater efforts are needed and new activities required to further progress in each of the goals.

Implementing the MDGs

Every region faces particular challenges but the goals are achievable with global political support, strong partnerships and coordinated efforts. Enormous progress has already been made. With the exception of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, primary school enrolment is at least 90 percent. Malaria prevention is expanding and one point six billion people have gained access to safe drinking water since 1990.

However a number of goals and targets are likely to be missed unless more action is taken urgently: about one quarter of children in developing countries are considered to be underweight; more than 500,000 mothers in developing countries die annually in childbirth; in Sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of people living on a dollar a day is unlikely to be halved. New challenges such as the global economic crisis, climate change and rapid urbanisation also threaten progress.

Who are the main players?

At a national level in the UK, the Department for International Development (DFID) coordinates the UK response to delivering the MDGs. The UK Government has committed to ring-fence Overseas Aid and has a target to spend 0.7% Gross National Product by 2013 on reducing global poverty.

At an international level, the UN, the World Bank and the European Commission play an important role in coordinating, supporting and measuring progress against the MDGs. The 2010 Summit declaration also lists NGOs, parliamentarians, business and local to global actors as critical in delivering the MDGs, and to generate support for measures to reach the poorest.

Ownership of development remains in the hands of developing country governments. They have the most crucial role in securing and delivering the Millennium Development Goals. Country development strategies, defined by developing country governments in dialogue with the development community, outline the specific poverty challenges and priorities for each country.