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## The Analysis of the Millennium Development Goals

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000. An analysis that provides critical issues of MDGs such as underlying assumptions, missing goals, accountability, measurement, gaps of MDGs will be included. The paper will furthermore conclude with constructive suggestions and recommendations.

## **FACTS**

The important facts, which are relevant to an examination of the MDGs, are as follows:

## **BACKGROUND**

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight development goals that the United Nations Member States (all 189 at the time and 193 currently) have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The MDGs are derived from the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which signed in September 2000 following the Millennium Summit<sup>1</sup>.

The MDGs were developed for combating poverty and facilitate overall human development in many dimensions - including 8 goals, 21 targets and 60 indicators for measuring progress between 1990 and 2015, when the goals are expected to be met. The goals range from halving extreme poverty, to reducing hunger, disease, environmental degradation and gender discrimination.

The MDGs are a joint effort by the United Nations agencies, governments<sup>2</sup>, international organizations and civil society groups at both global and regional levels. It is also worth noticing that the concept of "Global partnership for development" has also been brought up to the MDGs' agenda<sup>3</sup>. It is another joint effort, which emphasizes collaboration between developing countries and developed countries in the struggle to reduce world poverty.

Now, more than two decades have past since its inception. The MDGs witnessed both applaudable achievements as well as drawbacks in the course of meeting the targets. Moreover, the MDGs also experience criticisms include a perceived lack of analytical power and justification behind the chosen objectives<sup>4</sup>. To

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals website, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>2</sup> UN Partners on MDGs, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/partners.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals website, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>4</sup> Clemens, M & Moss, T., Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: What's wrong with existing analytical models?

better fulfill the MDGs' mission and meet the goals, world leaders renewed their commitment to achieve the MDG's targets and agreed to hold a high-level Summit in September 2015 to adopt a new set of Goals building upon the achievements of the MDGs.

## **GOALS**

Derived from the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the MDGs incorporate eight goals. Each goal has its rationale and targets set for 2015 as well as indicators to monitor progress from 1990 levels.

### *Goal One: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*

In order to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger around the global, three targets are aimed in the goal one, “Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day; Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger”<sup>5</sup>.

Nowadays, although the MDG target has been met, poverty rates have been halved between 1990 and 2010, billions of people still live in poverty all over the world. Poverty has many dimensions. As the hard fact shows that 1.2 billion people live on less than one dollar a day. Millions do not have access to land and housing and millions more do not have access to basic services like water and sanitation<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, 800 million people are undernourished and 153 million children are underweight<sup>7</sup>.

### *Goal Two: Achieve universal primary education*

To achieve universal primary education, the MDG targets that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling<sup>8</sup>.

Even though the primary school enrolment has been improving worldwide, there are nevertheless 115 million children of primary school age are not in school and 97% of them come from developing countries. Vast sum is needed to spend on education in the poorest countries so that to help them escape the poverty, however

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<sup>5</sup> MDG Facts and Stats, <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/sites/makepovertyhistory/files/documents/2010/09/mdg-facts-and-stats.pdf>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>6</sup> WHO, MDGs fact sheet, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs290/en/>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>7</sup> MDG Facts and Stats, <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/sites/makepovertyhistory/files/documents/2010/09/mdg-facts-and-stats.pdf>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals website, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013

they have limited resources to make such an investment. If current trends continue, the world will not meet the goal of universal primary education by 2015.

*Goal Three: Promote gender equality and empower women*

Around the world, it's undeniable that women have gradually gained a more equal power position as per before; the efforts still need to be furthered. 64% of the world's estimated 876 million illiterate adults are women. 80% of all refugees are women and 60% of the 113 million children absent from primary schools are girls. In general, women earn less income than men and hold fewer seats in national parliaments.<sup>9</sup> The MDGs believe that equal schooling for both boys and girls is the foundation for development.

In accordance with the aim to promote gender equality, the Goal three has a target of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

By far, however, this goal is far from achieving. Only 2 out of 130 countries have achieved that target at all levels of education. In addition, gender inequality remains in many nations. Women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and participation in government. What is worth noticing is that poverty is a cardinal barrier to secondary education, especially among older girls<sup>10</sup>.

*Goal Four: Reduce child mortality*

The target of this goal is to reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under five years old mortality rate, from 93 children of every 1,000 dying to 31 of every 1,000<sup>11</sup>.

Significant gains have been made in child survival since the inception of this goal, but efforts must be redoubled to meet the global target. Situation is particularly worse in sub-Saharan Africa where one in nine children die before age five, more than 16 times the average for developed regions.

*Goal Five: Improve maternal health*

There are 536,000 women and girls die because of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or the six weeks following delivery and 99% of these deaths occur in developing countries<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals website, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals website, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>11</sup> WHO, MDGs fact sheet, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs290/en/>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>12</sup> WHO, MDGs fact sheet, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs290/en/>, retrieved 29 November 2013

Two targets have been set for this goal: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio; Achieve universal access to reproductive health.

Although maternal mortality has declined by nearly half since 1990, it falls far short of the MDG target<sup>13</sup>.

*Goal Six: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*

A set of three targets are laid out in this goal: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS; Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for all those who need it; Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases<sup>14</sup>.

Even though the incidence of HIV is declining steadily in most parts of the world, still 2.5 million people are newly infected each year.

*Goal Seven: Ensure environmental sustainability*

Four targets are included in this goal: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources; Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss; Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

As of now, global emissions of carbon dioxide have increased by more than 46 per cent since 1990 and forests, which are a safety net for the poor, continue to disappear at an alarming rate<sup>15</sup>. To fulfill these targets, therefore, seem bleak.

*Goal Eight: Develop a global partnership for development*

According to MDGs stats, a minimum of 100 billion dollars is needed to meet the goals every year, or 0.5% of the gross national income of the Development Assistance Committee countries<sup>16</sup>. Total official aid is less than half of this. Unless rich countries keep their pledges to deliver financing for development, the MDGs have no chance to be fulfilled.

A total of six targets are incorporated in this goal: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system; Address the

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<sup>13</sup> WHO, MDGs fact sheet, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs290/en/> ,retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>14</sup> WHO, MDGs fact sheet, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs290/en/> ,retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>15</sup> MDG Facts and Stats, <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/sites/makepovertyhistory/files/documents/2010/09/mdg-facts-and-stats.pdf> , retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>16</sup> MDG Facts and Stats, <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/sites/makepovertyhistory/files/documents/2010/09/mdg-facts-and-stats.pdf> , retrieved 29 November 2013

special needs of least developed countries; Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries; In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications<sup>17</sup>.

## **OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

In two decades, some of the goals have been achieved. According to the MDGs report 2013, “More girls are in school. Fewer children are dying. The world continues to fight killer diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS. There are less than 1,000 days to accelerate action on issues such as hunger, access to education, improved sanitation, maternal health and gender equality.”<sup>18</sup> However, as facts illustrated above, there are nevertheless targets that can not be met by 2015.

## **MDG AFTER 2015: POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

With the deadline for the MDGs on the horizon, some of the targets of the MDGs will not be able to meet by 2015. In an aim to accelerate the fulfillment of the goals as well as initiate feasible plans on the future, a global development agenda beyond 2015 is under construction. The outcome of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development initiated an inclusive intergovernmental process to prepare a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs).<sup>19</sup> There is broad agreement on the need for close linkages between the two processes to arrive at one global development agenda for the post-2015 period, with sustainable development at its center<sup>20</sup>. Predictably, the world development agenda would undergo a transition from the MDGs to the SDGs.

## **ANALYSIS**

Based on the aforementioned facts, one can arrive at the following possible opinions:

## **UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS**

There are certain underlying assumptions that the MDGs use to frame the agenda. First and foremost is the path to development, which bears resemblances to the American modernization theory. Second assumption lies essentially in the benefits of education and the last assumption could be diagnosed in its promotion of universalization and equality.

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<sup>17</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals website, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>18</sup> The United Nations, Millennium Development Goals Report 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Carin, B (2012), Post-2015 Development Agenda: Goals, Targets and Indicators.

<sup>20</sup> Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda, <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013



*Path to Development*

In terms of path to development, the avenues that MDGs employ are reminiscent of the theoretical implication derived from the American Modernization Theory, in particular Rostow's "Stages of Economic Growth" and Levy's concept of "Universal social solvent". These underlying assumptions can be evidenced especially by goal eight – develop a global partnership for development.

According to Rostow's Stages of Economic Growth, there are "five stages of economic growth" beginning with traditional society and ending with modern society, or in his words, "high mass-consumption society", which follows a linear trajectory toward modernization. He claims that each stage should be completed in order to reach the next stage, and ultimately "take off" to the final phase of "self-sustained growth"<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, He argues that in order to make economic growth as an automatic process, the Third World countries need a stimulus to reach the "takeoff" stage. And the best way to help development is to provide aid in the forms of capital, technology, and expertise, to developing countries. Rostow's suggestion definitely plays a part in the underlying logic behind the Goal 8: development assistance in the form of money aid from developed countries to developing countries.

Judging from the other aspect of Goal 8, which urges to develop a global partnership for development, indicates another assumption, namely "Universal social solvent". Levy, one of the modernization theorists, in his writing has stated this concept. According to Levy, in order to occur modernization, contact between relatively modernized societies and relatively non-modernized societies is necessary. Levy treats the development as a universal social solvent: "The patterns of the relatively modernized societies, once developed, have shown a universal tendency to penetrate any social context whose participants have come in contact with them... The patterns always penetrate; once the penetration has begun, the previous indigenous patterns always change; and they always change in the direction of some of the patterns of the relatively modernized society"<sup>22</sup>. Accordingly, the development approach taken by the MDGs closely connects to Levy's argument. To develop a global partnership is to assume that connection between developed and developing countries will facilitate the poorest countries' development. In another word, offer poor countries patterns of development, including capital accumulation, skills, organizational planning etc. to imitate.

In sum, it is clear that the MDGs adopted a development model significantly influenced by western, not least the American modernization theorists. Thus it potentially falls short on localization of specific development path for different

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<sup>21</sup> So, A. Y. (1990). *Social change and development: Modernization, dependency and world-system theories* (No. 178). Sage.

<sup>22</sup> So, A. Y. (1990). *Social change and development: Modernization, dependency and world-system theories* (No. 178). Sage.



regions around the world given that basic developmental conditions vary from place to place.

### The Benefits of Education

Another basic assumption held by the MDGs, whose overarching objective is development is obviously related to the important role education plays in poverty reduction (or, development). In its second goal, which aims to achieve universal primary education implies this critical assumption.

According to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), “Education can help lift people out of poverty”<sup>23</sup>. It further states that education equips people with knowledge and skills necessary to increase income and expand employment opportunities. Furthermore, statistic indicates that one year of schooling can increase a person's earnings by 10%; each additional year of schooling can lift average annual GDP by 0.37%<sup>24</sup>.

In light of this point of view, it can be inferred that the United Nations MDGs have two possible assumptions with regard to universal education. We can draw the first one from Max Weber<sup>25</sup>, who had foreseen the power of ideals. Weber believes that ideals can have solid impacts on the real world. In other words, the values one holds affect his/her behavior, and eventually the whole society. Education is, undoubtedly, a good way to output and transform values. Likewise, the MDGs value the influence of education and how it may shape people’s behaviors. The other assumption stems from the American thinker Seymour Martin Lipset, who states in his modernization theory that education, as measured by enrollment rate on different levels (primary, post-primary, and higher education), is one of the key indices with respect to economic development<sup>26</sup>.

Admittedly, education is of critical importance in the course of poverty alleviation, it is no panacea to poverty eradication at all as society shows us that some of the most educated countries could be far less developed than their comparatively less educated counterparts. Ironically, the relation between education and poverty reduction exists somehow like a vicious circle where they mutually hinge upon each other. The rich can usually spend more on education as economic grows. The poor need to invest in education to escape their poverty, but they do not have resources at the first place to make such educational investment. In this case, more down-to-earth

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<sup>23</sup> UNESCO, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/education-and-the-mdgs/goal-1/>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/education-and-the-mdgs/goal-1/>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>25</sup> Giddens, A. (1971). *Capitalism and modern social theory: An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>26</sup> So, A. Y. (1990). *Social change and development: Modernization, dependency and world-system theories* (No. 178). Sage.

goals are needed to supplement for poverty eradication purpose. A further discussion on this matter will be continued later in this paper.

### Universalization and Equality

As demonstrated in Goal two and Goal three, universalization and equality are put on the central stage of the MDGs. When touching upon the key social issues relevant to the Millennium development, the MDGs spare the efforts on “achieve universal primary education” and “promote gender equality and empower women”.

Coleman, in reviewing the literature on political modernization, mentions six crises of modernization, and one of the crises is “the crisis of distribution that arises when the state is unable to bring about economic growth and distribute enough goods, services, and values to satisfy mass expectation”, and for him, modernization should be measured by the extent to which a political system has “successfully developed the capacity to cope with these generic system-development problems”<sup>27</sup>. Likewise, the MDGs acknowledged the disparities in gender equality. The MDGs’ belief in equality shares notable resemblance with Coleman’s political approach toward modernization because Coleman argues that “equality is the ethos of modernity”, and the issues concerning equality include universal adult citizenship, the widespread presence of universalistic legal norms, the prevalence of achievement standards in the recruitment and allocation of administrative roles, and general participation in the system<sup>28</sup>. In this sense, Coleman’s ideal of modern society is clearly embedded in the MDGs’ focus on universal enrollment to primary schools, its special attention to women empowerment. To a great extent, the MDGs echo Coleman’s thoughts in defining “development”.

However, a closer scrutinization may find flaws in the MDGs’ promotion of equality due to that equality has a rather broad range aside from gender equality.

### **ADEQUACY OF GOALS**

Based on the facts and analysis above, it is conspicuous that the MDGs suffer from an inadequacy of justification for chosen goals. While emphasizing on a range of goals from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, there are nevertheless missing goals in the MDGs’ agenda in the furtherance of global human development.

In this section, a set of missing goals of MDGs will be brought up and justified by proper rationale respectively.

### Calls to action for 0.7% Official Development Assistance

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<sup>27</sup> So, A. Y. (1990). *Social change and development: Modernization, dependency and world-system theories* (No. 178). Sage.

<sup>28</sup> So, A. Y. (1990). *Social change and development: Modernization, dependency and world-system theories* (No. 178). Sage.

0.7 refers to the repeated commitment of the world's governments to commit 0.7% of rich-countries' gross national product (GNP) to Official Development Assistance. First pledged 35 years ago in a 1970 General Assembly Resolution, the 0.7 target has been affirmed in many international agreements over the years. However, the 0.7 target has never been fulfilled by all the committed nations except for several countries such as Luxembourg, Netherland and Norway<sup>29</sup>.

Undeniably, for the MDGs, money is an essential element in either the pursuit of successfully carrying out the goals and meeting the targets or aiding the poorest countries. However, despite an "integrated implementation framework"<sup>30</sup> which was developed to record and monitor financial as well as policy commitments made in support of the MDGs by UN Member States and other international stakeholders, there is no secure venues to guarantee sufficient financial input to implement the given goals. Moreover, among them the poverty eradication goal would need vast sum of money flow from developed countries to the least developed ones. Therefore a constant prompt on developed countries to aid their developing counterparts is indispensable.

Accordingly, by including a target for donor countries to establish a timetable to meet their commitments of 0.7% would be advisable and will definitely have sufficient added value to the MDGs.

#### *Call for security and disarmament*

Despite the fact that our world today, is free from the notorious "World Wars", there are regional wars and ongoing internal conflicts happening almost every day. More death occurred on account of these regional wars than the combination of death toll of two world wars. Thus, the world is not in peace at all. As illustrated before, the MDGs' fundamental idea is to facilitate human development. In the process, a peaceful environment is the basis of any kind of progress regarding to development. The MDGs would be hindered or even degraded without peace as a prerequisite in the real world. In this sense, a target with contents of achieving global peace would be desirable. More specifically, the targets are suggested involving disarmament issues, such as counter terrorism and gun violence.

#### *Call for new commitment to job creation*

Following to previous discussion on the dynamic between education and poverty eradication. As these two factors interdependent upon one another, and as education is proved not necessary leads to poverty alleviation, a more down-to-earth venue is suggested in order to fulfill the target of poverty eradication, namely job creation. "Job creation is the most pressing global development priority," claimed by

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<sup>29</sup> Millennium Project, <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/press/07.htm>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>30</sup> Integrated implementation framework, <http://iif.un.org/>, retrieved 29 November 2013

the International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General Guy Ryder. “A decent job is the best way out of poverty and it’s also the way economies grow. Jobs mean development.”<sup>31</sup>.

Job creation is vital, especially in the world’s least developed countries. According to a new report from the UN, the number of young people of working age is increasing by 16 million per year. To lift poverty, this employment creation should be considered as one of its fundamental pillars.

Now, full and productive employment and decent work was added to the original MDGs but only as a sub-target of the goal to halve poverty and hunger by 2015. However, since the MDGs were adopted in 2000, many countries have moved further away from full employment because of the global financial and economic crisis. Given this current circumstance, “Setting full employment and decent work as an explicit goal and target will focus the attention of policy makers and development practitioners on this critical need”<sup>32</sup>.

#### *Call for policy development on migration*

Nowadays, the global migrating people’s population is increasing gradually, people move around either for study or for work. Those who migrate, by and large, are in the pursuit of a better living standard. The irony is that, money and goods can move freely around the globe but people actually cannot. Hence, it may be the time to call for policy development on migration. By providing more convenient avenues for people moving around and securing their rights, it helps better people’s migrating experience and thus facilitate the societal development.

In light of this, it is advisable to include migration-development policymaking and practice as one of the proposed Millennium goals.

#### *Call for a broader equality*

As illustrated in the MDGs, one of the goals is to promote gender equality. However, equality, by its nature, is rather multi-faceted. It is beyond gender equality. Our society abounds with issues of equality. Most notably, the equality between the disabled and the normal. Furthermore, equality between the socio-economic privileged ones and the rest is also worth addressing. Accordingly, the MDGs on equality are insufficient to accommodate the world's need for development. A more comprehensive goal in terms of a broader range of equality should thus be adopted.

In addition, besides empower women, other vulnerable groups of people need to be addressed as well, such as the children and the elder (senior citizens).

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<sup>31</sup>International Labour Organization, “[http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_193438/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_193438/lang-en/index.htm)”

<sup>32</sup> International Labour Organization, “[http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_193438/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_193438/lang-en/index.htm)”

### Call for climate change

Although some people argue that environment issue is less crucial compared to poverty alleviation, in a long run, they are essentially correlated in the furtherance of development. For instance, as the number one employment sector in the world, the agricultural industry would no longer be able to sustain itself if the climate changed severely. Millions of individuals around the world would be left without a steady income. Therefore, it might be practical to include the climate change as a sub-target under the goal of sustainable environment.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND MEASUREMENT**

As we can capture in the facts listed before, few targets that mapped out by MDGs could be met by 2015. Therefore, a few methodological problems that embedded in the MDGs' accountability and measurement framework should be addressed.

First critical issue is the MDGs' indicators. In general, the targets are quantifiable, with broad aspirations, which turn out not very feasible. Moreover, some of the goals lack proper measurements. For instance, Goal eight which urges for global partnership is hard to measure; both qualitative and quantitative measurements are advisable to employ in order to assess the progress of the targets under this umbrella. Moreover, the first goal, which consists of two targets is evident of lacking proper measurements. In practice, there is a tendency to focus on the first target (halving from 1990 levels the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar per day). This indicator lacks in credibility. There is no justified way to measure its performance.

Second problem is the weakness in data and monitoring process. The data required to assess the performance of the MDGs and to monitor their progress over time are at severely deficient. Moreover, the results appear inaccurate at time. A recent study found that the number of malaria cases worldwide might be close to double that previously estimated by the World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>33</sup> It also points out that WHO relies heavily on clinical reports of the disease for its statistics, whereas many sufferers do not seek treatment.

Third, there is a lack of mechanism for alleviating possible inaccuracy of estimates caused by unpredictable future shocks. Due to the long period nature of the MDGs, it is difficult to make accurate cost estimates at all levels. Once an unpredicted future shock occurs, it surely would undermine the accuracy of estimates. For example, shocks in the form of climate events (such as tsunami), civil and regional

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<sup>33</sup> Sanjay G. & Heuty, A, Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: What's wrong with existing analytical models?  
[http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2006/wp30\\_2006.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2006/wp30_2006.pdf)

wars (such as the Syria civil war which ignited in 2011) could significantly paralyze the measuring process.

The aforementioned factors, if not solved appropriately, they together will potentially handicap the credibility of the MDGs' accountability and measurement framework.

## **MDG GAPS**

### *Uneven progress*

Most notable gap of the MDG is the uneven progress and country-level involvement. Since the launch of MDGs, the progress has been far from uniform across the world. Huge disparities across global can be seen. Within countries, poverty remains the greatest in rural areas, though urban poverty is also extensive in some countries. As research shows that sub-Saharan African is the epicenter of crisis, with continuing food insecurity, high child and maternal mortality and large numbers of people living in slums, it suffers a widespread shortfall for most of the MDGs. Asian, in contrast, is the region with the fastest progress, but still, hundreds of millions of people remain in extreme poverty. Other regions, like Latin America, the Middle East often with slow progress on some of the goals<sup>34</sup>.

### *Awareness VS Action*

Yet another gap of MDGs is the unequal weight of promotion of the awareness and the actual action, most notably the United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC). The UNMC, which was established by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in late 2002, is in response to the Millennium Declaration<sup>35</sup>. The Millennium Campaign targets intergovernmental, government, civil society organization and media at both global and regional levels<sup>36</sup>. It is an inter-agency initiative of the United Nations to build and maintain political will for achieving the MDGs.

The UNMC, has employed varieties of means to promote society's awareness of MDGs not least the social media and traditional media in a bid to: Strengthening citizen feedback on MDG delivery; Strengthened civil society reporting on MDG promises; Framing the discourse for the realization of the MDGs. The campaign has so far launched several global activities such as "My world" survey, which enables people all over the world to vote for their priorities and the world they want in 2015.

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<sup>34</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals website, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, retrieved 29 November 2013

<sup>35</sup> The Millennium Campaign annual report 2012, [http://issuu.com/endpoverty2015/docs/af\\_annual\\_report\\_2012\\_issuu](http://issuu.com/endpoverty2015/docs/af_annual_report_2012_issuu)

<sup>36</sup> History of Millennium Campaign, <http://www.mdgasiapacific.org/index.php?q=node/82>

Undoubtedly, the Millennium Campaign plays a crucial role in keeping the political momentum on the MDGs and ensures the representativeness of the goals by involving civil society and individuals in the process of defining the ideal agenda. However, despite expanded exposure and awareness that added to the MDGs by the virtue of the campaign, less action-oriented activities are established. Therefore, the gap between promoting public awareness and promoting the real action emerges alongside the implementation of the MDGs.

### *Economic VS Political Development*

Last but not the least is a gap in the dynamic between economic and political development. Among the eight development goals, economy plays a vital role, whereas no political development has been touched upon. Even though, it is indubitable to put economic growth as a priority on the agenda, we should not utterly neglect the impact that political development could bring to society. Therefore, to close this gap, a more balanced dynamic between economic and political development should be taken into consideration.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the above analysis, one can arrive at following possible recommendations in order to better the overall implementation of the MDGs:

First, everything should start with a more serious political will, which means, all the involved stakeholders, regardless of his/her role and function, should intentionally be willing to commit in this course of work and believe in its positive effect to the society and to the world. Nothing could be done efficient and effective without good intention and right attitude.

Second, there is a need to modify objectives and goals of MDGs in order to better serve the fundamental needs of human development. Sets of goals such as job creation, security and disarmament, political development as well as climate change etc. are suggested to incorporate.

Third, the path of development that the MDGs adopted should be localized in different regions of the world, and the targets, therefore, need to be adjusted accordingly, from universal global targets to feasible national level targets.

Fourth, it is also necessary to adapt a more effective performance and accountability framework as well as a better measurement mechanism, which is more comprehensive, taken possible future shock into consideration.

Fifth, bridge and foster coordination and communication between actors at all level, sharing information and technology in a bid to close development gaps between rural and urban regions.

Last, Conduct ongoing evaluation report and tailor targets and goals alongside the implementation of relevant projects.



## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the remarkable progress that has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the MDGs fall short on adequate justification for their chosen objectives, lack of an effective performance and accountability framework as well as experience gaps and obstacles in their fulfillment.

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