

Facts and Actions



Volume 111, Issue I
Spring 2007

The Millennium Development Goals

- 1) **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
- 2) Achieve universal primary education
- 3) Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4) Reduce child mortality
- 5) Improve maternal health
- 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7) Ensure environmental sustainability
- 8) Develop a global partnership for development

Information and text from:

Heifer International's
WORLD ARK, July/August
2006
www.care.org

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Supporting the Millennium Development Goals

MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Targets: Between 1990-2015, halve the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.

Halve between 1990-2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Quick Facts

- In the developing world, over 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 a day. Nearly half the world's population (2.8 billion) live on less than \$2 a day (World Bank)
- Every 3.6 seconds another person dies of starvation. A large majority are children under 5 years of age (Millennium Promise)
- The 3 richest people in the world control more wealth than all 600 million people living in the world's poorest countries (ChristianAid)
- China, Thailand and Vietnam are among the "12 best performers" in the developing world, with China reducing the number of hungry by 76.3 million between 1990-92 and 1997-99. Increases in the productivity of small and marginal farmers were key. (FAO of the UN)



MDG 1 Overview

Poverty is not the fault of the poor. In the majority of cases, it is due to structural and deeply entrenched systems. Poverty has many faces. Poverty is hunger. 842 million people in developing and transition countries are severely undernourished—three times the total U. S. population. The problem is not that there is too little food in the world, but that there is a need to improve agricultural productivity, especially among farmers in Africa.

Poverty also means lack of access to affordable health facilities. Many children die of preventable diseases and from dehydration from diarrhea caused by diseases that can be controlled with inexpensive immunization. Poverty means lack of clean water and proper sanitation. Poverty is the loss of childhood and the denial of the right to a basic education. The World Bank estimates that in 2003, more than 100 million children did not attend school because of pov-

erty—thus depriving them of the chance to escape poverty later in life. Poverty is powerlessness. The poor lack access to markets which could offer a way out of poverty. Global inequality and social exclusion due to unequal distribution of wealth, are key problems to address. It is also the systematic exploitation, theft and abuse by the government and officials. The poor have to pay larger bribes as a share of their income just to survive.

Dr. Stephen Smith, Professor of Economics and International Affairs at George Washington University, gives us an alternative framework to understand poverty in his book, Ending Global Poverty: A Guide to What Works (Palgrave Macmillan). Smith explains that the poor often get mired down in “poverty traps”, and even very talented persons are not able to pull themselves out of poverty if they are faced with undernutrition, ill health, illiteracy, isolation and powerlessness. These traps may be deliberately set by the rich to ensnare the poor.

Smith contends that there is a way out of poverty—but like many traps, it often requires help from the outside. Smith reminds us that we are quite

blessed in the United States with good climate, soil conditions for agriculture, and good social, political and legal institution for facilitating commerce. This is not so elsewhere in the world.

The poor become trapped when, “conditions of poverty perpetuate themselves and create further conditions of chronic structural poverty”. Good programs are programs that address these structural problems. Some traps include: Family child labor traps: If parents are too unhealthy to support their family, the children have to work, they cannot attend school and poverty is transmitted down generations. Illiteracy traps: Even if families want to send their children to school, there is often the hurdle of costs of transportation, school fees and uniforms. Farm Ero-

sion traps: Desperate farmers may overuse their land just to put food on the table. This may reduce the soil’s fertility and productivity for future years and lead to desertification. High fertility traps: If there are high amount of large families and few decent jobs, then one must have large families to ensure someone will be able to take care of you when you are too old to work. “But from the study of these traps, we get confirmation that not only is poverty not the fault of the poor, neither are the things usually blamed on the poor...they are the result of poverty.” Ending global poverty is possible if we stop blaming the poor and focus on the conditions and systems that perpetuate poverty. Source: Heifer Intrnl’s WORLD ARK, July/August 2006

MDG 1 Take Action

- ▶ Read Economist, Jeffrey D. Sachs’s book, The End of Poverty. Sachs is the Director of the UN Millennium Project. Adopt a “Quick Win”. See the UN Millennium Project Quick Wins at: www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/endofpoverty/howtohelp.html
- ▶ Feed a child for a day just by clicking a button at www.fighthunger.org/home. On the homepage select “feed a child today” button to automatically trigger your donation by a sponsor.
- ▶ Visit learning centers through Heifer International and gain new understanding of the root causes of poverty. See “Learn” at www.heifer.org
- ▶ “Take Action” and sign The ONE Declaration at www.one.org. One is a campaign to make poverty history. To show solidarity, wear the white wrist band! Sign up for news downloads to your pc or iPod.
- ▶ Buy fair trade coffee and other fair trade products. Visit globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/
- ▶ Learn about hunger: Play the game Food-Force at www.food-force.com. Subscribe to the Food Force Newsletter.
- ▶ Visit the Bread for the World website at www.bread.org. See “Take Action” and “Get Involved” for concrete ways to contact U. S. policy makers and make hunger history!
- ▶ Get youth involved. See the Millennium Campaign’s *MDGs Youth Site* and Download a “Youth Action Guide” at <http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/mdgs/index.asp>

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that has.”

MDGs Resources and Further Information

- www.unmillenniumproject.org
- www.millenniumcampaign.org
- www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports2.html (progress reports)

View slide shows

- www.earth.columbia.edu/audio_slideshows/mdgs

Extensive listing of MDGs websites

- <http://condor.depaul.edu/~pszczerb/MDGs.html>