

About the Millennium Development Goals Indicators



In September 2000, leaders from 189 nations agreed on a vision for the future: a world with less poverty, hunger and disease, greater survival prospects for mothers and their infants, better educated children, equal opportunities for women, and a healthier environment; a world in which developed and developing countries worked in partnership for the betterment of all. This vision took the shape of eight Millennium Development Goals, which provide a framework of time-bound targets by which progress can be measured.

To help track progress on the commitment made in the year 2000 in the [United Nations Millennium Declaration](#), international and national statistical experts selected relevant indicators to be used to assess progress over the period from 1990 to 2015, when targets are expected to be met - see [Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration](#) (A/56/326 [PDF, 450KB]).

Each year, the Secretary-General presents a report to the United Nations General Assembly on progress achieved towards implementing the Declaration, based on data on the [selected indicators](#), aggregated at global and regional levels.

The goals, targets and indicators as developed in 2002 were used until 2007 to measure progress towards the MDGs. In 2007, the MDG monitoring framework was revised to include four new targets agreed by member states at the 2005 World Summit (Resolution adopted by the General Assembly - [A/RES/60/1](#) [PDF, 186KB]) and recommended, in 2006, by the Secretary-General in his report on the Work of the Organization ([paragraph 24, A/61/1](#) [PDF, 328KB]). In 2007, the General Assembly took note of the Secretary-General's report in which he presented the new framework, including the indicators to monitor progress towards the new targets, as recommended by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators (IAEG). The [current official MDG framework](#) supersedes the [previous version](#), which had been effective since 2003.

In close collaboration with agencies and organizations within and outside the United Nations system, the United Nations Statistics Division coordinates the preparation of data analysis to assess progress made towards the MDGs and maintains the database containing the data series related to the selected indicators, as well as other background series intended to supplement the official indicators.

The figures presented in the database are compiled by specialized agencies within their area of expertise. They are drawn from national statistics provided by Governments to the international statistical system-the United Nations Statistics Division and the statistical offices of the various agencies-and usually adjusted for comparability. The availability of data needed to calculate the indicators in each country depends on the capacity of the national statistical services to produce the necessary data and/or to report them in a timely manner to the relevant international agencies. In some instances, national Governments may have more recent statistics that have not been reported to the international statistical system. In other cases, countries do not produce the data required for the compilation of the indicators. When this occurs, agencies make estimates based on data available on related variables or other methodologies as described in the [metadata](#) section.

Since the periodic assessment of progress towards the MDGs started, the international statistical community has been concerned about the lack of adequate data to compile the required indicators in many parts of the developing world. At the same time, the monitoring requirements themselves have helped focus the attention on this shortcoming and raised awareness of the urgency to launch initiatives for statistical capacity building. Though there have been many steps in this direction, much remains to be done until all countries are able to produce a continuous flow of social and economic statistics needed to inform their development policies and track progress.

The Millennium Declaration

In September 2000 147 heads of State and Government, and 189 nations in total, in the [United Nations Millennium Declaration](#) (A/RES/55/2 [PDF, 63KB]) committed themselves to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want. They acknowledged that progress is based on sustainable economic growth, which must focus on the poor, with human rights at the centre. The objective of the Declaration is to promote "a comprehensive approach and a coordinated strategy, tackling many problems simultaneously across a broad front."

The Declaration calls for halving by the year 2015, the number of people who live on less than one dollar a day. This effort also involves finding solutions to hunger, malnutrition and disease, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, guaranteeing a basic education for everyone, and supporting the Agenda 21 principles of sustainable development. Direct support from the richer countries, in the form of aid, trade, debt relief and investment is to be provided to help the developing countries.