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# The Millennium Development Goals: Chances and risks

Markus Loewe

Bonn 2008

**Loewe, Markus:** The Millennium Development Goals : chances and risks / Markus Loewe. – Bonn : DIE, 2008. – (Discussion Paper / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik ; 6/2008)

ISBN 978-3-88985-396-7

Dt. Fassung u. d. T.: Die Millennium Development Goals: Hintergrund, Bedeutung und Bewertung aus Sicht der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit

ISBN 3-88985-301-3

Auszug aus: Die Millennium Development Goals: Hintergrund, Bedeutung und Bewertung aus Sicht der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Studies 9) bzw. Middle East / North Africa and the Millennium Development Goals: implications for German development co-operation (Studies 19)

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## Foreword

This discussion paper by the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) is the English version of a German discussion paper that was published in late 2005 in the same series under the title “*Die Millennium Development Goals: Hintergrund, Bedeutung und Bewertung aus Sicht der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*”. Both discussion papers are essentially drawn from a study by the same author on “*Middle East / North Africa and the Millennium Development Goals*” (DIE Study 19). The text was extracted from the longer study and published in English because hardly any literature has yet appeared on the background and relevance of the MDGs that would be suitable for use as a quick introduction to the subject matter or to prepare seminars or lectures. It has been used, in manuscript form, on numerous occasions (for papers held at universities and German development cooperation institutions, for a training course conducted by the German Development Institute and the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.). The positive feedback received has induced the author to publish the text in a more formal context, as a DIE Discussion Paper, with the aim of making it available to a broader public.

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## Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung / Federal German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, Bonn
EZ	Development co-operation
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik/German Development Institute, Bonn
DOTS	Directly observed treatment short course (for tuberculosis)
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the UN
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome
G8	Group of eight (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America plus Russian Federation)
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit / German Technical Co-operation, Eschborn
HIPC	Heavily indebted poor countries
HIV	Human immuno-deficiency virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IEA	International Energy Agency, Paris
ILO	International Labour Organization / International Labour Office, Geneva
IMF	International Monetary Fund, Washington, DC
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva
ITU	International Telecommunication Union, Geneva
IUCN	The World Conservation Union (originally: International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources), Gland, Switzerland
LDCs	Least developed countries
LLDCs	Land-locked developing countries
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris
OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, Paris
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Geneva
UN	United Nations, New York / Geneva
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Geneva, New York
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme, New York
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme, Nairobi
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Bonn
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Nairobi
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund, New York
UNO	United Nations Organization, New York, Geneva
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division, New York
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization, Geneva
WTO	World Trade Organization, Geneva

## 1 Introduction

In September 2000, the Millennium Declaration was adopted at the so-called Millennium Summit, held in the framework of the 55<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations (UN). The summit was attended by the heads of state or government of nearly all UN member states. Never before had a similarly large number of highest-ranking representatives of independent states come together on one occasion. This, and the fact that all of the representatives attending made statements of their own on the Millennium Declaration, are a clear indication of the importance attached to the declaration even before it had been adopted.

The Millennium Summit is the culmination of a development that began after the end of the Cold War and has entailed a paradigm shift in the international development debate. The Millennium Declaration, for instance, sums up numerous resolutions and declarations of intent, which were adopted by the international community during the 1990s and have placed good number of new issues and goals on the international agenda.

In the wake of the Millennium Summit, a joint working group was constituted with representatives from the UN, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and other international organisations. It extracted a number of measurable targets from two of the eight chapters of the Millennium Declaration – Chapter 3 “*Development and poverty eradication*”) and Chapter 4 (“*Protecting our common environment*”) and specified these goals by 18 targets and 48 indicators. Most of the goals are set to be implemented by 2015. They include:

- 1 the reduction of income poverty and hunger,
- 2 the achievement of universal primary education for boys and girls,
- 3 the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women,
- 4 the reduction of child mortality,
- 5 the improvement of maternal health,
- 6 the combat of HIV/Aids, malaria and other infectious diseases,
- 7 the observance of ecological sustainability by country policies, and
- 8 the development of a global partnership for development.

In September 2001, the MDGs were approved by the 56<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly. The international community is thus in possession of a common goal system that has been agreed upon by all relevant actors and that is both measurable and set to be implemented by a fixed date. The intention is that both, the international community as a whole and each individual country, should achieve all of the MDGs.

This paper pursues three aims: first, to discuss, in a historical context, the important role the Millennium Declaration and the MDGS have played in the ongoing international development debate; second, to explain what risks and chances are bound up with the MDGs; and third, to discuss what consequences may be derived from these international development goals for Germany and for German development cooperation.

## 2 Historical background and genesis of the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Summit is the outcome of a development that entailed an at least partial departure from the so-called Washington Consensus, which dominated the international debate during the 1980s and rested squarely on neoliberal economic theory (Gsänger 1996a; Eberlei 2000). It found expression above all in the stabilisation and structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank that provided for consolidation of the current accounts and budgets of indebted developing countries, continuous and non-interventionist monetary and fiscal policies and structural market reforms (market opening, deregulation and privatisation). Poverty reduction was largely equated with higher economic growth, the assumption being that such growth would, sooner or later, benefit the poor through trickle-down effects.

In the early 1990s, however, it gradually became apparent that this assumption was, at least in its then current form, not tenable. Indeed, in many developing countries – above all in Africa, but also in Latin America – poverty had even worsened under the SAPs (Decker 2003, 488; Betz 2003, 456). As early as the mid-1980s UNICEF, the UN Children’s Fund, voiced criticism of the high costs exacted by the SAPs and called for “adjustment programs with a human countenance.” This demand was underpinned programmatically by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which, in 1990, released its first Human Development Report (HDR), a counter piece to the World Bank’s World Development Report (El Masry 2003, 472). The HDR argued that economic growth did by no means automatically come along with social development (e.g. on education and health indicators) (UNDP 2000). The report further noted critically that the development debate was largely dominated by a one-dimensional, purely economic understanding of poverty. Based on the capabilities approach pioneered mainly by Amartya Sen (Sen 1981; Sen 1999), poverty was now defined as multiple deprivation of capabilities, i.e. as a lack of means that are needed to carry out the activities one cherishes and to live a life of self-determination (Lipton / Ravallion 1995). Five groups of capabilities can be distinguished:

- *economic capabilities* (on the basis of income and assets),
- *human capabilities* (health, education and access to food, water and habitation),
- *political capabilities* (freedom, voice, influence, power),
- *socio-cultural capabilities* (status, dignity, belongingness, cultural identity) and
- *protective capabilities* (protection against risks).

The HDRs, which have been released annually since 1990, seek to measure some of these capabilities with the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is a composite indicator of prosperity that includes, for the population of a given country, per capita income (as the key figure for economic capabilities) and data on levels of education and health (as criteria for human capabilities) (El Masry 2003, 472).

The disappointing balance of development in the 1980s also led to the calling, in the early 1990s, of a number of international conferences in the UN framework that dealt with various aspects of social and ecological development (see Overview 1). The first of these conferences was the 1990 Summit on Education for All in Jomtien (Thailand), which was organised by

<b>Overview 1: The decade of world conferences</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>conference</b>	<b>most important results</b>
1990	World Summit on Education for All (Jomtien)	– Agenda on Education for All
1990	World Summit for Children (New York)	
1992	UN Conference on Environment and Development / “Earth Summit” (Rio de Janeiro)	– Rio Declaration – Agenda 21 – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – Statement of Forest Principles – UN Convention on Biological Diversity
1993	2nd World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna)	– Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action
1994	World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (Yokohama)	
1994	3rd International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo)	– ICPD Programme of Action
1994	Conference on Small Island Developing States (Barbados)	
1995	World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen)	– Copenhagen Declaration – Copenhagen Programme of Action
1995	4th World Conference on Women (Beijing)	
1996	2nd UN Conference on Human Settlements/ “Habitat” (Istanbul)	
1996	World Food Summit (Rome)	– Programme of Action
2000	UN Millennium Summit (New York)	– Millennium Declaration
2001	World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban)	– Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
2001	UN General Assembly (New York)	– Secretary-General’s Report Road Map Towards the Implementation of the Millennium Declaration (includes the MDGs)
2002	International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey)	– Monterrey Consensus: Reaffirmation of the MDGs and the PRSP process; expansion of the HIPC Initiative adopted by the 1999 G8 Summit in Cologne; increase in ODA
2002	World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg)	– Enlargement of the MDGs to include two targets concerning sustainable development
2005	High-level Plenary Meeting / “World Summit” (New York)	– World Summit final document: Reaffirmation of the MDGs
Source: author of this study		
Note: The column on the right contains only important results that go beyond the issue complex discussed at the conference in question.		

UNESCO; at it the international community defined a number of educational goals, including an important one calling for access, for all children – girls and boys alike – by the year 2000, to a complete course of primary education. This conference was followed by the World Summit for Children in 1990 in New York and the ‘Earth Summit’ in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which adopted four landmark declarations. One conference of particular importance for what was to come was the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development. Among other things, the conference adopted a 10-point Declaration on Social Development that later formed the basis of the MDGs.

These world conferences were as such nothing really unprecedented. Earlier decades had also experienced some international conferences that adopted declarations of intent and commitments on various issues. What was new, however, was (i) the large number and close sequencing of the world summits, (ii) the detailed and binding character of the resolutions adopted and (iii) the high political importance attached to the conferences. Even though this certainly is due at least in part to the end of the bipolar international system, it also has to do with the dissemination of new information and communications technologies, the ongoing process of globalisation and the sense for networked thinking that the latter development has entailed: In many countries a consciousness had matured that numerous socio-economic, ecological and human rights problems are not accessible to national solutions and are in need of international arrangements and that these problems are marked by a high level of interdependence. One reflection of this is the fact that the declarations and agreements adopted at the world summits take a holistic view of global problems and underline the causal links between them (Gsänger 1996b; Martens 2005; Satterthwaite 2004, 8).

At the end of the decade, there was a large measure of consensus on numerous development-related issues and it was this that paved the way for the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. In particular, the conferences served to establish a broad consensus on a common goal system as well as on strategic approaches for translating it into practice (see Overview 2).

<b>Overview 2: Concerns shared by the UN world conferences held between 1990 and 2000</b>	
<b>Central concerns</b>	<b>Main strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Realisation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights</li> <li>– Elimination of poverty</li> <li>– Promotion of social integration</li> <li>– Equal status and equal rights for women</li> <li>– Environmentally sustainable use of water and other resources</li> <li>– Support for particularly disadvantaged groups of countries (small island states, land-locked states, highly indebted poor countries etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improvement of international framework conditions (trade, finance, etc.)</li> <li>– Promotion of market economies</li> <li>– Participation of the population in the political decision-making process</li> <li>– Strengthening of civil society</li> <li>– Access to basic social services for all</li> <li>– Secure and sustainable livelihoods based on productive employment</li> <li>– Improvement of the legal status of women in state and society</li> <li>– Environmental and resource protection</li> </ul>
Source: Gsänger (1996b, 5)	

<p><b>Overview 3: The International Development Goals set out by the OECD/DAC in 1996</b></p> <p><b>Economic well-being:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a reduction by one-half in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015</li> </ul> <p><b>Social development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– universal primary education in all countries by 2015</li> <li>– by 2005, demonstrated progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education</li> <li>– by 2015, a reduction by two-thirds in the mortality rates for infants and children under age 5 and a reduction by three-fourths in maternal mortality rates</li> <li>– access through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages no later than the year 2015</li> </ul> <p><b>Environmental sustainability and regeneration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– current implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015</li> </ul> <p>Source: OECD/DAC (1996, 2)</p>
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It should be borne in mind here that this goal system is nothing fully new; indeed, it very largely reflects the goals that led, in 1945, to the foundation of the United Nations and that are laid out in the UN Charter. However, the multidimensional goal system of the new development paradigm contrasts in many respects with the one-sided focus of 1980s development policy on economic target dimensions (economic growth, income, containment of inflation). The new consensus was soon to find support among a broad alliance of actors: the UN system, the OECD and, finally, the IMF and the World Bank.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Since the mid-1980s the structural adjustment programs had been further and further refined because it had become clear that the first-generation programs were not delivering the successes expected of them. Many developing countries were in urgent need of the consolidation-oriented fiscal- and monetary-policy measures imposed on them by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as a condition for further loans. And some of the structural adjustment measures imposed (deregulation and opening of markets; privatization of state-owned enterprises) in fact led to improvements in the efficiency of the affected countries' economies. However, in many countries – in particular in Africa and the Middle East – the anticipated growth impulses failed to materialise and these countries' social indicators deteriorated as a consequence of cuts in social service spending made by the national governments concerned. Responsibility for this development can be assigned to the weakness of the structural adjustment programs themselves, but also to the insufficient commitment shown by the governments concerned when it came to implementing the individual measures.

With this in mind, the president of the World Bank unveiled, in 1999, the so-called Comprehensive Development Framework, which was to put the developing countries "back in the driver's seat." They were to work out and define their own development priorities and develop thoughts on the areas in which they were in especially urgent need of external support. Only then were the donors decide in which of these areas they were interested in engaging, in the sense of providing targeted support for national development strategies. It was thought that this would serve to improve donor coordination and the coherence of development policy and development cooperation. This is the basis of today's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Developing countries are required to work out such PRSPs, in a participatory process, in order to qualify for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

Another unmistakable sign of the World Bank's change of course may be seen in the 1999 study "Voices of the Poor" and the 2000/2001 World Development Report, "Attacking Poverty" (World Bank 2000), which was based on it. In both publications – and in contrast to the 1990 World Development Report on "Poverty" (World Bank 1990) – the World Bank embraces a multidimensional concept of poverty.

In 1996, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) released its report "Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation" (Clemens / Kenny / Moss 2004, 5). In it, the DAC took up the central goals defined by the earlier world conferences (see Overview 3) and proposed a global development partnership geared to achieving these "ambitious but realisable goals" (OECD/DAC 1996, 2) by the year 2015. These so-called International Development Goals were to be pursued and implemented by each country on its own. The key consideration here was

*"qualitative factors in the evolution of more stable, safe, participatory and just societies. These include capacity development for effective, democratic and accountable governance, the protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law. We will also continue to address these less easily quantified factors of development."* (OECD/DAC 1996, 2)

In return, the industrialised countries were to offer the developing countries broad and effective support in their efforts to reach the goals: on the one hand by boosting their official development assistance, but on the other hand also by improving the co-ordination of their development co-operation both among one another and with the orientation and planning activities of the developing countries:

*"Effective international support can make a real difference in achieving these goals. This is far from saying that they can be achieved by aid alone. The most important contributions for development, as in the past, will be made by the people and governments of the developing countries themselves. But where this effort is forthcoming it needs and deserves strong support from the industrialised countries. We commit ourselves to do the utmost to help."* (OECD/DAC 1996, 2)

Then, in September 2000, the Millennium Summit adopted the Millennium Declaration. It consists of eight chapters: The first has the character of a preamble, while all others are programmatic in nature. Four chapters are devoted to the themes "Peace, security and disarmament" (Chapter 2), "Development and poverty eradication" (Chapter 3), "Protecting our common environment" (Chapter 4) and "Human rights, democracy and good governance" (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 is concerned with "the vulnerable" and Chapter 7 with "the special needs of Africa". Chapter 8 finally addresses the reform of the United Nations (UN / General Assembly 2000a).

In Chapters 3 and 4, the Millennium Declaration takes up the International Development Goals of the OECD/DAC, coming close to citing them. However, because of the massive resistance of the US, one of the International Development Goals ("improved access for all people to reproductive health services") was not incorporated into the Millennium Declaration. Instead, another goal was added: To combat and halt the spread of HIV/Aids, malaria and other severe diseases (UN / General Assembly 2000a).

In turn, almost all of the MDGs (see Overview 4) were derived from these two chapters. One reason for this is that most of the goals set out in Chapter 2 (*Peace, security and disarmament*) and Chapter 5 (*Human rights, democracy and good governance*) would be very difficult to operationalise. The latter, for example, includes the calls to combat global drug problems and for all countries to undertake efforts to improve freedom of the press and to curtail trade in small arms. Another reason was the expected opposition by many governments against a codification of these rather political goals.

<b>Overview 4: The MDGs, with targets and indicators</b>	
<b>Goals and targets</b>	<b>Indicators</b> (with the international organisation/s responsible for collecting the statistical data)
<b>Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>	
<b>Target 1:</b> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day (<i>World Bank</i>) (For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available)</li> <li>2. Poverty gap (<i>World Bank</i>) (Mean distance of the poor below the poverty line as % of the poverty line. This mean is taken over the entire population, counting the non-poor as having zero poverty gap.)</li> <li>3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption (<i>World Bank</i>)</li> </ol>
<b>Target 2:</b> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> <li>5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (<i>FAO</i>)</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</b>	
<b>Target 3:</b> Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education (<i>UNESCO</i>)</li> <li>7a. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 (<i>UNESCO</i>)</li> <li>7b. Primary completion rate (<i>UNESCO</i>)</li> <li>8. Literacy rate of 15–24 year-olds (<i>UNESCO</i>)</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</b>	
<b>Target 4:</b> Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education (<i>UNESCO</i>)</li> <li>10. Ratio of literate women to men, 15–24 years old (<i>UNESCO</i>)</li> <li>11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (<i>ILO</i>)</li> <li>12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (<i>IPU</i>)</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 4: Reduce child mortality</b>	
<b>Target 5:</b> Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Under-five mortality rate (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> <li>14. Infant mortality rate (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> <li>15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 5: Improve maternal health</b>	
<b>Target 6:</b> Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Maternal mortality ratio (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> <li>17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b>	
<b>Target 7:</b> Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15–24 years (<i>UNAIDS / WHO / UNICEF</i>)</li> <li>19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive pre-valence rate (<i>UNAIDS / UNICEF / UN Population Division / WHO</i>)</li> <li>19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> <li>19b. Percentage of population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> <li>19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</li> <li>20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10–14 years (<i>UNAIDS / WHO / UNICEF</i>)</li> </ol>

<i>(Overview 4: The MDGs, with targets and indicators, continued)</i>	
<b>Goals and targets</b>	<b>Indicators</b> <i>(with the international organisation/s responsible for collecting the statistical data)</i>
<b>Target 8:</b> Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	<p><b>21.</b> Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria (<i>WHO</i>)</p> <p><b>22.</b> Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</p> <p><b>22a.</b> Percentage of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bed-nets (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</p> <p><b>23.</b> Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis (<i>WHO</i>)</p> <p><b>24.</b> Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under the internationally recommended TB control strategy DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course) (<i>WHO</i>)</p>
<b>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</b>	
<b>Target 9:</b> Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources	<p><b>25.</b> Proportion of land area covered by forests (<i>FAO</i>)</p> <p><b>26.</b> Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area (<i>UNEP / IUCN</i>)</p> <p><b>27.</b> Use of kg oil equivalent per \$1 GDP (PPP) (<i>IEA / World Bank</i>) <i>(A measure for the efficiency of energy use)</i></p> <p><b>28.</b> Carbon dioxide emissions per capita (<i>UNFCCC / UNSD</i>)</p> <p><b>28a.</b> Consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons) (<i>UNEP</i>) <i>(indicator included 2002 during Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development)</i></p> <p><b>29.</b> Proportion of population using solid fuels (<i>WHO</i>) <i>(indicator included 2002 during Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development)</i></p>
<b>Target 10:</b> Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation	<p><b>30.</b> Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source: (a) urban and (b) rural (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>)</p> <p><b>31.</b> Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation: (a) urban and (b) rural (<i>UNICEF / WHO</i>) <i>(indicator included 2002 during Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development)</i></p>
<b>Target 11:</b> By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	<b>32.</b> Proportion of households with access to secure tenure ( <i>UN-HABITAT</i> )
<b>Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development</b>	
<p><b>Target 12:</b> Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.</p> <p><i>(Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally)</i></p>	<p>Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)</p> <p><b>Official development assistance (ODA):</b></p> <p><b>33.</b> Net ODA, (a) total and (b) to LDCs, as percentage of OECD / Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors' gross national income (GNI) (<i>OECD</i>)</p> <p><b>34.</b> Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation) (<i>OECD</i>)</p> <p><b>35.</b> Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied (<i>OECD</i>)</p>

<b>(Overview 4: The MDGs, with targets and indicators, continued)</b>	
<b>Goals and targets</b>	<b>Indicators</b> <i>(with the international organisation/s responsible for collecting the statistical data)</i>
<p><b>Target 13:</b> Address the special needs of the LDCs</p> <p><i>(Includes tariff- and quota-free access for LDC's exports; enhanced program of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction)</i></p> <p><b>Target 14:</b> Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states</p> <p><i>(through the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)</i></p> <p><b>Target 15:</b> Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term</p>	<p><b>36.</b> ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their GNIs (<i>OECD</i>)</p> <p><b>37.</b> ODA received in small island developing States as proportion of their GNIs (<i>OECD</i>)</p> <p><b>Market access:</b></p> <p><b>38.</b> Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and from LDCs, admitted free of duty (<i>UNCTAD / WTO / World Bank</i>)</p> <p><b>39.</b> Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries (<i>UNCTAD / WTO / World Bank</i>)</p> <p><b>40.</b> Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP (<i>OECD</i>)</p> <p><b>41.</b> Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity (<i>OECD / WTO</i>)</p> <p><b>Debt sustainability:</b></p> <p><b>42.</b> Total number of countries that have reached their Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative) (<i>IMF / World Bank</i>)</p> <p><b>43.</b> Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative (<i>IMF / World Bank</i>)</p> <p><b>44.</b> Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services (<i>IMF / World Bank</i>)</p>
<p><b>Target 16:</b> In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth</p>	<p><b>45.</b> Unemployment rate of young people aged 15–24 years, each sex and total (<i>ILO</i>)</p> <p><i>(An improved measure of the target for future years is under development by the International Labour Organization).</i></p>
<p><b>Target 17:</b> In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</p>	<p><b>46.</b> Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis (<i>WHO</i>)</p>
<p><b>Target 18:</b> In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications</p>	<p><b>47.</b> Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population (<i>ITU</i>)</p> <p><b>48.</b> Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population (<i>ITU</i>)</p>
<p>Source: Website of the United Nations Statistics Division: <a href="http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp">http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp</a> (17 May 2004)</p> <p>Note: The poverty gap refers to the money needed to completely erase poverty, if it were perfectly targeted and each poor person were given exactly the value of his or her income shortfall below the poverty line.</p>	

In 2002, the MDGs were for the first time affirmed by both the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg). Furthermore, MDG7 was enlarged to include two targets and several indicators (BMZ 2004b; Radke 2002).

Finally, in September 2005, the so-called Millennium+5 World Summit was held in conjunction with the opening of the 60<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly. Five years after they had been adopted, this conference, referred to officially only as the High-level Plenary Meeting, was to be devoted to an initial review of the progress made in implementing the MDGs.

But things did not turn out as expected. The Iraq war had clearly shown how urgent the need for UN institutional reform had become. Furthermore, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan recognised how large the divide had grown between the ways the US and the developing countries had come to perceive world problems in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the US. While the developing countries were groaning under the burdens of hunger, poverty and debt, the US was concerned chiefly with international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Alongside the issue complex of development and poverty reduction, Kofi Annan therefore placed three additional issues on the agenda of the Millennium+5 Summit: (i) peace and collective security, (ii) human rights and democracy and (iii) UN reform.

In his 1995 report “In Larger Freedom” Kofi Annan presented his programmatic draft for the final document of the summit (UN/General Assembly 2005a). The report set out a package of proposals, including a reaffirmation and expansion of the MDG agenda, concrete commitments by the industrialised countries on an appreciable rise in official development assistance, debt relief for the world’s poorest countries and a number of measures designed to achieve a more just system of world trade. But it also proposed resolutions on fighting terrorism, human rights protection, promotion of democracy and disarmament and it went on to set out a number of measures designed to strengthen the UN. Kofi Annan’s intention was to use the occasion of the UN’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday to exert moral pressure and to move the member states to take steps to reset the world political stage.

This proved to be a miscalculation. The closer the summit got, the less people talked about the MDGs and other issues moved in to fill the gap. First, some developing countries (including e.g. China, Algeria and Pakistan) announced that they had reservations concerning measures in the fields of terrorism, human rights and democracy. Then, only three weeks prior to the summit, the US tabled several requests for amendments of the text prepared for the final document. While this was not unexpected, it did come at an unusually late point of time and this meant that there was little time left to negotiate on the remaining critical points. The outcome was that there was virtually no time left to discuss the implementation of the MDGs.

In the end a complete fiasco was averted and the UN member states managed, in tough negotiations, to overcome their differences and reach agreement on a final document. Aside from countless more or less unspecific targets, nonbinding declarations of intent and reaffirmations of resolutions adopted in the past, the document does contain some very important new resolutions, most of them concerning development and the MDGs (see Overview 5).

<b>Overview 5: Balance of the Millennium+5 Summit in September 2005</b>	
<b>This was achieved:</b>	<b>This was not achieved:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reaffirmation of Millennium Declaration, Monterrey consensus and MDGs (MDGs 2, 3, 5 and 7 are even named explicitly)</li> <li>– Enlargement of MDG 3 to include several economic and legal aspects: inheritance, property land titles, housing; access to sustainable employment, adequate labour protection and social security; access to technology</li> <li>– Additional goals: (i) fair globalisation, (ii) access to reproductive health</li> <li>– All countries expected to adopt, by 2006, national development strategies to implement the MDGs</li> <li>– Quick-impact initiatives to be taken (e.g. malaria bed nets, local school meal programs using home-grown foods, Green Revolution in Africa, elimination of user fees for primary education)</li> <li>– Establishment of a worldwide early warning system for natural hazards</li> <li>– Declarations of intent on (i) more environmentally-friendly energies, (ii) more sustainable management of forests, lakes and seas, and (iii) more sound management of hazardous wastes</li> <li>– Support for developing countries in integrated water management, implementation of environmental conventions and access to environmental technologies</li> <li>– Establishment of new peace-building institutions</li> <li>– UN democracy fund to promote democratisation in developing countries</li> <li>– Doubling of the budget of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</li> <li>– Creation of a Human Rights Council to replace the Human Rights Commission</li> <li>– Rejection of any attempts to relativise human rights on the basis of religious or cultural particularities</li> <li>– Responsibility of the international community to protect a country's civilian population from genocide and similar crimes if the government of this country is unwilling or unable to do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explicit reference to MDGs 1 and 8</li> <li>– Binding international resolution on raising official development assistance or providing debt relief for developing countries (above and beyond what the EU decided on at the Gleneagles G8 Summit)</li> <li>– Decision on innovative financing instruments</li> <li>– Binding commitments on a more development-friendly world trade system</li> <li>– Reform of the Bretton Woods institutions</li> <li>– A more important role for the UN in development policy</li> <li>– Measures designed to implement Agenda 21 / the Johannesburg Action Plan</li> <li>– Measures designed to improve climate protection and/or to achieve other environmental goals</li> <li>– Measures designed to prevent further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction</li> <li>– Agreements on disarmament and/or a ban on nuclear weapons tests</li> <li>– Rejection of unilateral preventive war</li> <li>– Uniform definition of terrorism</li> <li>– Reform of the UN General Assembly</li> <li>– Enlargement of the UN Security Council</li> <li>– Reform of ECOSOC</li> <li>– Steps to strengthen the UN Secretary-General</li> <li>– Concrete decisions on expansion of cooperation with civil society, parliaments and the business community</li> </ul>
Source: Fues / Loewe (2005)	

One central consideration here is of course the reaffirmation of the MDGs as the comprehensive action framework for international development policy. The US, starting out by rejecting out of hand any mention of the MDGs, finally relented and officially declared, for the first time, its commitment to the global goals. Furthermore, the international community adopted two new, additional goals: to work (i) for an equitable globalisation and (ii) for universal access to reproductive health measures. The US took some time in finally coming to accept this last goal, even though it was on the first list of International Development Goals elaborated in 1995.

Another decision of just about equal importance is that all developing countries would be expected to work out, by 2006, national strategies to implement the MDGs. This implies that the validity of the MDGs is not only global but also extends to the national level; i.e. by 2015 the MDGs should have been reached by every single country. The document also adopts some elements of Jeffrey Sachs' "Investing in Development" (2005), a plan for achieving the MDGs, including e.g. distribution of malaria drugs and bed nets, elimination of user fees for primary education and basic social services, local school meal programs using home-grown foods and an "Green Revolution" to overcome hunger in Africa. The document also reaffirmed the most recent decision taken by the G8 in Gleneagles to provide, by 2010 at the latest, an additional US \$ 50 billion p.a. for development cooperation. It at the same time underlined, in the sense of a mutual partnership, the responsibility of the developing countries to provide for good governance, respect for human rights, rule of law, participation and development friendly economic framework conditions.

### **3 Significance of the Millennium Declaration**

The Millennium Summit and the world conferences of the 1990s have vitally shaped the course of the international development debate. They have led to a paradigm shift that may be outlined here in five keywords:

*1. New development consensus:* In the course of the 1990s, a certain rapprochement came about between the basic positions of the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank) and the UN system. This paved the way for a new development consensus, which is sometimes called the "post-Washington consensus". The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs address the need to reduce poverty – labelled as an "unacceptable, global problem" – in all its dimensions as the objective of the new consensus.

*2. Sustainable human development instead of a one-sided focus on economic growth:* One characteristic feature of the new development consensus is its comprehensive concept of poverty, which includes the poor's lack of human capital (education, health), political rights (participation, civil rights, transparency of administrative and judiciary systems, etc.) and possibilities to manage risks (social protection). The consensus furthermore attaches greater importance than past conventions to the sustainability of development in its ecological, social and economic dimensions. Accordingly, since the mid-1990s national and international development strategies have focused increasingly on the promotion of democracy and good governance, building and further development of systems of social protection and improving environmental and resource protection, without losing sight of the need for participation and gender mainstreaming. A liberal economic system geared to competition and equal opportunity

continues to be seen as a central precondition for development and poverty reduction, although it is at the same time also emphasised that, if they are to be sustained, competition and equal opportunity may often require targeted government intervention.

3. *Outcome orientation*: Development policy and development co-operation are expected to be geared to and measurable in terms of the common goal of poverty reduction – as are all other external policies of the industrialised countries. The main concern here is not what inputs are provided by individual actors but what impacts these inputs achieve altogether. To measure the impacts, the MDGs can be used as indicators (Radelet 2004).

4. *Coherence*: In view of the scarcity of the resources available to it, DC must, if it is to generate the maximum possible impacts, be coherent, i.e. all relevant actors must join forces and subordinate their activities to the common goal system. This involves three different dimensions: *First*, donor DC must be coherent with other external policies. DC should, for example, not be allowed to be counteracted by donor trade or agricultural policies harmful to the developing countries. *Second*, DC must be designed in such a way as to support partner-country policies, although DC should be provided only in cases in which partners are unable to meet, on their own, these goals which they themselves have formulated (principle of subsidiarity). *Third*, donors should not compete with one another for prestigious projects and should instead undertake whatever efforts are necessary to co-ordinate and harmonise their DC with partner countries (Ashoff 2002; Ashoff 2004; Fues 2005).

5. *Global partnership for development*: The industrialised and developing countries bear joint responsibility for reaching the MDGs. At the national level, the focus is on the responsibility of every individual developing country and each such country must do its utmost to ensure that MDGs 1-7 are achieved. Donors should provide only support for these efforts. This is why the developing countries are expected to define, in a participatory process, their own development priorities and approaches and set out them out in PRSPs or other national development plans. The donors should, for their part, concentrate on providing support for the implementation of these plans. The aim here is to free developing countries from their dependence on DC and to assign more responsibility to their political decision-makers. On the other hand, it is the economically dominant industrialised countries that are chiefly responsible for MDG8 – shaping a global framework conducive to development (Baulch 2004; Deutschland 2004; Radke 2002; Wolff 2004).

6. *The growing role played by civil society as an actor of development policy*: While non-governmental organisations are seen as playing an increasingly important role in development policy, their voice is at the same time coming to be taken more seriously in the international development debate. One unmistakable sign of this is the fact that more and more NGOs were invited to attend the international conferences of the 1990s, where they were given at least observer status and where their views and concerns were heard. NGOs also play an increasingly important role at the national level, e.g. in the preparation of PRSPs and MDG reports (Donner-Reichle 1995; Jarré 2000; Rodenberg 2001).

## 4 Evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals

While the MDGs do offer major chances, they also entail risks. If these risks are to be avoided, it is essential to approach the MDGs more as a frame of reference than as a rigid corset and it is also important to bear in mind that the goals do not map depict all dimensions of development. The risks involved here include in particular the following:

*A too narrow concept of development:* The Millennium Declaration springs from a highly comprehensive view of development, based on a concept of poverty that also includes non-material aspects. Yet these aspects are not depicted adequately by the MDGs. None of the MDG indicators measure political deprivation (lack of human and civil rights, means of participation, rule of law, or administrative transparency), social deprivation (marginalisation of social groups, insufficient cohesion and unifying forces in society), or vulnerability (lack of social protection). In other words, it is important to look at the MDGs against the background of the Millennium Declaration; otherwise it would be possible to lose sight of some very important targets included in the Millennium Declaration but in the MDG agenda such as e.g. democratisation and good governance or the strengthening of the protective capabilities of low-income groups (Hermle 2005; Satterthwaite 2003, UN / General Assembly 2005).

*Quantity at the expense of quality:* What can be said in general of indicators that are easy to measure applies for the MDGs as well: They lend themselves to measuring quantitative aspects of development, not qualitative aspects. This may, for instance, mean that while efforts that are undertaken to improve school enrolment ratios are successful, the quality of education is neglected. It is therefore important not to lose sight of potential non-quantifiable deficits (Martens 2005, Satterthwaite 2004, 9).

<b>Overview 6: The MDGs viewed as a reflection of the Millennium Declaration and Amartya Sen's poverty concept</b>		
<i>Millennium Declaration:</i>		<i>Capabilities (Amartya Sen)</i>
<b>development and poverty eradication</b>	<b>MDG 1: income poverty and nutrition</b> <b>MDGs 2-6: health and education</b>	<b>economic capabilities</b>
<b>protecting our common environment</b>		<b>human capabilities</b>
<b>peace, security and disarmament</b>	<b>MDG 7: environment</b> <b>MDG 8: selected aspects of governance and global governance</b>	<b>political capabilities</b>
<b>human rights, democracy and good governance</b>		<b>social capabilities</b>
	Democracy and human rights ? Peace and security ? Social inclusion ? Social protection ?	<b>protective capabilities (security)</b>

*Optimising inputs at the expense of efficiency:* Even though the MDGs are an instruments well suited to establishing a more marked outcome orientation in development policy, the ongoing international debate about the MDGs is rather focused on inputs. Numerous academic studies are concerned with the issue of how far official development assistance (ODA) will have to be increased if the MDGs are to be reached by 2015. These studies focus e.g. on how many schools will have to be built and how many additional teachers to be employed if all boys and girls are to be able to attend a full course of primary schooling. Many of the studies fail to note that implementing the MDGs hinges not only on more ODA but also on a more efficient use of the available funds, the absorptive capacity of the developing countries, the administrative and organisational capacities of their institutions and, not least, greater efficiency and transparency in the system of DC itself. In fact, increasing ODA may not even be the most important of these factors (Baulch 2004; Clemens / Kenny / Moss 2003, 4; Fues 2005; Satterthwaite 2004, 12; Wolff 2004).

*Neglect of the process dimension:* Another much-discussed topic is what countries are likely to reach the MDGs and which are not. It would, however, be far more important to ask why certain countries are unlikely to reach the MDGs and what measures might be taken to correct the situation (Maxwell 2005; Radelet 2004).

*Short-term planning* is closely associated with another problem. If individual countries fully gear their efforts to reaching the MDGs by 2015, come what may, the danger is that the success they meet with may not prove sustainable. To cite an example, fixation on the year 2015 may induce developing countries to hire more teachers and to pay their salaries with ODA funds, in order to raise school enrolment rates. Even if the strategy proves successful, the success will not be sustainable because it is not based on structural change. And finally, who is to pay the newly hired teachers when the year 2015 has come and gone? It is, in other words, more important for developing countries to make progress on the MDGs and, at the same time, not lose sight of the need to ensure sustainability from the very start.

*Insufficient underpinning for the idea of sustainability:* One development that generally deserves to be criticised is that the idea of sustainability, which, in a difficult process, earned its place on the international agenda during the 1990s and has now found expression in the Millennium Declaration, has been shunted into the background of the MDG agenda. While it is true that the MDG agenda also includes environmental targets, these range toward the end of the list under MDG7 and, viewed purely in terms of the number of targets involved, they tend to be overshadowed by the economic and social targets (Martens 2005).

Furthermore, environmental and resource protection is only one component of sustainable development. It is at least equally important to ensure that the idea of sustainability, with all its ecological and economic aspects, is firmly entrenched as an action-guiding (i.e. cross-cutting) principle in all fields of development policy. What this means is that – put in simple terms – when any and all measures are being planned, it is essential to factor in the longer-term (positive and negative) impacts (Hermle 2005).

*Neglect of multi-causalities:* Another risk is that the MDGs may be regarded in isolation, with measures designed to implement them being taken only in the most obvious sectors. One of the great merits of the world conferences of the 1990s was of course that they pointed to the interdependencies between income poverty, education, health, environmental protection, etc. and placed emphasis on cross-cutting issues. Concentrating on individual

MDGs may, for instance, lead decision-makers to equate the implementation of MDG4 (reduction of maternal mortality) with a need for measures in the health sector (Wolff 2004).

However, empirical studies show that health indicators depend less on supply-side than on demand-side factors. It has turned out quite often that building healthcare stations and hiring new medical personnel do not lead to the intended results. No use has been made of the additional capacities because the target group is not properly aware of the need for preventive healthcare (especially prenatal/natal and for new-born children) (Clemens / Kenny / Moss 2003, 12ff.). It is simply not possible to use health-policy instruments to influence this awareness. Indeed, this awareness correlates far better with household prosperity and maternal educational level. Implementation of the MDGs 4-6 may therefore be said to hinge in large measure on progress made on MDGs 1, 2, 3 and 7.

In fact, empirical studies indicate that – above all – health indicators depend less on supply-side than on demand-side factors. In many cases building health stations and staffing them with qualified medical personnel have not led to the results hoped for and the target group has not made use of the additional services because it lacked the necessary awareness of the need for preventive medical care (in particular as far as childbirth and newborn children are concerned) (Clemens / Kenny / Moss 2004, 12f.). It appears not to be possible to influence this awareness using the instruments of health policy. Indeed, it correlates far better with household economic prosperity and maternal education level. What this means concretely is that achieving MDGs 4-6 depends in crucial ways on progress towards MDGs 1, 2, 3 and 7.

A working paper published by the International Monetary Fund confirms this finding. Based on the results of a regression analysis carried out with panel data on 120 development countries,<sup>2</sup> the authors (Baldacci et al. 2004) argue that not only are higher expenditures for education and governance reforms essential for reaching MDGs 2 and 8 respectively, greater efforts here are also by far the most effective and efficient approach when it comes to (i) accelerating economic growth; (ii) reducing income poverty and hunger (MDG 1), (iii) improving gender equality (MDG 3) and (iv) reducing child mortality rates (MDG 4) (See Overview 7).

*Unrealistic expectations:* The ongoing discussion on what conditions must be given if the MDGs are to be reached and how much additional funding will be required involves the risk that the Millennium process awakens unrealistic expectations. Numerous developing countries – especially in sub-Saharan Africa – will probably not reach all of the MDGs, regardless of how much ODA flows are increased. The experiences of the past indicate that, in the social sectors in particular, development is a protracted and complex process that hinges more on structural reforms than on the amount of financial resources available. Setting concrete goals is a good idea in that it serves to boost the motivation and commitment of relevant actors. If, however, there is a widespread belief that all of these goals can actually be reached everywhere in the world, this may entail serious consequences. If it turns out in 2015 that the goals

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2 Regression analysis was used to estimate the direct and indirect effects of different policy changes on four dependent variables: (i) economic growth, (ii) the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day, (iii) primary school attendance of boys and girls and (iv) child mortality rate. As examples of possible policy changes of this kind, the study used five independent variables: (i) an increase in public spending for education by one percentage point of GDP, (ii) an increase in public health care spending by one percentage point of GDP, (iii) a reduction in total government spending by 1% of GDP, (iv) a reduction in the inflation rate by 10 percentage points and (v) a significant improvement in the quality of governance as measured by the World Bank governance indicators (see Baldaccii et al. 2004).

<b>Overview 7: Multi-causalities: The example of child mortality</b>				
Intervention	reduction of under-5-mortality rate (per 1000) after different policy interventions			
	basis year	after 5 years	after 10 years	after 15 years
Increase health spending by 1 percent of GDP	76.0	73.6	69.9	69.9
Increase education spending by 1 percent of GDP		76.0	70.9	64.7
Improving governance to be above the world average		76.0	70.8	69.7
Source: Baldacci et al. (2004)				

have not been reached, DC will suffer another credibility setback and extensive frustration is likely to be the result. The citizens of donor countries will have even less understanding for the fact than they do at present for the fact that their governments are spending tax revenues for development-related purposes (Clemens / Kenny / Moss 2003, 1f.).

*Undifferentiated assessment:* In addition, any failure to reach the MDGs may have undesirable impacts in developing countries as well. The main reason for this is that the MDGs specify the same percentage targets for all countries. However, countries in which over half of the population is living in absolute poverty are in any case faced with far greater difficulties in halving this percentage than countries in which ‘only’ one in ten of the population is forced to live on less than one US\$ per day. The reason why this constitutes a problem is that development-minded governments that have made some successes, but without reaching the MDGs, may find themselves delegitimised (Clemens / Kenny / Moss 2003, 31; Satterthwaite 2003).

*Planning and evaluation conducted on the basis of incomplete or irrelevant data:* Finally, there is also a risk that the determination of whether or not a country has reached to MDGs will be based solely on the indicators defined for the purpose. This would be problematic in several respects:

- Some indicators are not equally viable for all countries. For example, the MENA region has not had one major forest in the last centuries. This means that Indicator 25 of the MDG agenda is largely irrelevant for the region.
- Also, the MDG indicators measure outcome at entirely different levels. For MDGs 4-6 impact indicators have been defined (including child and maternal mortality rates) that in fact reveal much about the population’s health status. Other indicators, however, including e.g. school enrolment rates and completion rates – measure outputs. They do not provide any information on outcomes because they do not measure the actual quality of education. And they certainly cannot be used to determine the impacts of education, which may consist, inter alia, in better employment and earnings potentials, in the fact that school graduates are better able to exercise their rights and thus lead more self-determined lives, or in the fact that education as such may be seen as important for a fulfilled life. Finally, some of the environmental indicators are pure input factors, e.g. the proportion of land set aside as conservation areas or nature reserves.
- Also, the data used for some indicators are very fragmentary. For the base year, 1990, which is the reference year for most of the targets, numerous data are missing for the indicators of MDG 1, 5, 6 and 7.

All of these risks are manageable. But this of course presupposes awareness about them. Whether the effects on global development generated by the agenda turn out to be exclusively positive or in part negative as well will depend above all on how the agenda is interpreted by the international community in the years to come:

*“The MDGs might be better viewed not as realistic targets but as reminders of the stark contrast between the world we want and the world we have, and a call to redouble our search for interventions to close the gap.”* (Clemens / Kenny / Moss 2003, 1)

It is, though, absolutely essential not to waste the major opportunities afforded by a goal system which has been recognised and welcomed by all relevant actors:

*Uniform frame of reference:* The MDGs provide, for the first time ever, a common goal system for all actors in development policy, one that has been agreed on by developing countries, donor countries and international organisations alike and is thus well suited as the basis of a global partnership for development. All of the actors involved are now able to key their efforts and contributions to this goal system and in this way to improve their co-ordination. This not only makes it possible to concentrate forces, it also sets the stage for greater continuity in international development policy – at least up to 2015 (BMZ 2004b).

*Outcome orientation:* Furthermore, a good chance exists that DC may now opt for a more pronounced outcome orientation. Viewed against the background of the MDGs, what individual donors contribute individually is a matter of secondary importance. The crucial factor is the impacts achieved by all relevant actors working together (Maxwell 2005; Radelet 2004).

*Public interest and approval:* In addition, the MDGs are easy to grasp, plausible and close to people’s day-to-day lives. They are thus well suited to redirecting public attention in donor countries to the problems of the developing world and getting this public interested in development goals. In this way, the MDGs may well contribute to boosting public approval for the development engagement of the donor governments.

*Mobilisation of energies and resources:* Finally, the commitments undertaken by the international community can serve to encourage and motivate all relevant actors in developing countries – governments, civil society, the private sector and donors – to mobilise additional resources and redouble their efforts to make progress toward reaching the goals (Vandemoortele 2004a). Between 2000 and 2003 the overall ODA provided world-wide rose already by almost 10% per annum from US\$ 52 to US\$ 69 billion in constant prices (Herfkens 2005).

Between 2000 and 2003 total worldwide ODA had risen from 52 to 69 billion US \$ in constant prices, i.e. by 10% per year in real terms (Herfkens 2005) and the announcements made by the European Union (EU) and the G8 in the spring of 2005 likewise served to spark optimism. In this connection the EU member states agreed to a so-called step-by-step plan under which the “old” member states are required to expend at least 0.51% of their gross national income (GNI) for official development assistance, with this figure rising to 0.70% by 2015, while the countries that joined the EU after 2002 are required to raise their ODA to 0.17% of GNI by 2015 and to 0.33% by 2015. This amounts to a rise in development assistance by 50 billion US \$ p.a. starting in 2010. And it is precisely this amount that the G8 promised the developing countries several weeks later at the Gleneagles Summit (Scotland). The G8 furthermore pledged to devote at least half of this additional ODA to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Fues / Loewe 2005).

## 5 The Millennium process

The fact that the Millennium Declaration is seen as having a new quality different from that of previous declarations and commitments becomes clear, for instance, when we look at the degree to which the follow-up process has been institutionalised. The UN system has e.g. developed a highly diversified set of instruments designed to advance the Millennium process at the global and national level: (i) to heighten awareness of the MDGs among political decision-makers and the public, (ii) to set in train a discussion on the implementation of the MDGs, (iii) to measure how much progress has been made and to identify possible obstacles.

Since the Millennium+5 Summit in September 2005, mainly three instruments have been used to support this process at the global level:

- the annual report of the UN Secretary-General on the state of implementation of the MDGs;
- the Millennium Campaign, an organisational unit headed by Eveline Herfkens and dedicated to raising awareness for the MDGs; and
- the Millennium Project, a working group made up of scientists and experts and headed by Jeffery Sachs; the project, which reports directly to the Secretary-General, has the task of acquiring and processing data on best practices suited to implementing the MDGs as well as information on the experiences made by selected countries.

At the national level, the MDG country reports are the central instruments used to make the MDGs known, to raise awareness for them, to urge politicians to work to implement them, to monitor the present state of implementation, to identify deficits and to come up with approaches to overcoming such deficits: Like poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), national MDG reports are expected to be developed at regular intervals (ideally once a year) by the governments of all UN member countries in participatory processes which involve civil society and the private sector, assign tasks to all relevant actors and critically review the engagement shown thus far by these actors.

In the national context, the MDG country reports are key to

- creating awareness for the MDGs;
- establishing consensus on (i) appropriate indicators to measure progress in implementing the MDGs and (ii) action-guiding principles for aligning national policies and projects to the MDG agenda;
- securing for the MDGs an ownership that is sustained by national governments, but also civil society and the private sector;
- creating crosslinks to other conceptual strategy papers like e.g. PRSPs or national development plans;
- mobilising, at home and abroad, additional resources;
- shaping national and international alliances for the implementation of the MDGs; and
- monitoring the national Millennium process (Vandemoortele 2004b).

It was resolved at the Millennium+5 Summit that all countries should “*adopt, by 2006, and implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.*”

(UN / General Assembly 2005b, § 22). However, the role to be played by these national development strategies has yet to be defined exactly. This means that it remains unclear (i) how they relate to the MDG country reports, the PRSPs and other national development plans, (ii) whether they are to replace these papers, to supplement them, or whether they refer in fact to one and the same thing, (iii) what the best approach is to dealing with possible contradictions at the goal level or when it comes to choosing the development instruments to be used.

## 6 Implications for German development cooperation

In its Programme of Action 2015, a national strategy paper prepared in 2001, Germany reaffirmed, as one of the first donor countries, the commitments it had made nine months earlier at the Millennium Summit (BMZ 2001a). The program was adopted not only by the BMZ but by the German government as a whole and it is therefore binding for all of Germany's ministries and external policies.

This is also emphasised in the German government's report to the European Commission on the German contribution to achieving the MDGs. The reports notes that "*Germany is serious about the decisions taken at the Millennium Summit and is undertaking efforts to implement them*" (Deutschland 2004, 1). The report goes on to state; "*The MDGs and the Millennium Declaration constitute the binding frame of reference for German development policy.*" (Deutschland 2004, 1). The German government, the report further notes, "*is providing concrete measures designed to reach the MDGs in the countries concerned, and it supports initiatives to improve the framework conditions for development in ways called for in the Millennium Declaration.*" (Ibid, 1).

The greatest challenge for the immediate future will thus be to anchor the spirit of the Millennium Declaration and the Programme of Action 2015 at all levels of German policy and to provide for *more coherence between development policy and other external policies*, including security policy, trade policy, environmental policy and agricultural policy. These policy fields are also expected to contribute to reducing global poverty and implementing the MDGs (Ashoff 2002; Gsänger 2002; BMZ 2004b; BMZ 2005a; Deutschland 2004).

Above and beyond this, the MDG agenda has three central implications:

- *Poverty focus of DC*: The priorities, approaches and instruments of German DC must be reviewed with a view to their relevance for the MDGs. There is no need for the donor countries to align all of their DC to the MDGs. Nor are they expected to provide a contribution to each and every MDG. But they should be able to demonstrate that they are, in one way or another, supporting the Millennium process in each of their partner countries and thereby contributing to the ultimate goal of overall poverty eradication.
- *Effectiveness of DC*: The MDGs are forcing donors to pay more heed to the effectiveness of their DC. First, even in the planning phase the donors are, in this sense, forced to optimise the inputs they provide. Second, they will have to develop evaluation systems to keep track of the impacts of their DC. Third, they have to optimise their contributions to MDG8, for which they bear the main responsibility – by, inter alia, increasing their ODA and by taking action on trade liberalisation and debt relief.
- *Alignment and donor co-ordination in DC*: Finally, the need for a more efficient use of resources also implies that donors must more closely align their activities to both part-

ner priorities and their own comparative strengths. Their planning should be based on the development priorities of partner countries, which means in effect that they should support developing countries in fields which the latter themselves regard as priorities, even though they may be unable to make headway in them without outside support (principle of subsidiarity). Furthermore, the donors must step up their efforts to improve the harmonisation of their own DC measures and to co-ordinate them in such a way as to ensure that every donor takes on tasks in which it has comparative strengths (Ashoff 2004; BMZ 2004b; BMZ 2005a; Deutschland 2004; Fues 2005; Gsänger 2002; Radke 2002; Wolff 2004).



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