

EGM to support the advancement of the post-2015 UN Development Agenda

Session I (27 February 2012, 9:40–11:30 am)

Overview of lessons from the MDGs to a post-2015 UN development agenda

Summary

Strengths and weaknesses of the MDG agenda and its implications for the post-2015 agenda

The current MDG framework has many strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths at the global level:

- the MDGs are based on a strong vision for global development in the form of the Millennium Declaration;
- the MDG agenda is simple and clear —the goals are global and limited in number, and the targets and indicators are also clear and easy to communicate;
- they are agenda setting without being prescriptive;
- they have helped to strengthen global partnership, recognizing the needs of Africa and the LDCs, all of which has helped them to attain a high level of visibility.

Weaknesses:

- there was insufficient consultation in their formulation, important issues were omitted, such as peace and security, governance and human rights, while some important issues were not adequately incorporated, such as sustainable development, employment and inequality;
- the MDGs are also not a development strategy and not focused on addressing root causes of poverty and other development challenges;
- the one-size-fits-all goals and targets may have missed the point; there is perhaps too much focus on ends and too little (or nothing) on processes;
- the global partnership for development was poorly defined.

At the regional level:

- The post-2015 development framework should be sensitive to the growing regionalism, regional specificities and regional frameworks and processes.

Strengths at the country level:

- the MDGs changed the perspective of national governments and proved to be a useful tool for awareness and advocacy, monitoring and reporting, MDGs needs assessments and costing, and integration into national strategies and policies.
- the implementation of the MDGs resulted in increased national statistical capacities and increased coordination within national statistical systems. The inclusion of national statistical offices and the continued increase in statistical capacity and productivity must be part of the post-2015 development agenda process.

Emerging/pressing global development challenges that the post-2015 agenda should respond to (and how)

- Development goals must become more balanced than the MDGs. There is a need to put greater emphasis on issues such as production and the productive sector, human rights, population dynamics, fragile states, governance and agriculture.
- The global economy is dominated by imbalances, such as too much power by the financial sector and increased income inequality, which inhibit development progress. Demographic trends and environmental challenges are also risk sources.
- While the MDGs focus on the goals and outcomes, we also need to look at the process of how we get there.
- Human rights must have a central place in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. It should not be treated as an “add-on” issue. Economic and social rights and participation rights are particularly important in this context.
- Need for an emphasis on the responsibility and obligation of national governments to reduce poverty, no matter what the circumstances or unforeseen events.

Other issues and discussions included:

***Contents and format of the development agenda
Common global goals vs. regional and national level goals and targeting
Extent of specificity about the means to achieve the goals and targets***

- The core values contained in the Millennium Declaration appear to be as valid today as an expression of the global development challenges as they were in 2000.
- The post-2015 UN Development Agenda would need to build on broad consultations with main stakeholders from its inception. It is important that the post-2015 process be consultative, participatory, open and transparent. It is also important that the consultations directly reflect the voices of people who are affected by issues such as poverty. To this end, national governments of about 40 to 50 countries will be conducting national consultations, assisted by UNDP.
- The new agenda should reflect the need for transformative change and serve multiple purposes, such as an advocacy tool, policy guide for national and global policies, or instrument for policy coherence.
- The current format of concrete goals, targets and indicators should be kept, but built on the strengths of the simplicity and clarity of the MDGs. The long time horizon (say, 25 years) should also be kept, but intermediate milestones (say, every 5 years) should be added.
- Countries should be allowed to have greater flexibility to tailor goals and targets to national and sub-national realities. However, there should be no “carte blanche”: national governments would need to comply with global targets and principles relating to sustainability, inclusion and equity, and the fulfillment of human rights, among others.

- The format of the development agenda should also retain a clear focus on ends. However, more attention needs to be given to processes and resources to achieve results through transformative change.
- The content of the development agenda would need to give more prominence to reducing inequalities, account better for demographic dynamics, and better define global partnership for developments and make sure it's truly "global".
- The development agenda should also relate to regional processes, with a global vision that provides links between global and regional issues and processes.

Further attention was drawn to:

- ***How to broaden and strengthen the global partnership for development, and***
- ***The relation of a post-2015 framework to on-going processes and already-established agenda***