

# **Millennium Development Goals and LDC-Specific Development Goals: An assessment of differences and recommendations towards harmonization**

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## **Summary**

### **Background**

Since the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, this is the second paper that has been written in UNCTAD on challenges associated with the international development goals. The first paper – which was tabled before UNCTAD's TDB in 2001 (TD/B/48/14) – provided a “preliminary assessment” of difficulties associated with the measurement and monitoring of international development targets, and it also pointed at overlaps between development targets entailed in the Brussels Programme of Action (PoA) and the development targets associated with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This second paper draws on the first one but goes beyond it. It identifies overlaps between the different development targets in a more systematic manner and it makes recommendations towards a harmonization of the development targets.

### **Findings**

- The majority of development targets associated with the Millennium Development Goals do not overlap with the development targets entailed in the Brussels Programme of Action. In this sense, the majority of the MDG targets and the PoA targets are complementary. But....
- There are a number of MDG targets and PoA targets that overlap with each other. But these overlaps are incomplete overlaps. This means that the targets are not identical, even though they are very similar. These targets are so similar that it is impossible to suggest that they are fundamentally different targets, but yet these targets are so different that it is impossible to suggest that they are identical targets. The targets are generally very similar with respect to (1) the issues that they focus on and (2) the objectives that they formulate. But they are different with respect to (1) the indicators that they are associated with, (2) the change that they expect, (3) the base years (where necessary) and/ or (4) the target years. In this sense these MDG targets and PoA targets conflict with each. The attached summary table 1 shows overlaps between the MDG targets and the PoA targets.
- There are also a number of PoA targets that overlap with other PoA targets. These overlaps are incomplete overlaps as well. Accordingly, these targets too are very similar even though they are not identical. They are so similar that it is impossible to say that they are fundamentally different targets and yet they are so different that it is not possible to say that they are identical targets. In this case too the targets are generally very similar with respect to (1) the issue areas that they focus on and (2) the objectives that they formulate, and they are different with respect to (1) the indicators that they are associated with, (2) the changes that they expect, (3) the base years that they use (where applicable), and/ or (4) the targets years that they

assume. It is in this sense that some MDG targets and PoA targets conflict with each other. The attached summary table 2 shows overlaps within the group of PoA targets.

### **Implications**

- If the MDG targets and the PoA targets are not harmonized, and if the PoA targets themselves are not harmonized, there is a danger that the international community will concentrate on the MDG targets and that it will increasingly neglect the PoA targets. Even the OHRLLS – which has the objective to monitor the implementation of the PoA and consequently also progress towards the targets entailed in it – has so far only been able to record the progress of the LDCs towards the MDG targets, and has not been in a position to effectively monitor the progress of LDCs towards other PoA targets. This is because of the described difficulties associated with these targets

### **Possible actions**

- One theoretical possibility is to concentrate exclusively on the MDG targets and continue to neglect the PoA targets. But it would mean to effectively neglect an entire set of international development goals that have been identified not only by some of the poorest countries but also by their development partners.
- Another theoretical possibility is to simply accept the overlaps between the MDG targets and the PoA targets and to also accept the overlaps within the group of PoA targets. This, however, would imply that the United Nations need to promote support for the MDG targets as well as the PoA targets, and that the different agencies would need to monitor the MDG targets as well as the PoA targets. In other words, it would be necessary to establish parallel mechanisms. But there is a clear danger that such parallel mechanisms lead to confusions and frustration, impede the effective monitoring of progress, and weaken the support for all development targets as a whole.
- Finally, the only realistic possibility appears to be a streamlining and harmonization of the MDG targets and the PoA targets as well as a streamlining and harmonization of the PoA targets with each other. This is the purpose of the second paper. (Table 16 of the paper, not attached, displays a possible harmonized list of MDG targets and PoA targets). It must be noted, however, that the harmonization of the MDG targets and the PoA targets is only a first step towards an effective monitoring of the former and the latter. In addition it is necessary to (1) identify indicators, expected changes, base years (where necessary), and/ or target years for all those targets which currently lack these specifications, and it is also necessary to (2) make efforts to improve the availability and quality of data in developing countries, especially the least developed countries.

Summary table 1: Differences between MDG targets and PoA targets, summary

Issue area	Source	Targets	Sub-Targets	Suggested Indicators	Expected change/level	Base year	Target year
Poverty	MDG-T	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the T1 proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 per day.		\$1 per capita per day in 1985 PPP; poverty gap ratio; share of poorest quintile in national consumption	Improve by 50%	1990	2015
Poverty	PoA-T	[...] make substantial progress towards halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger [...].		\$1 per capita per day in 1985 PPP	Decrease by at least 50%	not determined	2015
Nutrition	MDG-T	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the T2 proportion of people who suffer from hunger.		Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age; proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	Decrease by 50%	1990	2015
Nutrition	PoA-T	[...] make substantial progress T2 towards halving the proportion of people [...] suffering from hunger [...].		Undernourished people	Improve by at least by 50%	not determined	2015
Health	MDG-T	Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 T5 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.		Under-5 mortality rate; infant mortality rate; proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles	Improve by at least 66%	1990	2015
Health	PoA-T	T11 Reducing the under-5 mortality rate below 45 per 1000 live births by 2015.		Under-5 mortality rate	Decrease to below 45 per 1000 live births	not necessary	2015
Health	MDG-T	Reduce by three quarters, between T6 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.		Maternal mortality ratio; proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Improve by at least 75%	1990	2015
Health	PoA-T	Reducing the maternal mortality rate T12 by three-quarters of the current rate by 2015.		Maternal mortality rate	Improve by at least 75%	2001	2015
Health	MDG-T	T7 Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/ AIDS.		HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years; condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate; number of children orphaned by HIV/ AIDS	Stop worsening and improve by maximum	not determined	2015
Health	PoA-T	Reducing HIV infection rates in persons 15-24 years of age by 2005 in all countries, and by 25 per cent in the most affected countries.	T15.1 ... in most affected countries	Total HIV infection rate in age group 15-24 (including women and men)	Decrease by at least 25%	not determined	2005

Health	PoA-T		T15.2 ...in all countries	Total HIV infection rate in age group 15-24 (including women and men)	Decrease by maximum	not determined	2005
Health	MDG-T	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidents of malaria and other major diseases.	T8.1 Have halted and begun to reverse the incidents of malaria	Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria; proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures	Stop worsening and improve by maximum	not determined	2015
Health	MDG-T		T8.2 Have halted and begun to reverse the incidents of other major diseases I: Focus on tuberculosis	Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis; proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under direct observed treatment short course	Stop worsening and improve by maximum	not determined	2015
Health	MDG-T		T8.3 Have halted and begun to reverse the incidents of other major diseasesII: Other diseases than tuberculosis		Stop worsening and improve by maximum	not determined	2015
Health	PoA-T	Substantially reducing infection rates from malaria, tuberculosis and other killer diseases in LDCs by the end of T18 the decade; reducing tuberculosis deaths and prevalence of the disease by 50 per cent by 2010; and reducing the burden of disease associated	T18.1 Reduce infection rates from malaria	Malaria cases notified	Decrease by maximum	not determined	2010
Health	PoA-T		T18.2 Reduce infection rates from tuberculosis	Tuberculosis cases notified	Decrease by maximum	not determined	2010
Health	PoA-T		T18.2 Reducing infection rates from other killer diseases		Decrease by maximum	not determined	2010
Education	MDG-T	Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boy and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.	T3.1 Ensure universal enrollment in primary education	Net enrolment ratio in primary education (girls, boys, total)	Increase to 100% of relevant group	not necessary	2015
Education	MDG-T		T3.2 Ensure completion of primary education	Proportion of pupils starting at grade 1 who reach grade 5 (girls, boys, total); literacy rate of 15-24-year-olds (women, men, total)	Increase to 100% of relevant group	not necessary	2015
Education	PoA-T	Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.	T7.1 Universal enrollment in primary education	Net primary enrolment rate	Increase to 100% of relevant group	not necessary	2015

Education	PoA-T		T7.2	Completion of primary education	Children reaching Grade 5	Increase to 100% of relevant group	not necessary	2015
Gender equality	MDG-T	Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.	T4.1	Eliminate gender disparities in primary education	Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	Increase ratio for girls to ratio for boys	not necessary	2005
Gender equality	MDG-T		T4.2	Eliminate gender disparities in secondary education	Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education	Increase ratio for girls to ratio for boys	not necessary	2005
Gender equality	MDG-T		T4.3	Eliminate gender disparities on all levels of education	Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education; ratio of literate women to men of 15-24-year old; share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector; proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	Increase levels for women to levels of men	not necessary	2015
Gender equality	PoA-T	Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015 [...]	T9.1	Eliminate gender disparities in primary education	Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	Increase ratio for women to ratio of men	not necessary	2005
Gender equality	PoA-T		T9.2	Eliminate gender disparities in secondary education	Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education	Increase ratio for women to ratio of men	not necessary	2005
Gender equality	PoA-T		T9.3	Achieve gender equality in education	Ratio of literate women to literate men in age group 14-25	Increase rate for women to rate for men	not necessary	2015
Infrastructure	MDG-T	"To halve, by the year 2015, [...] the T10 proportion of people who are unable old to reach or afford safe drinking water."	T10.1	Halve the number of people who old cannot reach safe drinking water	Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source (urban and rural)	Increase by at least 50%	not determined	2015
Infrastructure	MDG-T		T10.2	Halve the number of people who old cannot afford safe drinking water		Improve by at least 50%	not determined	2015
Infrastructure	PoA-T	Reducing by half by 2015 the T14 proportion of people who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water.	T14.1	Halve the proportion of people who cannot reach safe drinking water	Access to safe drinking water (20 liters per person per day within 1 kilometer from dwelling)	Increase by at least 50%	not determined	2015

Infrastructure	PoA-T		T14.2 Halve the proportion of people who cannot afford safe drinking water	Access to safe drinking water (20 liters per person per day within 1 kilometer from dwelling)	Increase by at least 50%	not determined	2015
Infrastructure	MDG-T	T10 new	Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.	Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source (urban and rural)	Improve by at least 50%	not determined	2015

Source: Michael Herrmann (2002): Millennium Development Goals and LDC-Specific Development Goals: An assessment of differences and recommendations towards harmonization; Geneva, 06 November 2002, mimeo.

Summary table 2: Overlaps within the group of PoA targets, summary

Issue area	Targets	Sub-Targets	Suggested Indicators	Expected change/ level	Base year	Target year
Nutrition	MDG-T2, PoA-T2 Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.		Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age; proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	Decrease by 50%	1990	2015
Nutrition	PoA-T13 Reducing the number of undernourished people by half by the year 2015.		Undernourished people	Decrease by at least 50%	not determined	2015
Nutrition	PoA-T17 Halving malnutrition among pregnant women and pre-school children in LDCs by 2015.	PoA-T17.1 Halve malnutrition among pregnant women		Decrease by at least 50%	not determined	2015
Nutrition	PoA-T20 Improving the health an nutritional status of infants and children.	PoA-T20.2 Improving child nutrition		Improve by maximum	not determined	not determined
Nutrition	PoA-T21 Promote breast feeding as a child survival strategy.			Improve by maximum	not determined	not determined
Nutrition	PoA-T17 Halving malnutrition among pregnant women and pre-school children in LDCs by 2015.	PoA-T17.2 Halve malnutrition among pre-school age children	Underweight children	Decrease by at least 50%	not determined	2015
Health	PoA-T20 Improving the health and nutritional status of infants and children.	PoA-T20.1 Promoting child health		Improve by maximum	not determined	not determined
Health	PoA-T19 Promoting child health and survival and reducing disparities between and within developed and developing countries as quickly as possible [...].	PoA-T19.1 Promoting child health		Improve by maximum	not determined	not determined
Health	MDG-T5, PoA-T11 Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.		Under-5 mortality rate; infant mortality rate; proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles	Improve by at least 66%	1990	2015
Health	PoA-T19 Promoting child health and survival and reducing disparities between and within developed and developing countries as quickly as possible [...].	PoA-T19.2 Promoting child survival		Improve by maximum	not determined	not determined

Infrastructure	PoA-T25	Increase LDCs' communication networks, including telecommunication and postal services, and improving access of the poor to such services in urban and rural areas to reach the current levels in other developing countries.	PoA-T25.1	Increase telecommunications networks		Increase to 2001 level of other developing countries	not necessary	not determined
Infrastructure	PoA-T27	Increase average telephone density to 5 main lines per 100 inhabitants and internet connections to 10 users per 100 inhabitants by the year 2010.	PoA-T27.1	Increase telephone density	Telephone lines	Increase to at least 5 main lines per 100 inhabitants	not necessary	2010
Infrastructure			PoA-T27.2	Increase internet users	Internet users	Increase to at least 10 users per 100 inhabitants	not necessary	2010
<b>Memo:</b>								
Infrastructure	MDG-T18	In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.			Telephone lines and cellular subscribers; personal computers in use; internet users	Improve by maximum	not determined	not determined

Source: Michael Herrmann (2002): Millennium Development Goals and LDC-Specific Development Goals: An assessment of differences and recommendations towards harmonization; Geneva, 06 November 2002, mimeo.