

About the UN Millennium Project

Introduction

The Millennium Project was commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2002 to recommend a concrete action plan for the world to reverse the grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people. Headed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, the Millennium Project was an independent advisory body and presented its final report, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, to the Secretary-General in January 2005. The Millennium Project was then asked to continue operating in an advisory capacity through the end of 2006.

Investing in Development proposes straightforward solutions for meeting the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline. The world already has the technology and know-how to solve most of the problems faced in the poor countries. As of 2006, however, these solutions still had not been implemented at the needed scale. *Investing in Development* presents recommendations for doing so, through partnership between countries both rich and poor.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

More than one billion people -- one-sixth of the world's population -- still live in extreme poverty, lacking the safe water, proper nutrition, basic health care and social services needed to survive. This means a single episode of disease, an ill-timed pregnancy, a drought or a crop-destroying pest can be the difference between life and death. In many of the poorest countries, life expectancy is half of that in the high-income world--40 years instead of 80 years.

The consequences of this poverty reach far beyond the afflicted societies. Poverty, inequality and disease are chief causes of violent conflict, civil war and state failures. A world with extreme poverty is a world of insecurity.

There is still time to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the poorest countries, but the window of opportunity is closing. Fortunately, major global policy breakthroughs happened in 2005 to help get the world's poorest countries on track to meeting the Goals. This included the 2005 World Summit agreement in which every country committed to adopt its own national strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It also included the G8 commitment to double development assistance to Africa by 2010.

Recommendations

The Millennium Project has recommended a global strategy to help nations turn the tide against extreme poverty. Using the targets outlined in the Millennium Development Goals, the Project's policy recommendations center on:

- Planning for the 2015 time horizon
- Pursuing the Millennium Development Goals as minimum policy targets in developing countries
- Specifying the ways donor countries need to follow through on their aid, trade and debt relief commitments to coherently support the world's poorest countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The core recommendation of the Millennium Project is that the Millennium Development Goals must be at the center of national and international poverty reduction strategies, and these strategies must focus on tackling the practical ground-level challenges of development. For this to happen, developing countries need to conduct rigorous "needs assessments" to identify where they stand on the Goals and what interventions need to be in place in order to get on track for 2015.

In 2004, the Project began working with the UN system in selected "pilot countries"- Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Tajikistan and Yemen - to help identify the best ways to integrate Millennium Development Goal targets and timelines into their national strategies to reduce poverty. The aim was for these national strategies to serve as models for similar undertakings in developing countries throughout the world.

The Project continued to work with these and other developing countries to help identify the practical challenges each one faces en route to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, such as: how many mothers need access to health clinics; how many children need immunizations; how many teachers should be in every district; how many roads need to be built; how many water pumps should be installed and so on.

Backed with tried-and-true examples of what is already working to combat the many faces of poverty, *Investing in Development* presents concrete strategies for scaling-up throughout the developing world. The UN Millennium Project's findings demonstrate that through developing countries' pursuit of "MDG-based poverty reduction strategies," matched with fulfillment of the 0.7 pledge made by developed countries, the Millennium Development Goals can still be achieved. All countries can thereby follow through on the agreement for a "global development partnership" that forms the 8th Millennium Development Goal.

Organization of the Project

The bulk of the Project's work was carried out by 10 thematic Task Forces comprising a total of more than 250 experts from around the world including: researchers and scientists; policymakers; representatives of NGOs, UN agencies, the World Bank, IMF and the private sector. From 2002 through 2005, the Task Forces conducted extensive research within their fields of expertise to produce recommendations for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The ongoing work of the Project was led by a secretariat housed at UNDP headquarters in New York.

As of Jan. 1, 2007, the Millennium Project's work was incorporated into the Bureau for Development Policy under the leadership of the United Nations Development Program, forming the MDG Support group, which works at the regional, national and global level to support the preparation and implementation of MDG-based national development strategies.

