

## Millenium Development Goals

Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) is a set of 8 goals with 21 targets that was set at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> millenium. MDGs were adopted on the Millenium Summit in New York, september 2000, where over 150 world leaders participated in the discussion. Below is the list of MDGs, they are to be fulfilled by the year 2015. Not only national states but also over 20 international organisations such as IMF or WB participate on the MDGs. Here is the list of 8 MDG.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
  - By 2015, all children can complete a full course of primary schooling, girls and boys
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality rates
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

*Source: (MDG report, 2011)*

My paper is going to deal with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> MDGs. Why I think they matter the most? What is special about them? I will try to explain shortly. We need to educate the peoples of the third world so they can work not only in agriculture but in services, machinery, financial business and other well paid jobs. The education is the future for most of the 3<sup>rd</sup> world children and the must be well led by good teachers, so they can concentrate on the subjects they are studying. The last 8<sup>th</sup> goal is universal and is aimed on the developed countries. Fulfillment of this goal is important for both developing and developed countries. For the developed countries it is the finding of concensus for the furure cooperation. For the developing countries is the fulfillment of this goal a certain guarantee of support from the developed world.

## MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

The main indicator for this goal is adjusted net enrolment ratio in primary education (Defined as the number of pupils of the theoretical school age for primary education enrolled either in primary or secondary school, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.).

Table 1: Progress of MDG 2 made in last 5 years (numbers in percent)

Source: (MDG report, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011)

MDG report	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Sub-Saharan Africa	70	71	74	76	76
Oceania	78	---	---	---	---
Western Asia	86	88	88	88	88
CIS, Europe	90	93	94	93	---
Southern Asia	90	90	90	90	91
South-Eastern Asia	94	95	94	9	94
CIS, Asia	94	94	---	94	---
Eastern Asia	95	94	95	96	96
Northern Africa	95	95	96	94	94
Latin America	97	95	95	95	95
Developing regions	88	88	88	89	89

The results are not quite as expected. A certain progress was not made in all regions and somewhere even a decrease is visible. The 1<sup>st</sup> region shown – Sub-Saharan Africa, possibly the area with most of the effort made a progress of 6 percent, not much but still significant for this area. Oceania with 78 percent in 2007 has a better score, but the data for all other years are missing. There is no explanation for this in the MDG, the data are simply not shown. Western Asia is a region with constant score of 88 percent, except for the first year, we can say a minimum progress was made here (2 percent). CIS, Europe has one of the highest scores here, as expected. The highest score is 94 in 2006/2007, there is a slight decrease one year after, data for 2008/2009 are missing. Score for Southern Asia is constant, 90 percent till 2008/2009 (91), high number of children is involved in the primary education here and no significant progress is to be expected. The score for the rest of the areas shows good progress in the past years. The best development is to see in the Eastern Asia with 96 percent in 2008/2009. On the other hand Latin America is descending 95 percent, which is still high but we can expect more decrease in the future.

This new data are shown in the MDG report with older data from 1990/1991 or 1998/1999 so the comparison could be shown. Sometimes it is an imposing look to see, how well the MDGs are working for the people in the poorest regions of the world (Sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa or Developing regions). But in some cases (Latin America) the data are not flattering for the UN. I do not see that as a result of a bad policy of the MDG initiative, I think it is the nature of the people in the region. I think they might not like it, being forced to do things they did not do for centuries. They just do not see it so important to send their little children to schools. It is very similar to the situation in the Czech republic. The gipsy minority here also does not send almost all the

children to schools they just live and grow up without education like their parents did. Whats worse, they do not see it as a problem.

There is also a short reflection at each goal in the MDG report. What would it take to meet the goal by the year 2015? I found very interesting thoughts here. Only in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, 3.8 million teachers will have to be recruited by 2015 if the goal of universal primary education is to be achieved. (*MDG report, 2011*) I do not think this goal is to be fulfilled. It is simply impossible to provide 4 million teachers for Africa. I also do not think this is the only unreal wish of the MDG project. Such dreams are chased in other goals as well, and that is the reason why are MDG seen as unreal in the eyes of the public. Small but realistic goals must be set, not enormous and unreal dreams. It might be difficult to find financial support for the small goals but it is better than wasting money on unreal promises...

### **MDG 8: Global partnership**

At this point I would also like to talk briefly about the last of the MDGs, namely to create a global partnership for development. It is the only indicator for which has not been defined criteria that could be precisely measured by economic indicators, evaluation or tables. In my opinion, the measure of the success of this MDG is only sustained progress in the fulfilling of other seven MDGs. Meeting the MDG 8 is a kind of investment into the future, if it is set, there will be easier international cooperation on other projects that come after the MDGs.

MDG 8 is also the only goal that is focused only on developed countries and their economies. These are precisely the ones that should ensure by their development and observance of the principles of fair trade, that needy states get enough humanitarian aid, medical supplies, goods and raw materials, that these countries really need. Developed economies should also work together on debt relief for developing economies, both in the form of partly remission of debts. A mere waiver of the debt is current and addresses only a very small portion of the debt problem. Affected economy is experiencing a short-term relief, but there is nothing to prevent the country from falling in the debt trap again.

The goal of MDG 8 should be to learn developing countries to effectively manage their debt and to avoid further debt. Developed countries should long-term trade with the developing economies, and allow them to rise from the "red numbers". However, in the light of the events of the last 3 years, (I have in mind the economic crisis caused by the fall of U.S. banks and the debt crisis in the euro-zone, which is fighting the extreme indebtedness of Greece and several other states) I would consider it possible, that industrialized countries led by the U.S. and the EU for several years will focus entirely on themselves and their economies and temporarily leave the MDG initiative aside. I consider that an obvious fact, that the economies are suffering from such severe problems and instability, that the U.S. and the EU will first focus on their own stabilization and then the stabilization of the third world countries. The state, which suffers from the consequences of its own mismanagement or poor management of the union's partner, can not, in my opinion, quite effectively help countries in the third world and spend money that would be better and more effectively spent on stabilizing of its own economy.

MDG 8 also expects the developed countries to help the developing countries together as partners. Assistance will therefore not take place so that every developed nation is assigned a developing country, which would care about. Rather, such a developing country will benefit from the cooperation with a greater number of developed countries. If the share of co-operation between developing countries and a group of

developed countries, for any reason drops, could the other developed countries (eg Japan, Russia, ...) see that as not willing to provide economic help and they could stop supporting their partners as well. This situation could lead to disagreements between states that are committed to meet the MDGs.

At this point I would like to briefly review three chosen targets of MDG 8. I chose them because I consider them current and very serious issues.

**8A. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system** (Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally.)

I do not consider this specific objective really achievable in the next years, since the idea of rule-based and also non-discriminatory trading and financial system is very demanding. In view of the fact that the vast majority of the MDGs was created by advanced countries, (*AMIN S., 2006*) I'm not quite sure how an equal partnership between them and the third world countries can be established. I do not simply see a chance, how could arise a system that would discriminate anyone. United States, NATO and the G8 will just always prevail and whenever its necessary to enforce their interests, they will not hesitate to apply means that will be certainly of greater or lesser part discriminatory. These means are probably justified in many ways, but it does not change anything about it. That will be the oppression of the economically weaker countries.

**8E. In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries** (Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis.)

Efforts to provide essential drugs to the widest possible part of the world's population is nothing new and it will take a long time to improve the current situation. What I see as a problem are the efforts to cooperate with existing pharmaceutical companies. Most of them are purely private companies that were established in order to profit. In the 20th century, a group of several multinational pharmaceutical companies formed, and they nearly completely dominate the world market in pharmaceuticals and they often abuse this position. It is likely that some of these companies will be asked for cooperation on this project. These large companies, however, have no interest in anyone questioning their dominance or asking questions about their price policy towards developing countries. (*AMIN S., 2006*) Their involvement in MDG projects could cause such questions, and so I think their opinion on possible cooperation will be cautious or negative.

**8F: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications** (Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population, Personal computers in use per 100 population, Internet users per 100 Population.)

In this goal it is a similar situation as the target 8E, but not a such thorny problem like the drugs. Technical and communication infrastructure is the domain of several private companies of developed Western world. Their cooperation is uncertain. They can not be fully controlled by the national states and above all their work in developing countries brings another wave of cocacolonisation.

The local residents will become even more dependent on services and products of developed countries. Some residents may begin working for technical and other companies, which will higher the level of their dependence.

### **MDG: Critique from outside**

I chose these two articles to discuss the outer critique of the MDGs:

MICHAEL CLEMENS AND TODD MOSS, "What is Wrong with the Millenium Development Goals?" Centre for Global Development, 2004

SAMIR AMIN, "The Millenium Development Goals: A critique from the South" Monthly Review, 2006

Both of these articles are written by people who did not participate in the MDGs. Their assessment is not affected by willing to exaggerate the results or present them in a brighter light than they really are. On the other hand, we can say that their evaluation of the entire project is very uncompromising. Both articles agree that the vast majority of countries is not going to meet the MDG targets in 2015.

Clemens and Moss highlight some very serious problems the MDGs. First, we always need more money. (*CLEMENS M., MOSS T., 2004*) This argument is simple and eternal. We should always be able to invest more money in the development. We could spend more money for drugs, food or for the renewal of infrastructure. More money to support developing countries does not automatically mean faster development and better results. Time is another factor that is highlighted in this article: can the developing countries achieve the same stage of development in 10 years, if the European countries took nearly a century? No, they can not. Even with huge material and financial assistance, 10 years time is too short to meet all the objectives of the MDGs.

The article also pointed out the fact that the setting of international development goals has been a tradition since the 1960s and that therefore the MDGs are not new and revolutionary, and thus that the hype around them is not in place. (*CLEMENS M., MOSS T., 2004*) The last major problem that is here in the context of the MDGs mentioned, is asking for utopian goals. Whenever there is a new source of money in the project, these utopian hopes appear and rational planning recedes into the background, then comes disillusionment.

The second article by Samir Amin is very detailed and points out several aspects of each of the 8 MDGs. These are brief but very critically evaluative, he also presents a kind of alternative, so called "the real objectives of dominant capital." This is a list of five actual goals of developed countries (in the opinion of the author of the article).

1. Extreme privatization, aimed at openin new fields for expansion of capital
  2. The generalization of the private appropriation of agricultural land
  3. Commercial opening within a context of maximum deregulation
  4. The equally uncontrolled opening up of capital movement
  5. States are forbidden in principle from interfering in economic affairs
- (*AMIN S., 2006*)

This critique of the MDGs is very strong and I can not help feeling that the author is strongly against the MDG initiative. Samir Amin is director of the Third World Forum in Dakar, Senegal. The Third World Forum is an international association of intellectuals

from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The Forum produces critical analysis and development of alternate strategies within the context of fortifying the logic of the international system. As director of this organization the author has certainly much experience with specific impacts of the MDGs and it is possible that he is not very satisfied with what is going on about the MDGs.

### **MDG: My point of view**

Millennium Development Goals initiative is very needed in today's unbalanced world. Many people have a chance to raise through it their standard of living and have a better life. But this whole project has in my opinion a considerable number of shortcomings.

The time when the MDGs were set up is chosen very well. The turn of the millennium gives a good name to the entire project, plus a promise, it could last a thousand years. It is true that the UN has worked on some parts of MDGs since the 1960s. The Millennium Summit in 2000 drew attention of the world, making it even possible to get large financial flows from the IMF and WB.

The time period, intended to fulfill the MDGs is rather oddly defined. The fact that they meet the targets between 1990 and 2015, when the MDGs were established in 2000, is not normal. I see many reasons for this procedure. As the main one, I see that many of the MDG targets have been worked on between 1990 and 2000 and it was managed to make progress in many areas. In order to facilitate further work, or to please the public, the targets were set in 2000 already with a regard to a good past performance. Who has the benefit of all this? Only developed countries, because they get a positive rating (in the eyes of the world public) for how well they are doing to meet the objectives. But the underdeveloped countries only lose money and support by this way of approach. Far better would be to set the targets with regard to the current date (not 10 years old) in 2000 and set a 40 year-time period for meeting them.

The total time for meeting the MDGs is also inappropriately chosen. Establishing 30 or 40 years could be better and more helpful. It would be also appropriate to provide short periods of time (3 or 5 years), which would aim to achieving a particular destination. I know that this system is too reminiscent of a centrally planned communist economy, for the selected project, however, I consider this way as most appropriate.

I do not see the future development of the MDGs positively. Thanks to the disillusionment of unfulfilled goals and commitments many states slowly turn away from this project. The approaching 2015 deadline does not deliver too much optimism to those who have failed in meeting the objectives set. The economic problems of the past three years led developed countries to focus more on themselves and their economies. Problems of third world rather recedes into the background. It is possible that some amendments to the MDGs will appear in 2014 or 2015. They could postpone the fulfillment of certain objectives. This will result in a further feeling of disappointment and failure. MDG is a project of the magnificent idea, but it is very poorly set up, I do not expect its fulfillment in the future.

### **Sources:**

MICHAEL CLEMENS AND TODD MOSS, "What is Wrong with the Millennium Development Goals?" Centre for Global Development, 2004

SAMIR AMIN, "The Millennium Development Goals: A critique from the South" Monthly Review, 2006