

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is the foundation for the MDGs

‘Gender equality and empowerment of women’ – Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals - is at the core of all the MDGs, from improving health and fighting disease, to reducing poverty and mitigating hunger, expanding education and lowering child mortality, increasing access to safe water, and ensuring environmental sustainability. **Attempting to achieve the MDGs without promoting gender equality will both raise the costs and decrease the likelihood of achieving the other goals.**

Gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Gender equality in capabilities and access to opportunities can accelerate economic growth.
- Equal access for women to basic transport and energy infrastructure (such as clean cooking fuels) can lead to greater economic activity.
- Gender equality in farm inputs helps increase agricultural production and reduce poverty because women farmers form a significant proportion of the rural poor.
- Equal investment in women’s health and nutritional status reduces chronic hunger and malnourishment, which increases productivity and well-being.

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

- Educated girls and women have greater control over their fertility and participate more in public life.
- A mother’s education is a strong and consistent determinant of her children’s school enrolment and attainment and their health and nutrition outcomes.

Goal 4 Reduce child mortality and Goal 5 Improve maternal health

- A mother’s education, income, and empowerment have a significant impact on lowering child and maternal mortality.

Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

- Greater economic independence for women, increased ability to negotiate safe sex, greater awareness of the need to alter traditional norms about sexual relations, better access to treatment, and support for the care function that women perform are essential for halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other epidemics.

Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- Gender-equitable property and resource ownership policies enable women (often as primary users of these resources) to manage them in a more sustainable manner.

Goal 8 Develop a global partnership for development

- Greater gender equality in the political sphere may lead to higher investments in development cooperation.

From **Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women**
Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005

The reverse is equally true – achievement of Goal 3 depends on progress made on each of the other goals. Tracking gender gaps and inequalities in relation to each of the other MDG targets and indicators is therefore as critical as accurate reporting against Goal 3.

Achievement of other goals is critical for Goal 3

Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- *Failure to design actions that reduce poverty equally for women and men will leave significant pockets of female poverty in many countries.*

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

- *Failure to achieve universal primary education has significant consequences for girls' enrolment and completion of higher levels of education and hence their ability to access resources and opportunities to the same extent as boys.*

Goal 4 Reduce child mortality

- *Child mortality is one reason why fertility remains high in some parts of the world. High fertility is associated with greater unpaid work burdens for women, and multiple pregnancies are associated with elevated risks of disability or death. In some countries child mortality partly reflects discrimination against girls in nutrition and medical care. Reducing child mortality in these countries will mean ending such discrimination.*

Goal 5 Improve maternal health

- *Women cannot enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and voice with men if they continue to suffer the ill-health, disability, and risks of dying associated with pregnancy and childbirth. The ability to have the number of children they desire when they desire is also critical if women are to take control of their lives and contribute productively to their families, communities, and societies.*

Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

- *Because the HIV/AIDS pandemic is rapidly being feminized, both in risk of becoming infected and in the burden of care, failure to control this epidemic is likely to leave girls and women increasingly vulnerable.*

Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- *Because women are the major food producers in the developing world, failure to ensure environmental sustainability is likely to damage their ability to feed themselves and their families. Failure to limit certain types of pollutants, such as indoor smoke from cooking fires, will also have particularly deleterious effects on the health of women and children.*

*From Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women
Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005*

No time to lose on Goal 3

Global reviews undertaken over the last year, as well as the picture emerging from national MDG reports, indicate that a majority of countries will be unable to meet the Goal 3 target of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by the 2005 deadline.

Since gender equality is the essential underpinning for the achievement of all other Goals, the failure to achieve gender equality targets will have a domino effect, compromising progress on other Goals and targets.

Accelerating progress on Goal 3 is therefore an urgent necessity for all actors in development.

Making MDG reporting gender-aware

National MDG Reports are the primary instrument for tracking progress on MDG targets. They are expected to be widely disseminated and discussed by policy-makers, donors and others including local communities, civil society groups and citizens. They are instruments for public information, advocacy, policy and accountability.

‘Over the past three decades women have made some gains, particularly in health and education. Despite these gains, it is clear that the first deadline for the MDG target of Goal 3 - eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels of education no later than 2015 – will be missed. This will be the first visible MDG failure. But instead of serving as an opportunity to underscore the failures of the international community, 2005 should be used to issue a clarion call for reenergizing efforts so that the second deadline for the target — 2015 — is honored.’

Interim Report 2003

Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project

Making sure that national MDG reports are gender-aware and that gender equality issues are adequately addressed in reporting on each of the Goals is essential to the purpose of these reports.

- The national MDG report is a snapshot showing where the country stands in relation to the achievement of the MDGs. Since gender equality and empowerment of women underpin all the MDGs, they must be reflected adequately throughout the report. **Restricting gender concerns to Goal 3 would amount to presenting a distorted picture of reality.**
- The MDGs have become the over-arching framework for national development and are the reference point for pro-people and pro-poor policy making. A gender-aware national MDG report would **catalyse gender-responsive policy-making and programming**, and would **facilitate more optimal resource allocation**.
- Policy-makers are aware that not everything that needs to be done for gender equality lies in their domain – individuals, families and communities all need to become actively involved in social transformation. A gender-aware national MDG report would be **a tool for public advocacy on gender equality** and **a means to create a supportive environment** for translating commitments into actual results on the ground.
- A gender-aware national MDG report would be **a platform for partnerships between national governments and civil society groups committed to women’s rights**, and would enlarge the space for dialogue and joint action on critical gender issues.
- The national MDG report is an instrument for transparency and accountability. Making gender issues visible across Goals will **broaden the scope of accountability on women’s rights** and make the report more relevant and useful to citizens, civil society groups and gender equality advocates.
- The national MDG report is expected to be translated into a range of advocacy products such as films, booklets, posters and fact-sheets which will spark a media campaign for national commitment to the Goals. Making gender issues visible across Goals will **add value to media products** and give **greater public visibility** to efforts being made by governments to achieve gender equality.
- Gender equality is common to the mandates of all UN organisations and donor agencies, and is an explicit national goal in the majority of countries. **Commitment to gender equality is the ‘glue’ that allows diverse actors in development to come together**, reach a consensus on a common agenda and deploy resources where they are most needed.

Putting national MDG reports under a 'gender lens'

This report documents the findings of a gender review of national MDG reports and covers all the national reports from developing countries published up to December 2004. This includes 78 reports in English, French and Spanish – 22 reports from Africa, seven from the Arab region, 10 from the Asia-Pacific region, 17 from Central Europe and the CIS, and nine from Latin America. There has been no attempt at sampling - all the reports available up to December 2004 were scanned.

The 13 reports covered in the pilot scan have also been included in the analysis. In cases where a country included in the pilot study has published a subsequent national report, the new report has also been included in the present scan.

Four reports from developed countries have also been scanned as a part of this exercise.

The scanning exercise identified and recorded the extent to which gender equality concerns are reflected in the reports, using the following parameters for tracking

- Whether gender inequality has been identified as a key determinant in fulfilment of any/all Goals.
- Whether gender equality and/or women's rights issues have been adequately/effectively highlighted in the text of the report.
- Whether sex disaggregated data have been presented and used effectively.
- Whether gender dimensions of poverty, education, infant mortality, maternal mortality, health, environmental sustainability and development cooperation have been made visible and substantiated with data.
- Whether strategies and/or resources for addressing gender inequality have been committed to or clearly identified.
- Whether additional gender targets/indicators relevant to the specific country situation have been incorporated in the report.
- Whether the strategic priorities for gender equality identified by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality have been flagged and discussed.

Strategic priorities for gender equality

To ensure that Goal 3 is met by 2015, the task force has identified seven strategic priorities. These seven interdependent priorities are the minimum necessary to empower women and alter the historical legacy of female disadvantage that remains in most societies of the world:

- *Strengthen opportunities for post-primary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education.*
- *Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights.*
- *Invest in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens.*
- *Guarantee women's and girls' property and inheritance rights.*
- *Eliminate gender inequality in employment by decreasing women's reliance on informal employment, closing gender gaps in earnings and reducing occupational segregation.*
- *Increase women's share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies.*
- *Combat violence against girls and women.*

*From Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women
Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005*

Gender scan of national MDG reports 2005

List of countries covered

Pilot Study 2003	Africa	Arab Region	Asia-Pacific	Central Europe and CIS	Latin America and Caribbean
1. Albania	1. Benin	1. Bahrain	1. Afghanistan	1. Albania	1. Argentina
2. Armenia	2. Botswana	2. Jordan	2. Bhutan	2. Azerbaijan	2. Bolivia
3. Bolivia	3. Burkina Faso	3. Kuwait	3. Cambodia	3. Bosnia & Herzegovina	3. Brazil
4. Cameroon	4. Cameroon	4. Lebanon	4. China	4. Bulgaria	4. El Salvador
5. Egypt	5. Cap Verde	5. Palestine	5. E. Timor	5. Croatia	5. Guatemala
6. Lithuania	6. Chad	6. Syria	6. Indonesia	6. Czech Republic	6. Guyana
7. Mauritius	7. Congo	7. Yemen	7. Mongolia	7. Georgia	7. Honduras
8. Mozambique	8. Cote d'Ivoire		8. Philippines	8. Hungary	8. Panama
9. Nepal	9. Ethiopia		9. Thailand	9. Kazakhstan	9. Paraguay
10. Poland	10. Gabon		10. Vietnam	10. Kosovo	
11. Saudi Arabia	11. Gambia			11. Kyrgyzstan	
12. Tanzania	12. Ghana			12. Romania	
13. Vietnam	13. Guinea			13. Slovakia	
	14. Kenya			14. Slovenia	
	15. Mauritania			15. Tajikistan	
	16. Namibia			16. Turkmenistan	
	17. Rwanda			17. Ukraine	
	18. Sao Tome				
	19. Senegal				
	20. Togo				
	21. Uganda				
	22. Zambia				