



## THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS TEN YEARS TO GO. WILL WE SCORE?

### Introduction

The world is 5 years on from the United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000. This historic document, adopted by all of 191 UN member states, was drawn up during the Millennium Summit in 2000. The declaration itself was very wide-ranging, setting out to deal with global security, environmental issues, human rights and poverty.

Part of the declaration concerned the **Millennium Development Goals (MDG)**. The 2000 Declaration contains **8 goals**, each goal consisting of 1 or more measurable **targets**.

In total there are **18 targets**, whose progress will be measured by **48 indicators**. Fig. 1, the 'Report Card for 2004' gives further details of the goals and targets. Slight changes have been made to MDG targets and indicators since 2000 but the basic goals remain the same. Most targets use 1990 as the base date, and 2015 as the target date. This means we have a decade left achieve the targets and reach the goals. So, is the world on track to achieve the MDG?

To investigate the detail of the MDG, the targets and indicators visit <http://millenniumindicators.un.org>

Fig. 1 UN Millennium Development Goals Report Card for 2004

GOAL	TARGET	PROGRESS							
		North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	East Asia	Southeast Asia	South Asia	West Asia	Latin America & Carib	
1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	☞ Reduce by 50% the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☹		
	☞ Reduce by 50% the proportion of people suffering from hunger	☺	☹	☺	☺		☹	☺	
2 Achieve universal primary education	☞ Ensure all boys & girls complete a full course of primary schooling	☺		☺				☺	
3 Promote gender equality and empower women	☞ Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 (all levels by 2025)	☺	☹	☺	☺	☹	☹	☺	
	☞ Ensure literacy parity between young men and women			☺	☺				
	☞ Women's equal representation in national parliaments			☹			☹		
4 Reduce child mortality	☞ Reduce by two thirds the under five mortality rate	☺	☹		☺			☺	
	☞ Universal child immunisation against measles	☺	☹		☺		☺	☺	
5 Improve maternal health	☞ Reduce the maternal mortality ratio by 75%		☹	☺		☹			
6 Combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases	☞ Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS			☹		☹			
	☞ Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria	☺	☹				☺		
	☞ Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of tuberculosis	☺	☹				☺	☺	
7 Ensure environmental sustainability	☞ Reverse loss of forests		☹		☹			☹	
	☞ Halve proportion without improved drinking water in urban areas	☺	☹	☹		☺	☺	☺	
	☞ Halve proportion without improved drinking water in rural areas					☺			
	☞ Halve proportion without sanitation in urban areas	☺	☹		☺	☺	☺		
	☞ Halve proportion without sanitation in rural areas		☹				☹		
	☞ Improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020	☺	☹		☺		☹		
8 Develop global partnership for development	☞ Reduce youth unemployment	☹	☹		☹		☹	☹	
<b>ACTIVITY:</b> Make the 'Report Card' easier to analyse by traffic-lighting the cells: • Colour cells with smiles green. These are targets that have either been met, or are likely to be met by 2015 • Colour cells with frowns red. These targets are currently not on track and are unlikely to be achieved by 2015 • Colour other cells yellow. Progress is being made, but it is currently too slow to meet the target by 2015 • Grey cells are where data is lacking, or the target is not relevant to the region. • Look down the columns and identify which regions are most off-track. Why might this be? • Look across the rows. Which targets are most off-track? Can you explain this?		North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	East Asia	Southeast Asia	South Asia	West Asia	Latin America & Carib	

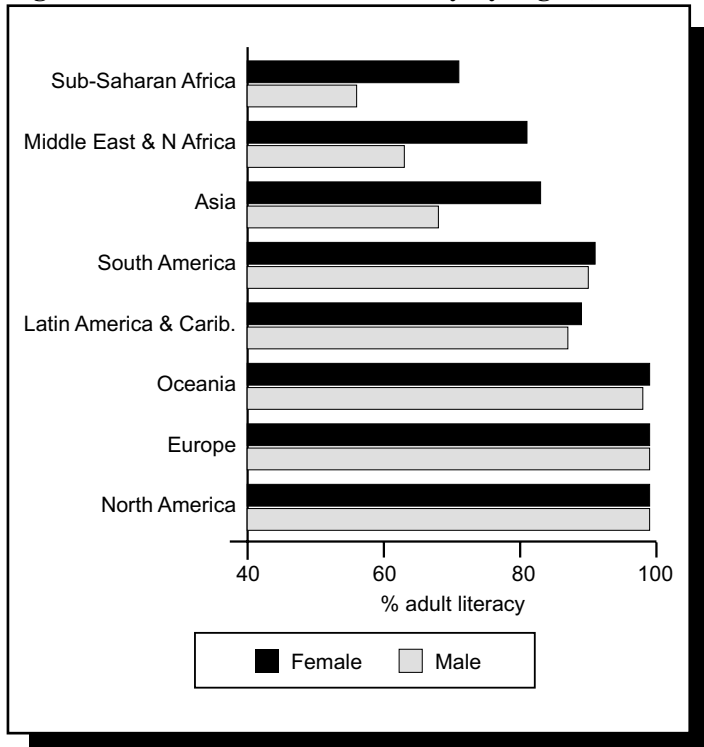
### Why have Millennium Development Goals?

The MDG recognise that before development can take place, many people need to overcome extreme poverty, the impact of disease, lack of access to education and poor sanitation and water supply. The MDG set out a strategy to do this by focusing on the inter-related problems of LEDCs. The goals are global; however they focus on disadvantaged people in particular areas of the world. Fig. 4 (page 3) illustrates the geography of poverty and underdevelopment.

**Exam Hint:** If you are asked to describe a map, such as Fig. 4, look out for broad patterns first, and gradually move to a smaller, more specific, scale. In the case of Fig. 4, countries failing to meet the MDG are all below the north-south divide. Specifically they are concentrated in Africa and the Middle East, with minor areas in Asia and Central America. There are anomalies however. You could mention Ecuador and Mongolia, plus South Africa and some north African countries as not fitting the general pattern.

Fig. 2 shows that low levels of literacy are a major problem in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Middle East and North Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa female and male illiteracy is an issue, whereas in the Middle East and North Africa, and Asia, male literacy is higher (over 80%) but female lags far behind. This helps explain Goals 2 and 3, which focus on education and gender equality.

**Fig 2 Male and female adult literacy by region, 2003**



This example shows that although the MDG are global, they are not all applicable, or equally important, to all regions. Goals 1-7 are reasonably simple to understand and have clear, measurable targets. Largely they concern meeting the basic needs of the poor in LEDC countries.

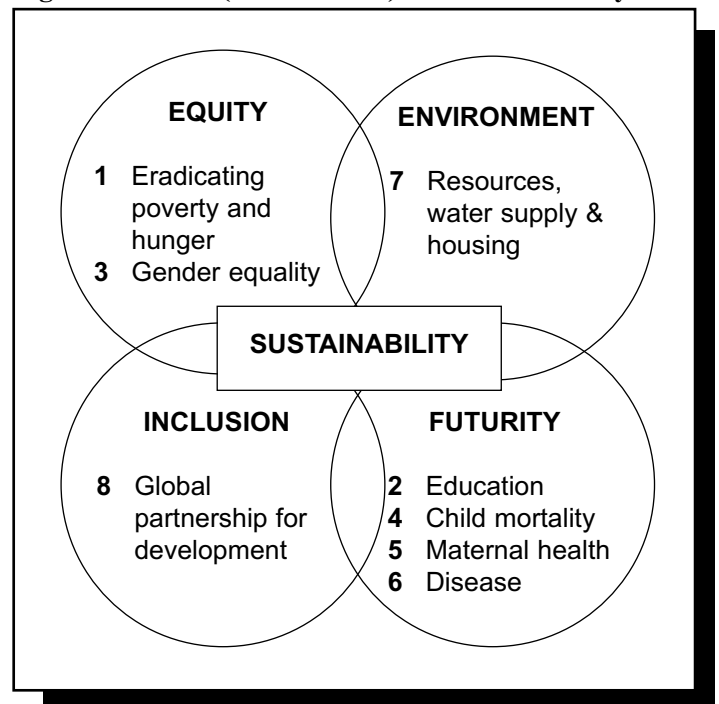
**Goal 8**, ‘Develop a global partnership for development’ is different. This Goal calls for changes to be made within MEDCs, to improve the chances of development in LEDCs:

- Develop a non-discriminatory trade and financial system
- Address the needs of LDCs by removing trade barriers, relieving debt and increasing aid. Address the special needs of small island and landlocked states
- Deal with debt in a sustainable way
- Develop productive work for young people
- Provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- Make new technology, such as ICT available

The MDG are seen as a partnership between the wealthy ‘North’ and poorer ‘South’; both parties will have to work together if the MDG are to be achieved, and both parties will have to change the way they work. For instance, MEDCs will need to approach trade and debt in new ways, whilst cultural changes are needed in some LEDCs if gender equality and education goals are to be met.

The MDG focus on sustainability, using a broad definition of sustainability that not only includes the environment but social and economic sustainability too. Fig. 3 shows the MDG in relation to the sustainability quadrat.

**Fig 3 The MDG (numbers 1-8) and sustainability.**



If the MDG are achieved, millions more people will be healthier (1,4,5,6), more equal (3), better educated for the future (2), living in cleaner, more sustainable urban and rural settlements (7) and with a better chance of getting on the first rung of the development ladder (8). Surely we are on track to achieve all of this?



**Case Study : The global pattern (continued)**

**REGION 2: Central America**

This region is similar to Asia, with only a few countries appearing in the UN 'top priority' lists. The most obvious case is Haiti, a concern to the UN for poverty, access to water and access to sanitation. This is largely due to a break down in civil governance and civil disturbance following years of crippling dictatorship under the Duvalier regimes. Successive military coups and a lack of government investment has made Port-au-Prince, the capital, one of the worst cities in the world. Much of rural Haiti has suffered devastating deforestation.

**REGION 3: West Asia**

Conflict is a central cause of the lack of progress in this region. The disruption to normal life, food production and infrastructure caused by wars works against achieving the MDG. The 'concerns' in the region are largely income poverty. Long-running conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan between Iran and Iraq, and involving Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia has worked against achieving the MDG. Many of the Former Communist Countries (Georgia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan) have suffered economic turmoil since they gained independence after the collapse of the USSR. Income distribution in these countries is very poor, with the poorest 40% of people sharing a very small % of national income:

Country	Poorest 40% share of national income	Richest 40% share of national income
Armenia	14.9%	71.2%
Georgia	17.5%	66.3%
Kyrgyzstan	19.3%	64.6%
UK	18.0%	65.9%
Sweden	24.1%	57.7%

This situation is compounded by a crumbling welfare system, and declining health and education standards.

**REGION 4: Arab States**

Many countries in this region are oil rich states, and the key concerns are different to the previous regions:

	Hunger	Primary education	Gender equality	Child mortality	Water access	Sanitation access
Libya					•••••	
Saudi Arabia		•••••				
Oman		•••••			•••••	
Yemen	•••••			•••••		•••••
Iran						
Iraq	•••••		•••••	•••••		


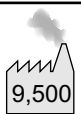

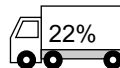
Not surprisingly, **water access** in what are desert states is an issue, and child mortality and a lack of progress in primary education also feature. Many Arab states are striving to overcome **cultural barriers** to gender equality. In Jordan primary school enrollment rose from 66% in 1990 to 93% by 2000. All Arab states increased the ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education 1990-2000, with only Iraq's progress being insignificant.

**REGION 5: Central Africa**

By far the most troubling region of the world is Central Africa. In 2003 the UN Human Development report highlighted the fact that the hunger, primary education and child mortality targets would be reached **after 2100** on current trends. A full century after the 2015 target date.

Explaining Africa's lack of progress is complex. Fundamental to the issue is Africa's lack of involvement in the global economy compared to Asia, where the MDG are being achieved. Fig. 6 shows some basic data on the economy of the two regions.

**Fig. 6 Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa's economies compared**

	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia
Foreign direct investment (FDI) 1998 - 2000	\$7 billion	\$76 billion
Number of parent TNCs	 966	 9,500
Exports as % of GDP	 30%	 22%

The differences in levels of **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** between the 2 regions are striking. Asia's wealth has been generated by investment from foreign TNCs whereas large parts of Africa have missed out on this investment. Asia has developed its own TNCs, and has around 10x the number compared to those originating in Sub-Saharan Africa (The European number is 38,500 for comparison). Africa also relies more heavily on **exports** to generate GDP; in many cases these are commodities such as coffee, cotton, copper and cocoa whose price is prone to fluctuation and **long-term decline**.

The MDG will not be achieved through economic growth alone, but income generation is a pre-requisite to their long-term attainability – governments need money to invest in health, education, water supply and sanitation. Fig. 7 shows some other factors which are currently preventing Sub-Saharan Africa from making progress toward the goals.

**Fig. 7 Factors preventing Sub-Saharan African development.**

<b>Debt</b>	Averages 70% of annual GDP; in Mozambique it is 24% of GDP. Repayments drain government income.
<b>Conflict</b>	There have been at least 18 civil and international conflicts in the region since 1990
<b>Aid</b>	Averages 4% of GDP and is off-set by debt; most MEDCs do not give the 0.7% of their GDP promised.
<b>Resources</b>	Deforestation, soil erosion and desertification are occurring as increasing populations degrade resources.
<b>Food</b>	12 countries have experienced famine since 1990; per capita food production is falling in the region.
<b>Water</b>	Lack of water supply prevents farm improvements; aquifers overused and running dry.

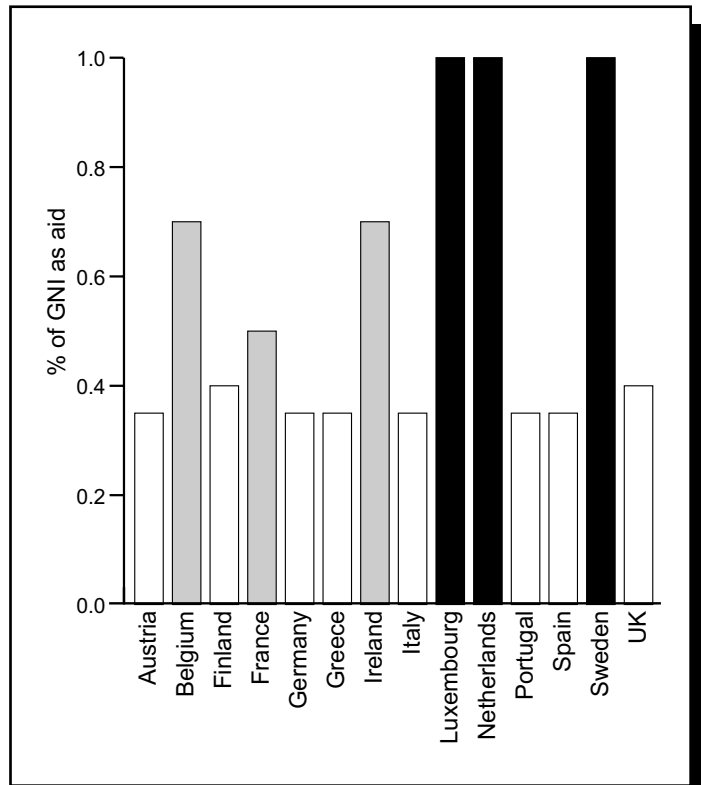
**Is Aid the answer?**

35 years ago the wealthy MEDCs agreed to give 0.7% of their annual GNI as aid to the developing regions of the world. 35 years on, few countries actually achieve this. In 2002, at the **International Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey** the MEDCs agreed to raise an additional US\$16 billion in aid by 2006 and set new targets for proportions of GNI, these targets are shown in *Fig. 8*.

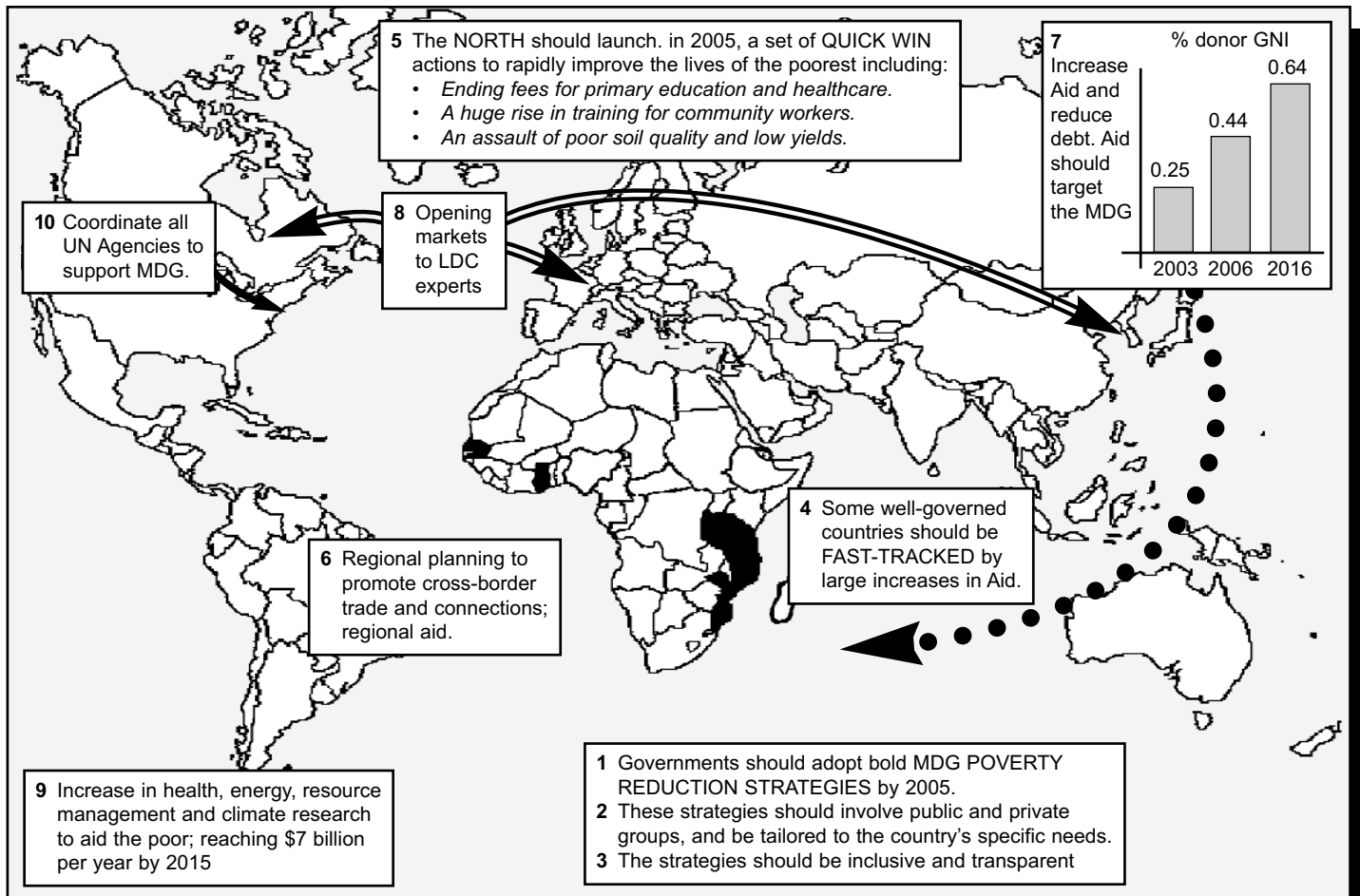
GDP (Gross Domestic Product) has been replaced by the new term GNI (Gross National Income). The two terms have similar meanings, however GNI will appear in future UN, World Bank and IMF reports and documents.

In March 2005 the UN's latest report on the MDG, **'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals'** was published. This document sets out the case for increased aid and global actions to achieve the MDG by 2015. *Fig. 9* summarises the 10 key **Recommendations** of the report. It strongly supports the view that in order to achieve the MDG the developed nations need to increase aid considerably, focusing first on a set of **Quick Win** actions to tackle the worst poverty head-on, plus a renewed investment in countries which are well governed and where aid is likely to have the most impact due to low levels of corruption – Ghana, Tanzania and Mozambique are examples of countries where this **Fast Track** approach may work.

**Fig 8 Aid targets for the EU by 2006 (% of GNI as aid).**



**Fig. 9 The 2005 report's 10 key recommendations to achieve the MDG.**



## Conclusions

Without major changes to aid and trade in the next few years, it is unlikely that the MDG will be achieved by 2015 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Only a radical programme is likely to bring about the rapid changes needed to reduce poverty and suffering by the levels called for by the MDG. Aid is crucial, but it must:

- **Increase, especially to countries lagging behind the goals.**
- **Be increasingly directed at specific MDG and targets.**
- **Become long-term, so that early successes can be built on and sustained.**
- **Country, region and locality specific.**

An increased amount of targeted aid, addressing the needs of the African, Asian and Caribbean countries that are in danger of missing the goals, would seem to be the best way forward if the world is to score the goals by 2015.

## Further research

This Factsheet has aimed to provide to you with an overview of progress toward the MDG. For detailed case studies of development projects, try these 2 websites:

- [www.grameenfoundation.org](http://www.grameenfoundation.org) Beginning in Bangladesh in 1976, the grassroots organisation 'Grameen Bank' provides low income women with micro-loans to start businesses and earn their way out of poverty. It now operates micro-loan schemes in over 20 countries.
- [www.itdg.org](http://www.itdg.org) The Intermediate Technology Development Group is an NGO working in Africa. Its website and downloadable Newsletters contain concise case studies of appropriate aid and development which you will be able to cross-reference against the MDG.

## Sources and References

- *Recasting the case for aid.* The Economist, January 2005.
- *Human Development Report – Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty*, UNDP 2003.
- [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)
- [www.wri.org](http://www.wri.org)
- *Investing in Development, a practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, UNDP 2005

## Questions

Most A-level specifications don't refer to the MDG directly, as they are relatively recent. You are most likely to be able to refer to them in an essay question about alleviating poverty, increasing sustainability or improving quality of life in the developing world. This question is adapted from Edexcel GCE B, June 2003 Unit 6474 Question 8. In part 'a', candidates were asked to examine a 'report card' for the MDG similar to *Fig.1 on page 1*.

### a) Write a report which assesses progress made so far towards the Millennium Development Goals.

- *Progress towards eradicating extreme poverty and hunger has been rapid in Asia, where economic development has raised around 250 million people out of poverty since 1990. Progress has also been made in North Africa. However, poverty, hunger and famine remain a major problem in Sub-Saharan Africa and West Asia, with little progress being made. Persistent conflict in countries such as Sudan and Iraq has made economic growth difficult to achieve.*
- *The progress toward achieving universal primary education is much better in all areas, perhaps because of the relatively small amount of investment needed to build schools combined with the work of NGOs in developing countries. The promotion of gender equality is not on track in many areas, especially Africa and West Asia, where cultural barriers to the full involvement of women in education, employment and politics are strong.*

- *Child mortality has been reduced and this target is on track in all areas except Africa. Improved infant healthcare and immunisation have fairly low cost solutions which have been successfully applied. In Africa the spread of Aids has worked against the global trend for reduced infant mortality and this can also be seen in Goal 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) where progress is patchy. Many regions have seen a growth in HIV/AIDS as the cost of available treatments is high.*
- *Environmental sustainability (Goal 7) is improving in North Africa, South and South East Asia but progress is poor or patchy in other areas. Deforestation remains a problem in many areas as countries continue to deforest areas for development. Providing water and sanitation in rapidly growing megacities is proving difficult in Africa and West Asia.*
- *Progress toward goal 8, reducing youth unemployment, is off-target in all regions.*

*To summarise, Sub-Saharan Africa and West Asia are the two regions most off-track, with many of the MDG likely to be missed. Other regions, such as South East Asia are making good progress largely due to the benefits of economic growth in countries such as India and China. Disease, gender disparity, youth unemployment and some environmental issues are the targets proving most difficult to achieve at present.*

### b) Choose three of the Millennium Development Goal targets and using examples, explain how each could contribute to a 'better world for all'.

*This question asks candidates to explain why the UN has set the MDG, in other words what is the point of them? The key to answering this question successfully is to recognise that many of the goals and targets are inter-linked.*

- *The target to 'reduce by 50% the proportion of people suffering from hunger' is important because of the knock-on impact of hunger and malnutrition. Malnourished people will not be able to farm effectively, so food production will fall. People become prone to disease and illness, further reducing their ability to work. A spiral of decline sets in, seen recently in Sudan and Niger, often leading to migration of refugees. People who have food security are more economically productive, less reliant on aid and healthier. Food is a basic necessity and food security is a prerequisite to stable economic growth.*
- *Improving education, by for instance, all children completing their primary education will lead to a 'virtuous cycle'. Basic education skills improve job prospects and agricultural production, which will improve incomes. Higher incomes links with Goal 1, but could also improve healthcare and link with Goals 4, 5 and 6. In places such as Kerala in India, and Mauritius, improved education has also had a major impact in lowering birth rates and improving gender equality.*
- *The fight against AIDS/HIV ('halt and begin to reverse the spread of AIDS/HIV') is crucial as disease not only creates poverty, by reducing ability to work, but also has the potential to 'undo' progress towards the other goals and targets. Most obviously, areas with food security and good nutrition levels could see this reversed if a significant proportion of the working population fall victim to the spread of disease.*

## Acknowledgements

*This Factsheet was researched by Cameron Dunn, Principal Examiner and Head of Geography, Tyne Metropolitan College, Sixth Form Academy. Curriculum Press, Bank House, 105 King Street, Wellington, TF1 1NU. Tel. 01952 271318. Geopress Factsheets may be copied free of charge by teaching staff or students, provided that their school is a registered subscriber. No part of these Factsheets may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any other form or by any other means, without the prior permission of the publisher. ISSN 1351-5136*