

The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Initiatives of Japan

■ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – International Development Goals to be Achieved by 2015 –

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are internationally shared development goals to be achieved by 2015. These goals were developed by building on such preceding documents as the United Nations (UN) Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000.

The MDGs consist of eight development goals, which are broken down into 21 concrete targets and 60 indicators. The target year to achieve these goals was set at the year 2015, while 1990 was set as the benchmark year.

In the field of development, the MDGs serve as a compass for the international community. While certain progress has been made in connection with some of the goals, there are also goals that are unlikely to be achieved by the target year, such as the goal for maternal health. Furthermore, there are regions, such as Sub-Saharan

Africa, where progress has been noticeably slow. In order to achieve the MDGs in 2015, the international community needs to step up its efforts.

■ Looking Ahead to the Future Beyond 2015 – The Post-2015 Development Agenda –

The international community is now conducting active discussions towards the establishment of new international development goals (the post-2015 development agenda) to succeed the MDGs.

■ Japan's View on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

In formulating the post-2015 development agenda, it is necessary to maintain the simplicity and the clarity of

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)



Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Halve the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day.
- Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.



Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.



Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education.



Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate.



Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.



Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

- Have halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.



Ensure environmental sustainability

- Halve the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.



Develop a global partnership for development

- In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

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Progress made

- Extreme poverty in the world was halved
- The number of people who suffer from hunger in the world has steadily declined
- The total number of out-of-school children was reduced by close to 50%
- The number of deaths from malaria and tuberculosis decreased significantly
- The proportion of the population without access to safe drinking water was halved

Remaining challenges

- The under-five mortality rate has decreased but the progress falls far short of achieving the goal
- The reduction of the maternal mortality rate has made slow progress
- The improvement in the literacy rate has been insufficient
- Access to improved sanitary facilities is insufficient

*The eight MDG logos were designed by NPO Global Call to Action Against Poverty

the current MDGs. In addition, the new agenda needs to build upon the experience and lessons learned from the current MDGs. In light of the issues of regional and intra-country disparities that came to light in the process of implementing the MDGs, a new framework should be created based on the principle of human security so as not to leave the vulnerable behind. The new agenda should be a set of goals that continue to make the alleviation of poverty a central issue in view of achieving sustainable development.

Keeping the above in mind, Japan's development cooperation under the post-2015 development agenda prioritizes a people-centered approach based on the three keywords of "inclusiveness," "sustainability," and "resilience." "Inclusiveness" means making sure that no one is left behind. Every single person must be able to enjoy the benefits of development. "Sustainability" means achieving sustainable development in terms of the economy, society, and environment. "Resilience" means creating societies that can withstand the risks posed by conflicts, natural disasters, and economic crises by enhancing the capabilities of individuals and communities as well as by building necessary infrastructure.

In addition, the new agenda needs to adapt to the changes that have occurred within the international community since the adoption of the current MDGs that date back to more than ten years ago. It is vital to make progress in tackling challenges and improving indicators in areas such as health that have lagged behind in terms of the achievement of the MDGs. Given that women who make up half of the world's population are important actors for development, continued efforts are needed to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality. Furthermore, the goals should address issues not included in the new MDGs, such as disaster risk reduction.

In recent years, in terms of capital flows from developed to developing countries, private flows are 2.5 times as large as the total amount of ODA disbursements. Development requires not only government-to-government cooperation, but also the involvement of the private sector. It is also important to achieve inclusive growth through the creation of employment at every level of the social strata and the extensive sharing of the fruits of development. Furthermore, efforts by developing countries in strengthening governance and taking the initiative to find solutions are required for improving the effectiveness of development. Resource mobilization by developing countries is also important. Japan's assistance for the development of legal systems contributes to the strengthening of governance.

In the field of health, Japan underscores the importance of universal health coverage (UHC) within the post-2015 development agenda. At the Japan-World Bank Conference on Universal Health Coverage held in Tokyo in December 2013, which was attended by Minister of Finance Taro Aso, World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim, World Health Organization Director-General Margaret



A female Pakistani extension officer of literacy and children who go to non-formal school. Ms. Chiho Ohashi, smiling with them. See page 37, "Stories from the field" column, for details of Ms. Ohashi's efforts on improving literacy rate. (Photo: Chiho Ohashi)

Chan, and ministers and experts from countries around the world, Japan and eight other countries shared their experience with promoting UHC. Moreover, at an event held in September 2014 entitled "Delivering on Universal Health Coverage: Why the Time is Now," Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida presented Japan's various initiatives aimed at promoting UHC, and underlined the importance of global leaders working together towards its achievement. Those who participated in the event appreciated the leadership of Japan in promoting UHC.

■ The Lead-up to the Establishment of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Initiatives of Japan

In December 2011, prior to the full-fledged start of discussion on the post-2015 development agenda, Japan took the initiative to promote dialogue among the members of the international community by setting up a contact group for the exchange of opinions on the new agenda among participants representing a variety of views, including governments, international organizations and civil society organizations. The contact group has been highly commended as a forum that has allowed for open discussions free from the constraints of views and positions the participants represent.

In July 2012, Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon established a high level panel consisting of 27 members for discussion on the post-2015 development agenda. Japan participated in the discussions at this panel, which delivered its report in May 2013. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012, it was decided that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would be created and that these goals would be incorporated in the post-2015 development agenda. An Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs OWG) was created in March 2013 and an Inter-governmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing was created in August 2013. Japan participated in the negotiations and worked to reflect its aforementioned views in the Groups' reports. SDGs OWG and the finance committee submitted reports respectively to the General Assembly of the United Nations by summer 2014. Based on these reports, negotiations are expected to take place in 2015 among UN member states on the establishment of the post-2015 development agenda which will be adopted at the United Nations High-Level Plenary Meeting in September 2015. The new goals are set to take effect from 2016.