

# Achievements and Challenges in the Implementation of the MDGs



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer, Ms. Manami Takahashi educates elementary school children of the Costa Rican city of San Jose on environmental issues. (Photo: Kenshiro Imamura / JICA)

## Section 1

## What are the MDGs?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are goals that the international community set forth to achieve such targets as halving world poverty by 2015. “Millennium” refers to the point at which a period of 1,000 years ends and another begins. In September of the milestone year of 2000, the Millennium Declaration<sup>1</sup> was adopted at the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit. This Declaration, combined with the International Development Goals (IDGs) adopted at major international conferences and summits during the 1990s, constitute the MDGs.

The MDGs identify 8 goals with 21 targets and 60 indicators that are more specific than the goals themselves (see below). Most of these goals set 1990 as the base year and 2015 as the target deadline.

The MDGs were established based on lessons learned from earlier approaches to development cooperation. In the 1980s, the concept of “structural adjustment policy” gained currency in international development cooperation. This concept contended that if the economic structure of developing countries were reformed to enable market

Note 1: The Millennium Declaration was adopted at the UN Millennium Summit on September 8, 2000. It consists of the following pillars: (i) peace, security, and disarmament; (ii) development and poverty eradication; (iii) protecting our common environment; (iv) human rights, democracy, and good governance; (v) protecting the vulnerable; (vi) meeting the special needs of Africa; and (vii) strengthening the UN. The Declaration provides a vision for the role the UN should play in the 21st century in response to globalization. It contains the underlying values of the MDGs and the goals that form the foundation of the MDGs.

## 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 at 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.

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

economy mechanisms to function, this would lead to economic development in developing countries, and by extension, the reduction of poverty.

However, it gradually came to light that this approach did not necessarily bring about a steady reduction of poverty, and conversely, worsened poverty in some cases. Partially due to lessons learned from this approach, more direct measures for tackling poverty began to gain global interest from the 1990s. At the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, world leaders set the goal of halving the world's absolute poverty, with the aim of achieving "human-centered social development."

In the following year, 1996, the IDGs were adopted in the new development strategy of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) proposed by Japan. The IDGs included the goal of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, which later became a core goal of the MDGs.



Women sell fruit in the old town of Querétaro City, Mexico. (Photo: Kenshiro Imamura / JICA)



A mother holds her newborn baby boy in Ouidah, Benin. (Photo: Masataka Otsuka / JICA)

Then, in the milestone year of 2001, the international community created the MDGs, which consolidated these changes in international trends from the 1980s to the 1990s.

The individual goals of the MDGs may not necessarily be novel. Nevertheless, the MDGs were groundbreaking in the sense that they not only represented a pledge by leaders from around the world, including both developed and developing countries, to realize the goals through setting a target deadline and specific numerical targets, but also prompted the leaders to subsequently make commitments to strengthening the efforts for achieving the MDGs at the 2005 UN World Summit, the 2010 UN Summit on the MDGs, and various other occasions.



Japan has played a proactive role in the efforts of the international community to achieve the MDGs. In this section, the key points of Japan's diverse efforts are highlighted for each goal.

Goal 1 is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. "Eradicate extreme poverty" is a challenge that ties in with Japan's development cooperation policy as a whole, and is explained in further detail in Chapter 2, Section 2. With regard to "eradicate hunger," assistance in the field of food and agriculture became one of the focal items of the international community's efforts. In this field, at the G8 L'Aquila Summit held in Italy in 2009, Japan announced assistance of at least \$3 billion in 2010-2012 for food security, including agriculture and infrastructure development. As of the end of 2012, assistance of approximately \$4.2 billion (commitment base) has been extended. In addition, at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in 2008 that brought together the leaders of African countries to Yokohama, Japan pledged to provide cooperation to increase agricultural productivity for doubling rice production in African countries over the next ten years. Japan reaffirmed that it would continue to provide this cooperation at the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in Yokohama in 2013, and is making steady progress to achieve its goal.

Goal 2 is to achieve universal primary education. This is another field in which Japan's contributions and



A woman sells deep-fried cassava at a restaurant in Tanzania.  
(Photo: Takeshi Kuno / JICA)



Children attending a public school in the outskirts of Cotabato in the Philippines.  
(Photo: Masataka Otsuka / JICA)

initiatives are wide-ranging. Japan has proactively led the efforts of the international community. Notably, at the UN Summit on the MDGs in September 2010, Japan announced education cooperation amounting to \$3.5 billion over five years from 2011. Furthermore, Japan proposed School for All,<sup>2</sup> a basic educational aid model that is designed to improve the learning environment comprehensively, working together with schools, communities, and educational administration. Additionally, at the 2013 TICAD V, participants set goals to increase the enrolment and completion rate and improve the quality of education.

Note 2: School for All aims to provide a quality educational environment for all children and youths by improving the learning environment comprehensively, working together with schools, communities, and educational administration. To this end, this educational aid model focuses on the following five interrelated components: (i) quality education (teacher training, lesson studies, distribution of textbooks, etc.); (ii) safe learning environment (building of school facilities, school health, and safe water supply); (iii) school-based management (school management with the participation of parents and community members); (iv) schools open to the local community (schools that meet the educational needs of the community, including adult literacy education); and (v) inclusive education (addressing the needs of children in difficult circumstances due to poverty, conflicts, disability, etc.).

On this occasion, Japan newly pledged to provide a quality educational environment for 20 million children and is steadily on course to realizing this.

Goal 3 is “gender,” namely, to promote gender equality and empower women. Japan has undertaken steady steps for “gender mainstreaming,” i.e., clarifying and accounting for the development challenges, needs, and implications for men and women in all areas and at all levels of development cooperation to achieve these objectives. In 2005, Japan unveiled the comprehensive policy document, the Initiative on Gender and Development (GAD),<sup>3</sup> at the 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women held in Beijing.

The goals related to health, including Goal 4 to reduce child mortality, Goal 5 to improve maternal health, and Goal 6 to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, are challenges for which Japan has led efforts by the international community. In 2002, the Global Fund to



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer, Ms. Satoko Maruyama teaches local women how to make folk art accessories as part of a program for improving the income of women groups in villages in the Boteti District in Botswana. (Photo: Etsuko Nagayama)



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer, Ms. Miho Iwasaki asks questions about the state of a two-year old patient suffering from malaria to her mother at a hospital in the Thyolo District, Malawi. (Photo: Kenshiro Imamura / JICA)

Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) was established, which was spun out of the Okinawa Infectious Diseases Initiative that Japan announced at the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in 2000. Japan has also proactively led efforts by the international community through the G8 Summit fora. At the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in 2008, Japan, as the country holding the G8 Presidency, compiled the Toyako Framework for Action on Global Health, which incorporates the principles for action related to health. At the G8 Muskoka Summit in 2010 held under the Canadian Presidency, Japan announced additional assistance of up to ¥50 billion over five years from 2011 for maternal and child health. In addition, Japan presented Japan's Global Health Policy 2011-2015<sup>4</sup> at the 2010 UN Summit on the MDGs. Japan announced that under this policy it would provide \$5 billion of assistance over five years from 2011, and implement EMBRACE,<sup>5</sup> a maternal and child health aid model aimed at saving the lives of 430,000 expectant and nursing mothers and 11.3 million children including infants. Japan has also steadily made regional-level efforts, including the provision of ¥50 billion of assistance and training of 120,000 African health and medical service providers unveiled at the 2013 TICAD V.

Goal 7, to ensure environmental sustainability, is another key development challenge that has significant implications on the people's lives in developing countries. Environmental sustainability is an area in which Japan has implemented a variety of initiatives, making use of

Note 3: The Initiative on GAD is a sectoral development policy that Japan established and unveiled in 2005, a decade after the Fourth World Conference on Women, in order to further strengthen supports for gender mainstreaming in response to the changes in the circumstances surrounding women in developing countries. The Initiative not only focuses on women, but also gives attention to the role of men in eliminating gender inequality. It aims to mainstream a gender perspective in all stages of policy formulation, planning, implementation, and evaluation in all fields of ODA.

Note 4: Japan pledged to provide \$5 billion over five years for health. The policy focuses especially on assistance in the areas of maternal and child health, the three major infectious diseases, and global public health emergencies, with a view to contributing to the achievement of the international development goals, the MDGs.

Note 5: EMBRACE stands for Ensure Mothers and Babies Regular Access to Care. This aid model was developed based on Japan's experience during its recovery from World War II. It focuses on ensuring a continuum of care from pre- and post-pregnancy in order to protect the lives of mothers and children.



its large pool of accumulated know-how, experience, and technologies related to tackling environmental pollution. For example, Japan announced the Proactive Diplomatic Strategy for Countering Global Warming: Actions for Cool Earth (ACE) in November 2013 through which Japan led the development and spread of innovative technologies and strengthened international partnerships for addressing climate change. In addition to implementing this strategy, Japan has provided an array of assistance using public and private finances. With regard to initiatives to secure water, which is essential for people's lives, Japan announced the Water and Sanitation Broad Partnership Initiative (WASABI) at the Fourth World Water Forum in 2006 to serve as Japan's basic guideline for international collaboration. At TICAD V in 2013, Japan committed to improving access to safe water and the sanitary condition for 10 million people. Furthermore, Japan is working to steadily implement concrete measures, including the building of urban waterworks and sewage systems and rural water supply systems.

The last MDG, Goal 8, is to "promote global partnership for development." For this goal, efforts were made to ensure progress in developing trading and financial systems and dealing with debt problems, among other issues, in order to allow developing countries with various needs and vulnerabilities to achieve economic growth amid globalization, such as least developed countries, landlocked countries, and small island countries. For example, at TICAD V in 2013, Japan announced an assistance package for African growth comprised of public and private measures amounting up to ¥3.2 trillion, including approximately ¥1.4 trillion in ODA for Africa, for the 2013-2017 five-year period.

Aside from these goal-specific initiatives, Japan has led the international community's discussions and efforts by organizing international meetings related to the achievement of the MDGs.

For example, in June 2011, five years before the



Children in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh, receive water through assistance for introduction of water-purifying equipment from Japan. (Photo: Kaku Suzuki / JICA)

deadline for achieving the MDGs, Japan hosted the ministerial-level MDGs Follow-up Meeting in Tokyo. Over 300 people attended the meeting, including delegates and representatives of more than 110 countries (24 minister-level heads of delegations), 20 regions and international organizations, Japanese and international NGOs, and the private sector. The meeting deepened discussions on the concrete challenges facing the international community in the lead-up to 2015 based on the outcome document from the previous year's UN Summit on the MDGs.

On the occasion of the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2011, Japan organized an informal ministerial-level meeting on the MDGs. Some 400 members of governments, international organizations, private groups, and NGOs attended. The meeting maintained and enhanced the momentum for the achievement of the MDGs. The discussions offered many suggestions regarding a clear way forward for accelerating future efforts and the content of the 2015 development goals (post-MDGs). Discussions at this meeting contributed to strengthening collaboration among diverse development partners, as well as giving impetus to the subsequent global discussions at a variety of fora.



The Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) held in Yokohama in June 2013.



Children in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, play with "Japan Brazil Friendship Cards" created by the Saitama Prefectural Board of Education. (Photo: Atsushi Shibuya / JICA)

## Section 3 MDG Progress Status

Thanks to these efforts by Japan and the concerted efforts of the international community, some advancements were made in achieving the MDGs by the 2015 deadline.

That is not to say, however, that all of the goals have been achieved. There were goals that were not achieved

by 2015 as well as uneven progress between the regions. In this regard, there are challenges still remaining.

These circumstances are summarized in The Millennium Development Goals Report published by the UN (the figures below are all taken from the 2015 report).

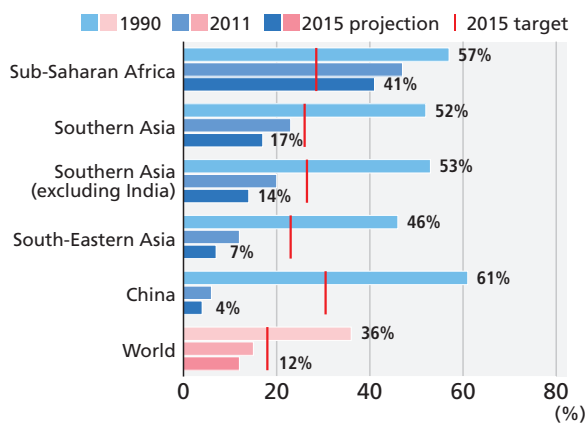
### 1. Results achieved

An example is the achievement made in the first MDG to eradicate extreme poverty. It identified a specific target: halve the proportion of people who suffer from extreme poverty by 2015 (compared to 1990) (Target 1.A). In 1990, approximately 36% of the world population (approximately 1.9 billion people) suffered from extreme poverty. The efforts made, however, resulted in that proportion dropping to one-third of the initial figure to approximately 12% (approximately 840 million people) in 2015. The target

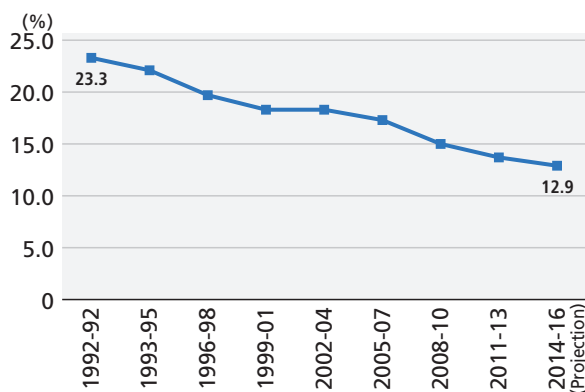


A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer, Mr. Tomoya Suzuki conducts an agricultural product survey in the state of Kassala, Sudan. (Photo: Tomoya Suzuki)

#### ● Proportion of people living in extreme poverty



#### ● Proportion of population living in hunger



Source: The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015

was thus achieved. It is considered that the rapid economic development in China and India, which accounted for a significant proportion of the population in extreme poverty, had a major impact on this achievement. It must not be forgotten that despite this achievement, 41% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa still lives in extreme poverty.

The target to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger compared to the 1990 level (Target 1.C) has also been achieved for the most part. The proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions has fallen from 23.3% in 1990-1992 to 12.9% (estimate) in 2014-2016. Nevertheless, there is considerable unevenness across regions. Progress to reduce hunger has been slow in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and West Asia.

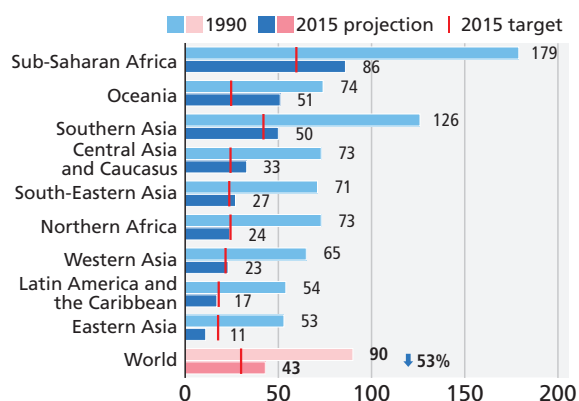
In addition, remarkable improvements were observed in the indicators related to combating infectious diseases. For example, new HIV infections in the world fell by approximately 35% between 2000 and 2014. Thanks to the advances in anti-infectious disease measures, it is estimated that over 6.2 million lives in the world were saved from malaria between 2000 and 2015 and approximately 37 million lives were saved from tuberculosis between 2000 and 2013.

## 2. Remaining challenges

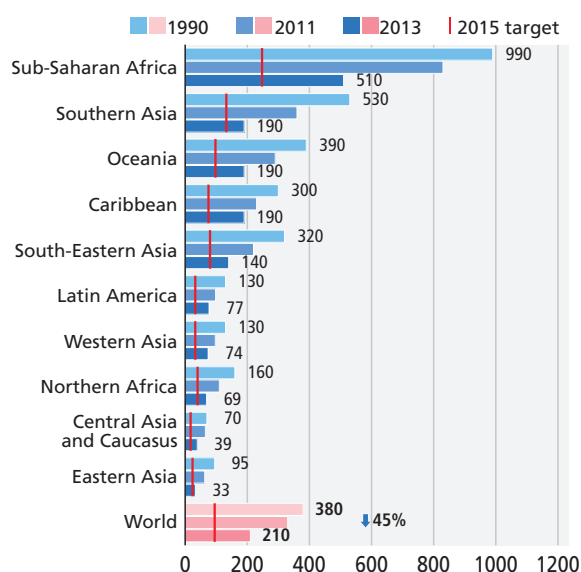
Despite the steady gains, there remain targets that are difficult to achieve, especially in the areas of education, maternal and child health, and sanitation.

In the area of education, although the goal was to achieve universal primary education by 2015, the enrolment rate in developing regions increased from

### ● Under-five child mortality rate (neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births)



### ● Maternal mortality ratio (maternal deaths per 100,000 live births)



Source: The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015



Parents and children from rural areas in the Chisamba District in Zambia receive a health checkup. (Photo: Atsushi Shibuya / JICA)

80% in 1990 to only 91% in 2015. While the literacy rate among youth increased and the narrowing gender gap was progressed, the efforts did not culminate in the achievement of this goal.

In the area of maternal and child health, while the global under-five child mortality rate decreased by 53% between 1990 and 2015, the target to reduce the mortality rate to one-third of the 1990 level was not achieved. As for the maternal mortality ratio, the target was to reduce it to one-fourth of the 1990 level by 2015, but the ratio ultimately dropped by no more than 45%.

In the area of sanitation, the target was to halve the proportion of the population without access to an improved sanitation facility. However, the proportion was not halved, declining from 46% in 1990 to no more than 32% in 2015.

The lack of uniformity in the MDG progress status across the world merits attention. As was noted earlier in connection with the progress status of the goal to eradicate extreme poverty, improvement in the situation has tended to be slow in Sub-Saharan Africa. Delays in reaching the development goals have been noticeable also in regions such as South Asia and Oceania (island countries). Such uneven progress across regions is another remaining challenge.

### Progress made

- Extreme poverty in the world was halved
- The proportion of people who suffer from hunger is forecast to be halved
- 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

- Gender, income and regional disparities exist domestically
- The under-five mortality rate has decreased but the progress falls far short of achieving the goal
- The reduction of the maternal mortality ratio has made slow progress
- Access to improved sanitary facilities is insufficient



### 3. Changes in the situation surrounding development

The global situation surrounding development has changed remarkably in the 15 years since the MDGs were established. In this regard, it is essential to pay attention to the fact that new issues are emerging that cannot be tackled adequately by pursuing the MDGs alone.

An example is the issue of disparities. The MDGs are macro indicators that measure progress at the country level. Nonetheless, as is seen in Asian countries, on the flip side of economic growth, disparities widened between regions or between the social strata and income groups in some countries. It is becoming ever more important that efforts are made to ensure that people in vulnerable positions are not left behind in the country, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and refugees. Nevertheless, country-level MDGs failed to capture these intra-country disparities. Moreover, efforts that deal with issues not necessarily covered adequately by the MDGs have gained greater importance, including responses to the increasingly serious problems of environmental pollution and climate change as well as disaster risk reduction efforts for coping with frequent natural disasters.

Recent years have also witnessed a diversification of development actors. With respect to financial flows to developing countries, private flows such as corporate



A JICA Senior Volunteer, Ms. Yoshie Hirota works as a physical therapist at the Instituto Nacional de Rehabilitación built with grant aid from Japan in Lima, Peru. (Photo: Kosuke Okahara / JICA)

investments are beginning to far exceed ODA amounts. This implies that it is becoming indispensable for governments and international organizations to partner with private companies to implement development cooperation. The role played by civil society, including NGOs, is expanding on various fronts, not only in the sites of development cooperation in developing countries, but also in recommending policies and raising awareness in developed countries. With some developing countries (emerging countries) developing rapidly, the existing “developed vs. developing country” dichotomy is losing its relevance. In the face of this situation, not only developed countries but all countries including emerging countries are called on to play their respective roles in development cooperation.

The “remaining challenges” of the MDGs that could not be achieved by 2015, as well as the newly emerging issues, have arisen as challenges that the international community must address beyond 2015. The question of how to deal with these challenges has been among the issues addressed as part of the countries’ discussions regarding the establishment of the international goals beyond 2015.



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer, Ms. Yoko Miwa interviews local people regarding their requests in Rajanganaya, Sri Lanka. (Photo: Jiro Nakahara / JICA)