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MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Developing countries as a whole met the Millennium Development Goal target of halving extreme poverty rates five years ahead of the 2015 deadline. Forecasts indicate that the extreme poverty rate will fall to 13.4 percent by 2015, a drop of more than two-thirds from the 1990 estimate of 43.6 percent. East Asia and Pacific has had the most astounding record of poverty alleviation; despite improvements, Sub-Saharan Africa still lags behind and is not forecast to meet the target by 2015.

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

The primary school completion rate for developing countries reached 91 percent in 2012 but appears to fall short of the MDG 2 target. While substantial progress was made in the 2000s, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, only East Asia and Pacific and Europe and Central Asia have achieved or are close to achieving universal primary education.

MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Developing countries have made substantial gains in closing gender gaps in education and will likely reach gender parity in primary and secondary education. In particular, the ratio of girls’ to boys’ primary and secondary gross enrollment rate in South Asia was the lowest of all regions in 1990, at 68 percent, but improved dramatically to reach gender parity in 2012, surpassing other regions that were making slower progress.

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

The under-five mortality rate in developing countries declined by half, from 99 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 50 in 2013. Despite this tremendous progress, developing countries as a whole are likely to fall short of the MDG 4 target of reducing under-five mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. However, East Asia and Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean have already achieved the target.

MDG 5: Improve maternal health

The maternal mortality ratio has steadily decreased in developing countries as a whole, from 430 in 1990 to 230 in 2013. While substantial, the decline is not enough to achieve the MDG 5 target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by 75 percent between 1990 and 2015. Regional data also indicate large declines, though no region is likely to achieve the target on time. Despite considerable drops, the maternal mortality ratio in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia remains high.

MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

The prevalence of HIV is highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. The spread of HIV/AIDS there has slowed, and the proportion of adults living with HIV has begun to fall while the survival rate of those with access to antiretroviral drugs has increased. Global prevalence has remained flat since 2000. Tuberculosis prevalence, incidence, and death rates have fallen since 1990. Globally, the target of halting and reversing tuberculosis incidence by 2015 has been achieved.

MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

In developing countries the proportion of people with access to an improved water source rose from 35 percent to 57 percent, but 2.5 billion people still lack access. The large urban-rural disparity, especially in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, is the principal reason the sanitation target is unlikely to be met on time.

MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

In 2000 Internet use was rapidly increasing in high-income economies but barely under way in developing countries. Now developing countries are catching up. Internet users per 100 people have grown 27 percent a year since 2000. The debt service-to-export ratio for developing countries averaged 11 percent in 2013, half its 2000 level but with wide disparity across regions. It will likely rise, considering the 33 percent increase in their combined external debt stock since 2010.