

Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals

Development Issues that the International Community Should Tackle Jointly

MDGs: Aiming at Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, the UN member states adopted the Millennium Declaration, which comprised goals to be achieved by the international communities in the 21st century. The declaration served to clarify the direction and role of the UN on issues of peace and security, development and poverty, the environment, human rights, and protection of the vulnerable. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were then set as a common framework for achieving these goals aimed at poverty reduction in developing countries, by integrating this Millennium Declaration and the other international development goals adopted by major international conferences and summits throughout the 1990s. The MDGs comprise eight goals to be achieved by the end of 2015.

Since the agreement on the MDGs, many countries have achieved remarkable progress in reduction of poverty and satisfaction of basic needs. However, achievement rates vary according to the goal, country, and region. Delays in progress toward MDG targets are especially prominent in conflict-afflicted or vulnerable countries, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. The goals that are expected to be achieved globally include: halving the population ratio of impoverished people; eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education (gender equality); and increasing access to safe drinking water. Goals that seem to be difficult to achieve are: halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; achieving universal primary education; and reducing the maternal mortality ratio.

JICA's Contribution toward Achieving the MDGs

In a world of globalization and interdependence, it is becoming important to provide assistance that focuses on human security and the stability of each individual, but not only on a bilateral basis. With the goal of realizing human security, JICA is contributing to achieving the MDGs in an effort to attain dynamic development that benefits all people.

● Support for the Poor and Reduction of Disparities

It is estimated that the population living in extreme poverty in developing countries will be 1.6 billion people by 2015, and these people are concentrated mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Since most of these people live in rural areas and also depend on agriculture for their livelihood, it is especially important to focus on the development of rural areas.

In an effort to advance inclusive assistance for the poor, since 2010 JICA has studied methods of cultivating fruits and vegetables suitable for high-altitude regions, and has provided

technical guidance for farmers in six eastern districts of Bhutan that have particularly high poverty rates. As a result of these efforts, not only are farmers able to earn hard cash through cooperative shipping and sales, young people are also returning from urban areas to inherit the management of family farms. In Ethiopia, because of extensive damage that resulted from ongoing drought conditions, JICA initiated a weather-damage insurance system in 2012. Through this insurance system, payments are made to insured farmers when rainfall drops below a certain level. This system is intended to enhance farmers' resilience against the risks of irregular or aberrant weather conditions.

● Achieving Universal Primary Education

JICA has also been working on improving the quality of education in Bangladesh, because the country has faced significant obstacles in achieving the goal of universal primary education. In cooperation with nine other aid institutions, JICA has provided financial support for the Third Primary Education Development Program, established by the Bangladesh government. Since 2004, JICA has also been providing assistance for enhancement of primary science and mathematics education; this effort has yielded promising results. The completion rate at target schools under this program exceeds the national average.

● Eliminating the Gender Gap in Primary and Secondary Education

With regard to promoting gender equality, JICA has contributed to eliminating the gender gap in the educational field. In South Asia, for example, the literacy rates for adult women are quite low, so it is important to broaden their learning opportunities via literacy education programs mainly targeting women. In Pakistan, JICA has assisted in improving literacy education administration through non-formal education support. In addition, to address the dropout issue for female primary and secondary school students, JICA is developing practical curricula that can be seen as useful for daily life.

● Improving Maternal and Child Health and Welfare

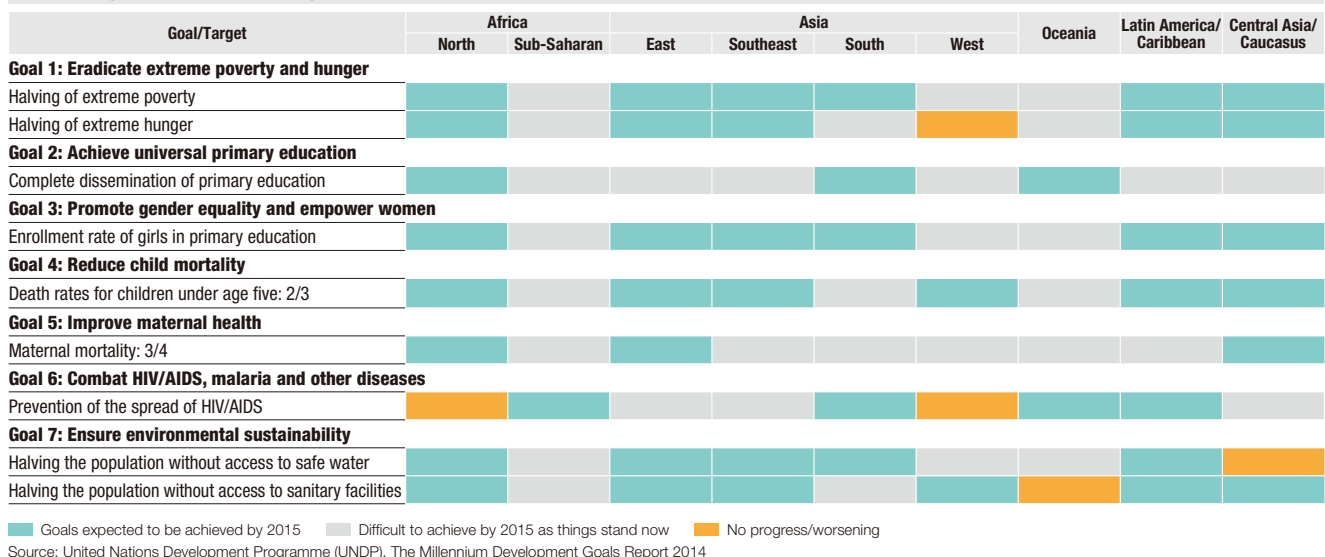
The improvement of maternal and child health and welfare has been limited and insufficient for poor people around the world. In the Philippines, which stands out as a poorly performing country in a regional index for maternal and child health, JICA worked on enhancing maternal and child health services in two provinces. This effort resulted in a significant improvement in maternal health and welfare, and has been accompanied by a significant rise in the number of babies delivered by doctors or midwives. In light of these favorable outcomes, JICA is now providing support to expand this approach to other provinces. In addition to these forms of support, JICA will aim to realize universal health coverage under the concept that all people should have access to timely and reasonably priced health care services, including

The Eight MDGs

Logos created by the NPO Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa (Don't let it be - World Poverty)



Global progress toward achieving the MDGs



health promotion, as well as disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

● Access to Safe Water and Sanitation

As for the improvement of access to safe water, the goal was achieved across the world in 2010. However, most Sub-Saharan African countries are still having difficulty achieving this goal. Specifically, access to basic sanitary facilities is one of the goals that lags the most. In three regions in Senegal with limited access to sanitation, JICA provided assistance not only to teachers and enlightenment officers involved in health education, but also to workers whom JICA trained in the development and construction of model toilets. Along with population concentration in urban areas, there have been some issues regarding water supply in Asian countries where the goal has been already achieved. For example, JICA assisted in the introduction of a remote monitoring control apparatus to the urban area of Cebu in the Philippines, for accurate understanding of water supply conditions. JICA, in collaboration with Yokohama City, is planning to provide operational training on the use of this monitoring apparatus.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Universal Global Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been adopted, at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, after the rounds of discussions among the international community over the last few years. It is clear at this point that ongoing efforts will be necessary to deal with targets underachieved in the current MDGs. In particular, in terms of emphasizing the people left behind by the MDGs, an inclusive view on internal disparities will become increasingly important.

Moreover, since countries that achieved remarkable economic

growth have concomitantly high MDG achievement rates, it has been reaffirmed that economic growth has a significant impact on poverty reduction. On the other hand, some global issues are becoming major risks that can disturb the smooth achievement of the MDG targets. These issues include natural disasters, rising food costs, financial crises, and infectious diseases. For this reason, it is important to incorporate an approach to managing such significant risks into development plans for the future. At the same time, resilience-building should also be emphasized, because the ability to cope with such potential risks will be critical to the formation of a successful new development framework. An approach to risk management is particularly important with regard to disaster risk reduction, as this can serve as a key component of disaster recovery and community resilience-building. In fact, this sort of risk-management approach is gaining worldwide attention as a style of cooperation that utilizes Japan's cumulative knowledge and experience in the field of disaster risk reduction and recovery.

Populations that keep growing bring about an increase in demand for food and resources, while at the same time greenhouse gases and waste resulting from economic activities of ever-larger populations have created significant concern about the heavy burden on the planet. Even though environmental sustainability was included in the MDGs, this issue is becoming more significant now as we seek to look beyond the MDGs.

The SDGs are expected to promote efforts to resolve or ameliorate issues that have not been resolved under the MDGs, and also to set universal goals and targets for new and emerging issues. With the aim of realizing human security, JICA will continue contributing to the establishment of a new development framework in developing countries by building on and extrapolating from its past support, which has focused on inclusive and resilient development perspectives.