

## FROM MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This report aims to describe global health in 2015, looking back 15 years at the trends and positive forces during the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) era and assessing the main challenges for the coming 15 years.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is of unprecedented scope and ambition, applicable to all countries, and goes well beyond the MDGs. While poverty eradication, health, education, and food security and nutrition remain priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprise a broad range of economic, social and environmental objectives, and offer the prospect of more peaceful and inclusive societies.

Progress towards the MDGs, on the whole, has been remarkable, including, for instance, poverty reduction, education improvements and increased access to safe drinking-water. Progress on the three health goals and targets has also been considerable. Globally, the HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria epidemics were “turned around”, child mortality and maternal mortality decreased greatly (53% and 44%, respectively, since 1990), despite falling short of the MDG targets.

During the MDG era, many global progress records were set. The MDGs have gone a long way to changing the way we think and talk about the world, shaping the international discourse and debate on development, and have also contributed to major increases in development assistance. However, several limitations of the MDGs have also become apparent, including a limited focus, resulting in verticalization of health and disease programmes in countries, a lack of attention to strengthening health systems, the emphasis on a “one-size-fits-all” development planning approach, and a focus on aggregate targets rather than equity.

The 17 goals and 169 targets, including one specific goal for health with 13 targets, of the new development agenda integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development around people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. The health goal is broad: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. Health has a central place as a major contributor to and beneficiary of sustainable development policies. There are many linkages between the health goal and other goals and targets, reflecting the integrated approach that is underpinning the SDGs. Universal health coverage (UHC), one of the 13 health goal targets, provides an overall framework for the implementation of a broad and ambitious health agenda in all countries.

Monitoring and review of progress will be a critical element of the SDGs. An indicator framework is still being developed and is scheduled to be adopted in 2016.

### MDGs

In September 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration, establishing a global partnership of countries and development partners committed to eight voluntary development goals, to be achieved by 2015. Representing ambitious moral and practical commitments, the MDGs called for action to: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development. Three of the eight MDGs are focused on health, while health is also a component of several other MDGs (nutrition, water and sanitation).

There has been unprecedented mobilization of resources around MDG-related activities across a wide spectrum of global and national initiatives and the development community has convened on a regular basis to assess progress. Major global events related to the MDGs include: the 2001 and 2011 UN special sessions on HIV/AIDS, convened to intensify international activity to fight the epidemic; the 2005 World Summit, which reaffirmed the commitments to the Millennium Declaration; the 2008 high-level event at the UN in New York, at which there was a call to accelerate progress towards the MDGs; the 2010 Millennium Development Goals Summit, which concluded with the adoption of a Global Action Plan and the announcement of multiple initiatives against poverty, hunger and disease, as well as initiatives designed to accelerate progress on women's and children's health, and at which specific MDG-related commitments were made by countries and others; and, most recently, the 2013 UN special event to follow up on MDG-related efforts. Many regional and country events have also been held to review progress and make new commitments.

The MDGs have gone a long way to changing the way we think and talk about the world, shaping the international discourse and debate on development, and stimulating popular awareness of moral imperatives such as achieving gender equality and ending poverty and starvation. The MDGs have also contributed to major increases in development assistance, as evidenced by the 66% jump in official development assistance (ODA, in real terms) between 2000 and 2014 when it reached an unprecedented US\$ 135 billion. More aid has flowed into education and public health, while also being directed towards poorer countries to supplement the increases in domestically sourced development finance. The influence on donor policies and practices and – more variably – on governments in the developing world, has been considerable. For instance, the MDGs (specifically MDG 6) were integral considerations in the policy formation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), which was created in 2002.

Tracking progress towards the MDGs has required a significant investment in measuring the 60 key indicators which are used to monitor the 8 MDGs and their 21 targets. Annual progress reports are produced by the Inter-agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on MDG indicators, coordinated by the UN Statistics Division, and based on the contributions of technical agencies. In 2008, the World Health Assembly called for regular monitoring of progress towards the health MDGs and has conducted annual reviews of progress since 2009, based on a report prepared by the Secretariat derived from the WHO annual statistical overview and WHO Global Health Observatory data.

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