



Millennium Development Goals: A Status Report

At the UN-sponsored Millennium Summit in September 2000, 147 world leaders agreed to a global compact known as the Millennium Development Goals. The goals were embraced anew at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development. And in June 2003 at the Group of Eight summit in Evian, France, leaders of the world's wealthiest nations reiterated their support for the Millennium Development Goals. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan publicly urged the G8 leaders to give "due priority to the issues of poverty and development, which are of overriding importance for the great majority of the world's people."

The eight goals—each a specific commitment to reverse the spread of poverty and disease by 2015—are backed by an action plan with 18 quantifiable targets combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. The goals also assign clear responsibilities to rich countries to provide more aid, fairer terms of trade, and meaningful debt relief to developing countries. The United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 2003* provides the most comprehensive analysis to date of the status of this global campaign and the concrete policy reforms and resource commitments needed to make these goals a reality by 2015.

But the challenges are great:

- ❖ More than a billion people still struggle to survive on less than a dollar a day. According to the *Human Development Report 2003*, most of them also lack access to basic health services and safe drinking water.
- ❖ Globally, one child out of five does not complete primary school.

- ❖ In much of the developing world, the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to spread unchecked: More than 14 million children lost one or both parents to the disease in 2001, and the number of AIDS orphans is expected to double by 2010.
- ❖ Nearly 800 million people, or 15 percent of the world's population, suffer from chronic hunger. Under the Millennium Development Goals, the world community is striving to halve that percentage by 2015. But if current trends continue, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa will not meet that target.
- ❖ In sub-Saharan Africa, a child has only a one-in-three chance of completing primary school. And one in four school-aged children in South Asia are not being educated.
- ❖ Half a million women die in pregnancy or childbirth each year—or one every minute of every day. A woman in sub-Saharan Africa is 100 times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than is a woman in Western Europe.

These negative trends can be reversed through political will in the developing world and new financial commitments and trade policies in the wealthiest nations, UNDP contends. In the leadership ranks of the developing world, there is a growing consensus that the Millennium Development Goals represent the best chance yet to lift hundreds of millions out of poverty, illiteracy and sickness.

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.