

# The Millenium Development Goals

A guide for South African civil society

Using the MDGs to promote environmental  
sustainability and socio-economic justice

Environmental Monitoring Group

2005

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## Acronyms

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Millennium Development Goals	MDGs
Civil Society (Organisations)	CS(O)
Non-Governmental Organisations	NGOs
Community Based Organisations	CBOs
United Nations	UN
New Partnership for African Development	NEPAD
Statistics South Africa	SSA
Treatment Action Campaign	TAC
Genetically Modified (Organism)	GM(O)
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership	REEEP
Budget Information Service	BIS
Highly Indebted Poor Country	HIPC
Official Development Assistance	ODA
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	OECD
Development Assistance Committee	DAC
Gross National Income	GNI
Gross Domestic Product	GDP
Group of Eight	G8

# Introduction

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In September 2005, world leaders will meet in New York to discuss the status of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and efforts to promote environmental and social sustainability. Civil society (CS) cannot miss an opportunity to engage in this process. This guide is intended to help South African civil society understand the MDGs and how they can be used to encourage a more sustainable South Africa.

The structure of this guide is as follows: *Environmental sustainability in South Africa* reviews current national trends concerning issues of socio-economic equity and environmental sustainability. *Defining a development agenda* charts the evolution of the international commitment to development while *A new approach, Reporting on the MDGs* and the *Millennium Development Goals* all familiarise CS with the MDGs and explain how they function. *Using this guide* introduces the themes that will be covered in the rest of the booklet, explaining how CS can engage with the MDGs to promote sustainability. *South Africa's commitment to sustainable development* provides evidence of South Africa's repeated pledge to support sustainable development. The following sections—*Using the MDGs to monitor sustainable development in South Africa*, *Using the MDGs to strengthen the existing work of NGOs*, *Using the MDGs to advance a sustainable development agenda*, *Using the MDGs to mobilise additional resources*—all examine in-depth ways that CS can engage with and use the MDGs. The next five sections discuss different aspects of the process of implementing and monitoring the MDGs in South Africa. The *Checklist for civil society* and *Finding more information* are tools to facilitate engagement with the MDGs, providing sources for more information, useful contact information and a checklist to prepare civil society organisations (CSOs) to engage with the MDGs. *Annex One* offers a detailed look at South Africa's progress in realising the MDGs so far.

## Environmental sustainability in South Africa

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*In over a decade of democracy, South Africa has made significant strides towards achieving sustainable development, but real challenges remain. Perhaps most pressing is the continued poverty that marks the country. Nearly half of all South Africans live below the poverty line and the unemployment rate continues to grow. The large—and increasing—income gap between the wealthy and the poor places South Africa among the ten most unequal societies in the world. The stress caused by spreading HIV/Aids threatens to worsen poverty and undo many of the advances made in achieving sustainable development.*

From an environmental perspective, South Africa continues to struggle to overcome the environmental injustices of the Apartheid regime. It still relies on heavily polluting fossil fuels, using inefficient methods of production that annually places the nation among the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases. The nation wrestles with questions of how to promote development that promises benefits to all while preserving biodiversity and protecting natural resources from overexploitation. A shortage of water remains a limiting factor to growth; South Africa must balance the demands of consumers against its legal obligations to provide water to all. For the first time since 1999, the country is completing a 'state of the environment' report that will look at the environmental problems facing the nation and the advances made in promoting sustainable development. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism plans to publish the report near the end of 2005.

*Of special concern is the controversy over the delivery of basic services (water, sanitation and electricity). Consumers in poorer areas face mounting charges and increasingly harsh punishments for a failure to pay arrears. The government has yet to fulfil its promise to provide water services to many rural areas.*

In spite of these mounting challenges to sustainable develop-

ment in South Africa, funding for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) is diminishing as donors invest a greater percentage of their funds in government programmes and policies.

South African trends reflect similar patterns from around the world. Despite advances made in limiting environmental destruction and promoting environmentally sustainable growth, the pressures on the environment continue to mount. It is clear that a new approach to development is needed.

## Defining a development agenda

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In the 1990s, the United Nations (UN) convened a series of international conferences. At these meetings, international delegates crafted a development agenda they thought would solve many of the social, economic and environmental problems facing the world. Most of these conferences, listed below, did not allow for extensive CS participation.

1900	New York	World Summit for Children
1992	Rio De Janeiro	Conference on the Environment and Development
1993	Vienna	World Conference on Human Rights
1995	Beijing	Fourth World Conference on Women
1995	Copenhagen	World Summit for Social Development
1996	Istanbul	Second UN Conference on Human Settlements
2000	New York	Millennium Summit
2002	Monterey	International Conference on Financing for Development
2002	Johannesburg	World Summit on Sustainable Development

*Recognising that past development efforts had failed to achieve sustainable development and reduce poverty, world leaders agreed upon a new approach for development in 2000.*



## A new approach: The Millennium Development Goals

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In September 2000, 189 states, including South Africa, signed the Millennium Declaration, committing to achieving the MDGs spelled out in the declaration by 2015. The eight MDGs focus on many aspects of poverty around the world and work to promote sustainable development by establishing targets and selecting indicators to measure gains in income, education, access to global trade and markets and environmental sustainability. Much work remains to be done—in South Africa and the world—if the MDGs are to be achieved by 2015.

The MDGs depart from the development agendas advanced in the 1990s. *They do not outline a strategy for achieving sustainable development. Rather, the MDGs provide a framework for implementing practical, measurable and comprehensive solutions at the national level.* They act as a yardstick for measuring development efforts. The MDGs require countries to monitor, evaluate and share progress on key indicators that can be used to measure the extent of poverty in the country. Each of the eight goals is divided into targets; the monitoring of selected indicators tracks progress in achieving the goals.



## Reporting on the MDGs

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Reporting national progress on achieving the MDGs is a key component of the goals. Nations, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme, must produce Country Reports detailing advances made in improving environmental sustainability and reducing poverty. The Country Reports require significant involvement from CS and the active participation of leading policymakers. The required monitoring and sharing of information is intended to encourage countries to take individual action to promote sustainable development. The Country Reports serve two important functions:

- 1) Countries must share information that evaluates their progress in achieving the goals.
- 2) The process of reporting allows individuals and groups to have access to information about national development efforts.

How do the MDGs work? Simple. Countries agree to the eight goals. Each goal contains targets; each target is measured by a set of indicators. Countries should select their own targets and indicators. Countries must prepare a report about their efforts.

Goals (International) → Targets (South Africa) → Indicators (South Africa)

# Millennium Development Goals: Goals, targets, and indicators

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## Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

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Target 1 Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Indicators

- Proportion of population with an income below \$1/day
- Poverty gap ratio
- Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

Target 2 Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicators

- Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age
- Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption

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## Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

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Target 3 Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Indicators

- Net enrolment ratio in primary education
- Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
- Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds

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## Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

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Target 4 Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators

- Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

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**Goal 4**    **Reduce child mortality**

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**Target 5**    Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

Indicators

- Under-five mortality rate
- Infant mortality rate
- Proportion of one-year-old children immunised against measles

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**Goal 5**    **Improve maternal health**

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**Target 6**    Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate

Indicators

- Maternal mortality rate
- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

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**Goal 6**    **Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases**

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**Target 7**    Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDs

Indicators

- HIV prevalence among pregnant women 15-24 years old
- Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate
- Ratio of school attendance of orphans to non-orphans

## The Millenium Development Goals

Target 8 Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

### Indicators

- Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
- Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures
- Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
- Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under DOTS

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## Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

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Target 9 Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

### Indicators

- Proportion of land covered by forests
- Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area
- Energy use
- Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone depleting CFCs
- Proportion of population using solid fuels

Target 10 Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation

### Indicators

- Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural
- Proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural

Target 11 By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million urban slum dwellers

### Indicators

- Proportion of households with access to secure land tenure

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**Goal 8**    **Develop a global partnership for development**

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- Target 12    Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction
- Target 13    Address the special needs of the least developed countries, including tariff and quota-free access for least developed countries' exports, enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction
- Target 14    Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states (through the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of small island developing states and the outcome of the 22nd special session of the General Assembly)
- Target 15    Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Indicators (for all the above)

- Net ODA as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income
- Proportion of total bilateral, sector allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
- Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied
- ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their GNIs
- ODA received in small island developing states as proportion of their GNIs

## The Millenium Development Goals

- Proportion of the total developed country imports from developing countries and from LDCs, admitted free of duty
- Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries
- Agricultural support estimates for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP
- Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity
- Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC initiative decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points
- Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative
- Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services

Target 16 In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

### Indicators

- Unemployment rate of young people, 15-24 years old, each sex and total

Target 17 In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

### Indicators

- Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

Target 18 In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

### Indicators

- Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population
- Personal computers in use per 100 population and internet users per 100 population

## Using this guide

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Many members of CS in South Africa view the MDGs with some suspicion, the memory of broken promises and disruptive social agendas fresh in their minds. The MDGs, like many of the past development agendas, were developed without significant participation from CS and African representatives. The MDGs are endorsed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the UN, the G8, and the European Union—the very same organisations that advocate strongly for neo-liberal reforms that have caused much harm in African economies.

Still, the *MDGs are a useful tool for CS in South Africa*. This guide is meant to suggest ways that CS can engage with the MDGs and use them to promote a development agenda that puts people first, advances sustainable development and at-



*NGOs can use the MDGs to lobby government officials.*

tempts to reduce and eradicate the brutality of poverty. Specifically, this guide:

- demonstrates how the MDGs can be used by CS to monitor development efforts in South Africa to ensure that they focus on sustainability and poverty;
- illustrates how the MDGs can be used to strengthen the existing work of CSOs;
- shows how the MDGs can be used to advance a sustainable development agenda; and
- explains how to employ the MDGs to mobilise additional resources and form partnerships.

This guide also provides an overview of the MDG process in South Africa and explain how CSOs can contribute. *The MDGs offer the opportunity for CSOs to work together to reclaim the development agenda for all South Africans.*

## South Africa's commitment to sustainable development

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The MDGs are one of the most recent attempts of the government to ensure environmental sustainability and promote sustainable development. South Africa pledged to support sustainable development in its national constitution, including in the Bill of Rights a clause that obliges the government to ensure “ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development”. The government reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development in the Millennium Declaration, the National Environmental Management Act and in the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Other key policy instruments that endorse sustainable development include the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy, the Urban Renewal Programme, the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, as well as the National Sustainable Development Strategy (to be published in March of 2006). As



this brief list demonstrates, the South African government has repeatedly promised to promote sustainable development.

*The South African government has repeatedly promised to work towards sustainable development. The MDGs provide a way for civil society to monitor sustainable development efforts in South Africa.*

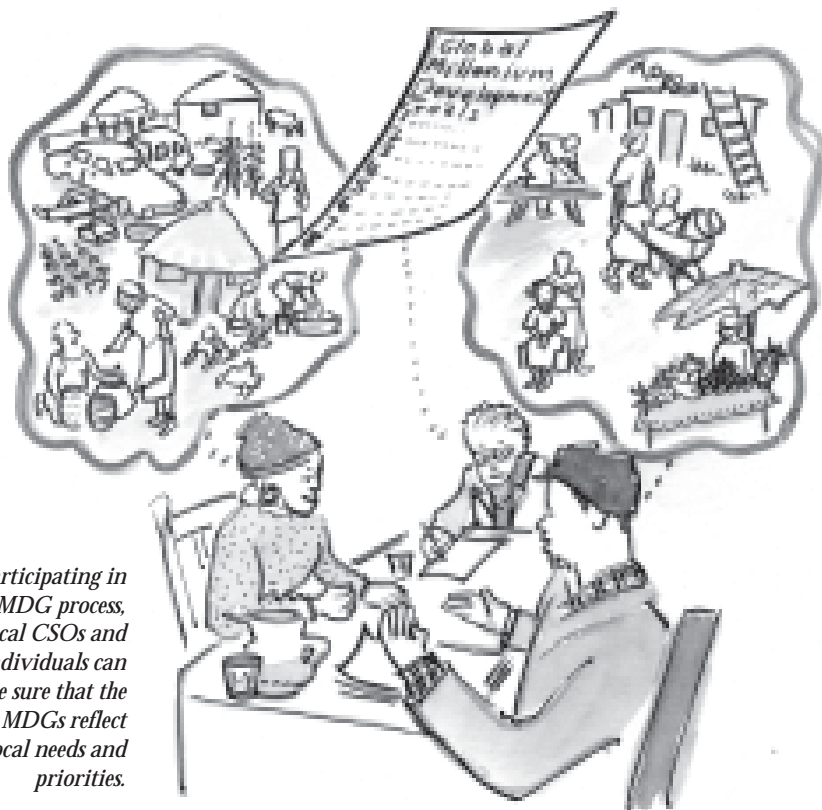
## How can civil society use the MDGs

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to monitor sustainable development in South Africa?

An important role exists for CS to participate in the localisation of the MDGs. The MDGs must be filtered down to the community level and *localised*. The process of localisation works to ensure that local concerns are reflected in the selection of targets and indicators. In this way, the progress measured by the indicators can better reflect improvements in environmental sustainability and reducing poverty. The process of localisation increases community and national ownership of the goals and targets, focusing attention on developing policies that address national development concerns. In South Africa, those include high rates of unemployment, the large income disparity, the connection between continued environmental degradation and poverty and the declining primary education rate.

What do we mean by *localisation*? Localisation means including local needs and priorities in the goals. The targets and indicators should be selected with the help of CS, for they can provide a local perspective. For example, how can poverty be defined in South Africa? How can poverty be defined in the Western Cape? In Khayelitsha? What indicators can best measure advances in environmental sustainability in South Africa? *Key to this process of localisation is the selection of appropriate indicators.*



*By participating in the MDG process, local CSOs and individuals can make sure that the global MDGs reflect local needs and priorities.*

Other countries have been successful in adapting the MDGs to meet their unique local circumstances.

- Vietnam undertook an extensive localisation process of the international MDGs, substituting country specific targets and goals after a consultation process that included government agencies, donors, and national/ international NGOs.
- In Albania, NGOs and other observers created reports for regions that used the NGO's capacity to survey the

areas in which they worked to provide the national government with reports that quickly and accurately reported the development constraints faced by the country. Multi-stakeholder regional boards used these reports to create regional development strategies. This process involved the local citizens and municipal and regional governments in the process of developing the goals for Albania, increasing the sense of ownership and partnership between different sectors. The process made generous use of the local media to inform citizens of the campaign.

- Carapague, Paraguay has become the first municipality to adopt the MDGs and work to localise them and make them relevant at a local level.
- Kenya is advancing a campaign to involve CSOs in the MDGs to ensure that CSOs can contribute to the establishment of a monitoring and reporting process for the national MDGs.
- In Zambia, the government is linking the indicators in the Poverty Reduction Campaigns to the MDGs, thus connecting national development policy with the international targets. Further, through consultative meetings with stakeholders, the government will define specific indicators to chart Zambian progress in realising the MDGs.

One of the issues that may prevent CSOs from monitoring the indicators is simply not knowing which government agency is responsible for collecting that information. The Country Report for South Africa should make clear where and how CSOs can access information on the MDG indicators.

Below is a list of existing institutions that currently monitor indicators used in the MDGs (website details are provided at the end of this guide):

- *Department of Health* records statistics on nutrition, HIV/Aids, contraceptive use, malaria prevalence/death rates and tuberculosis prevalence/death rates.

- *Department of Environment and Tourism* records statistics on energy and land use and biodiversity conservation.
- *Statistics South Africa* monitors statistics relating to education enrolment, literacy rates, gender equity and access to secure housing and improved water and sanitation services.
- *Department of Education* records statistics relating to school enrolment.
- *Education Foundation of South Africa* monitors gender equity issues in school.
- *South African Demographic and Health Survey (Department of Health)* recorded mortality rates, immunisation rates and access to health care.

The MDGs require extensive documentation and record keeping on behalf of the government. The government must compile a Country Report that is shared among national and

*Civil society can monitor the indicators for the MDGs to assess progress in realising the goals.*



international audiences, increasing the transparency of government actions. CS can use the documentation that results from the monitoring and evaluation of the MDGs to assess government efforts to achieve sustainability.

*The end result of these measures is increased communication about sustainable development in South Africa.* The documentation required by the MDG Country Report becomes part of the public debate concerning the MDGs. Increased communication ensures that sustainability and poverty reduction efforts remain a focus and priority of the government and CS.

## How can the MDGs strengthen the existing work of NGOs?

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The MDGs can be used by NGOs without changing the focus of their work. Indeed, the MDGs can complement existing campaigns and projects by providing new resources and strategies.

*NGOs must consider how the MDGs intersect with their work.* Many organisations have not considered how the MDGs can actually complement their existing efforts. Many NGOs may actually work on MDGs that fall outside of their primary sector.

- *The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC):* One of the leading HIV advocacy groups in South Africa, the TAC has been at the forefront of pushing for treatment for all South Africans affected by HIV. Their goals also include preventing the spread of HIV and creating a regional and global network of groups working on the same issues. Both goals relate to the MDGs. The TAC recognises that the MDGs offers a point of legitimacy for lobbying in the government, writing in a recent newsletter: “We support the call of the conference to all governments, including our own, to implement urgent measures to ‘reverse the current trends in malnutrition, HIV infection and food

insecurity in most countries in the region, in order to achieve the MDGs’’. (*TAC Electronic Newsletter*, April 26, 2005)

- *Biowatch*: In opposing the introduction of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into South Africa and promoting sustainable agriculture, Biowatch holds the government accountable for its pledge to eradicate poverty. Biowatch believes that GMOs will only further the cycle of poverty that traps many South African farmers; a government committed to meeting the MDGs cannot allow GM seeds to be planted. This example demonstrates how the MDGs can be integrated into an existing campaign. Such connections prove mutually beneficial. Biowatch holds the government accountable in its commitments to the MDGs and is able to link its current campaign to the government’s commitment to reduce poverty.

As these examples demonstrate, Biowatch and the TAC both endorse and work on MDGs that appear to fall outside of their policy interests. *They use the MDGs because they evidence real government commitment and allow the organisations to hold the government accountable.*

## How can civil society use the MDGs

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to advance a sustainable development agenda?

Currently, South Africa practices neo-liberal trade practices. The Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, adopted in 1996, prioritised accelerated trade liberalisation, encouraged privatisation of services and promoted the deregulation of markets. This strategy replaced the Redistribution and Development Programme (RDP). NEPAD, which governs trade relations between South Africa and the rest of the conti-

ment, focuses on export-led growth. Laws also make common the use of cost recovery for service delivery. Local municipalities, wielding more authority than ever but often lacking increased capacity, struggle to balance the competing demands on their resources.

CS must recognise that simply meeting the MDGs in South Africa requires meeting more than a statistic. *Meeting the MDGs requires a substantive change in the quality of life for many of South Africa's poorest and underprivileged citizens.* One example illustrates the merit in this cautionary warning. South Africa claimed success in meeting Target 10, halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation. In 2004, South Africa celebrated the delivery of clean drinking water and sanitation services to its 10 millionth customer since 1994, technically achieving its obligations under the MDGs. Yet, this celebration hides the inequities still existing in the water infrastructure and delivery service today. Millions—especially rural residents—do not have access to safe drinking water. Poor South Africans face water cut-offs and a loss of human dignity when they cannot pay their monthly bills. This situation—which both celebrates the efforts of the South African government in righting existing inequities and warns against the pitfalls of early celebration—illustrates that achieving the MDGs is not necessarily enough to improve the lives of the South African poor. *Poverty is more than an abstract definition and deserves more consideration than a statistic can offer.*

*Meeting the MDGs in South Africa means realising real changes in the quality of life.*

The MDGs can be used to advocate for a sustainable development agenda. By signing the Millennium Declaration, the government agreed to work towards the realisation of the

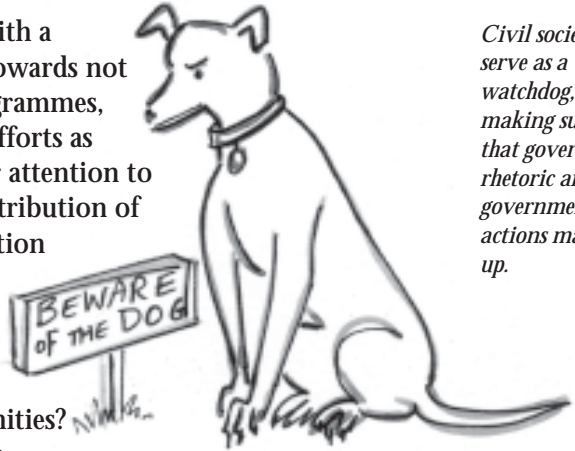


*While South African officials celebrate the delivery of water to 10 million residents, millions cannot afford water from the pump. Does this represent progress?*

**MDGs.** *Such a commitment validates many of the concerns of CSOs and affords CSOs the opportunity to gain increased visibility in holding the government accountable and demanding action.* CSOs, which have long been advocating for placing poverty and development at the core of national policies, can now rely on these public commitments to advance their own agendas. CSOs must ensure that the government follows through on these commitments as well. CSOs must monitor government statements and actions to ensure that they evidence a commitment to advancing a people-centred sustainable development policy. This involves asking questions and being critical of government officials. CSOs must also ensure that the government remains committed to the goals outlined in the MDGs. CSOs can serve as a watchdog, looking critically at all government policies so that the commitments made towards realising the localised MDGs are reflected in all government actions.



CSOs must look with a similarly critical eye towards not only government programmes, but international aid efforts as well, paying particular attention to the question of the distribution of benefits. What population receives the benefits? Are the jobs that are created through the project long-term employment opportunities? Are large corporations continuing to benefit economically from these development programmes?



*Civil society can serve as a watchdog, making sure that government rhetoric and government actions match up.*

**Budget Information Service (BIS):** Recognising that oversight of the governmental budget processes is necessary to monitor and evaluate the impact on the poor and under-privileged, the BIS analyzes government budgets in South Africa to assess the commitment to the poor contained in the budgets. The BIS trains CSOs to analyse budgets and hopes to ensure that such processes can be sustainable. Their reliance on networks provides a forum for showcasing their work and provides opportunities for greater research projects. The BIS, which focuses on the poor, children and women, improves governance and provides CS with more information for their campaigns. The BIS attempts to hold the government accountable for pro-poor spending, advancing the MDGs.  
<http://www.idasa.org.za/bis>

*The MDGs give CS legitimacy in advocacy and lobbying efforts. CSOs can use the MDGs to hold the government accountable for making real progress in advancing sustainable development and reducing poverty.*

While the MDGs may offer to bring in external development assistance to certain countries, South Africa will most likely not be a major beneficiary. It is especially important, then, to ensure that the existing internally mobilised resources are used effectively and efficiently. CS monitoring efforts described above can expose wasteful expenditure. Further, they can point out opportunities for *integrated development planning*. CS can also make use of integrated development planning in their own works to use their existing resources more effectively.



*Integrated development planning allows municipalities to craft coherent development strategies and avoid potential conflicts between programmes, ensuring the efficient use of available resources.*

Incorporating the MDGs into education and training efforts will *build capacity to promote a sustainable development agenda*. When NGOs conduct trainings and seminars for CBOs, they should explain the framework of the MDGs and promote the MDGs as a tool useful for planning, monitoring, and evaluating sustainable development. Such efforts will enable CBOs to use and understand how the MDG framework can advance their own efforts.

What is *integrated development planning*? Local authorities in South Africa must complete an integrated development plan. This is a plan that provides a framework for development in the region and co-ordinates programmes to provide better service. Without integrated planning, development efforts may overlap, wasting precious resources. Sustainable development requires such a broad view of development efforts. NGOs can use a similar strategy to use their resources efficiently.

*The MDGs provide opportunities to build capacity to advocate for sustainable development at the community level.*

## How can the MDGs mobilise additional resources for NGOs?

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The MDGs facilitate the creation of new partnerships with potential benefits, ranging from increased funding to increased training and opportunities for advancement. The MDGs, which require the broad support of many stakeholders, will bring together a large section of the population to work on common development goals. Stressing the need for *sustainable commitments*, these goals have the potential to create long-term equal relationships. These goals clearly call for the active engagement

and participation of CS and hold much promise to ensure its continued participation in the process.

Perhaps most promising from the goals is the emphasis on partnership—between the international community, CS, and national governments and between the national governments and CS—acknowledging that poverty of the world is a concern for all. All are important *partners* in working towards achieving the MDGs.

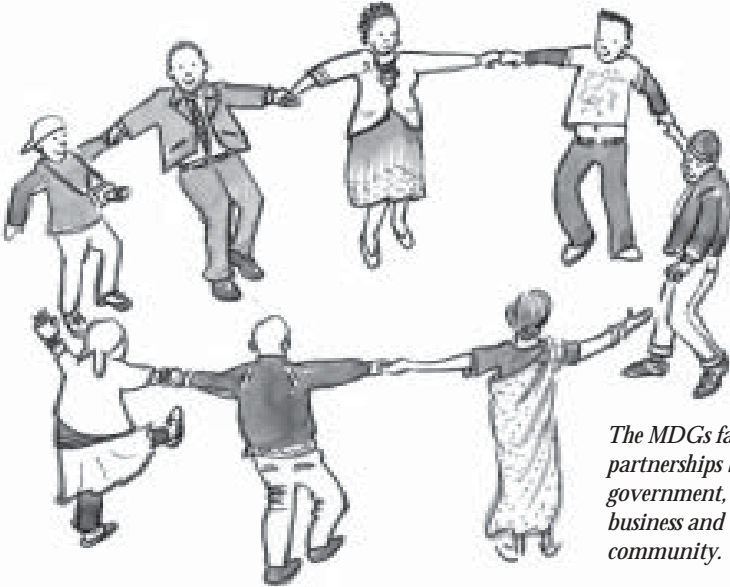
The Water Leaks Project, run by the Environmental Monitoring Group and Ilitha Lomso, offers one example of a partnership in South Africa between CS and the national government. The Water Leaks Project is a CS sustainable development initiative that aims to train community activists in water demand management, basic plumbing and business skills so they can work within their communities to generate income, reduce household water bills and conserve water. It grew out of concerns over significant water leakage in Khayelitsha and the resulting unpayable water bills that would result in cut-offs, installation of drip washers and possible evictions. The programme has received support and funding from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. The City of Cape Town also participated, providing the activists with a plumbing course.

*The emphasis on partnership in the MDGs means that all sectors can and should be involved in advancing sustainable development.*

There are also significant opportunities for NGO networking within the MDGs. The MDGs can bring together groups that have not worked closely before and create new opportunities for collaboration between groups. Also, since the MDGs have strong international support, it may be possible to use international pressure to advance the MDGs in South Africa.

Along with the opportunities to work with new partners comes the chance of greater funding opportunities from interna-

tional sources. However, CSOs must not necessarily think that the MDGS promise increased funding. Like the government, they must rather focus on improving the efficiency of their existing resources.

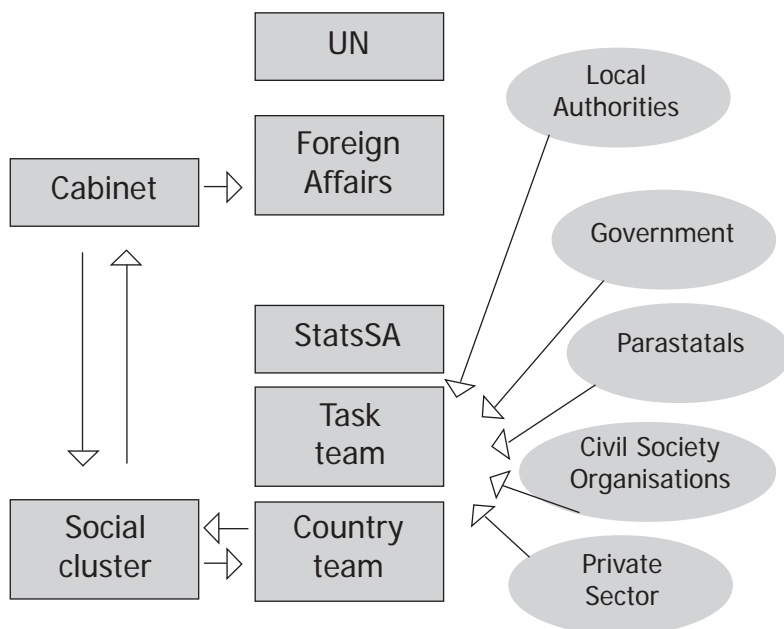


*The MDGs facilitate partnerships between the government, NGOs, CBOs, business and the international community.*

**Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP):** Noted as a model for partnership in service delivery, REEEP brings together stakeholders from government, business and CS to facilitate the structuring of global policies in energy and financing for energy projects. In South Africa, REEEP is working with the Kuyasa community in Cape Town to develop best practices in energy delivery systems, especially energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy. The Department of Health, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, SouthSouthNorth, and the City of Cape Town are all key stakeholders in the project.

## The MDG process in South Africa

In South Africa, the government agency responsible for the country's participation in, and implementation of, the MDGs is the Department of Foreign Affairs, which has named Statistics South Africa (SSA) as the co-ordinating agency. SSA has begun the process of compiling the already overdue report. This schematic represents the process employed by SSA to develop the report.



The current process has seen a truncated consultation with CS and other stakeholders, due to time constraints because of the late start in developing and researching the report. SSA has committed to 'meaningful engagement' with stakeholders—especially CSOs—in the future.

## What is the status of the MDGs in South Africa?

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South Africa's history presents a unique difficulty in measuring the MDGs. After years of isolation from the international community because of the Apartheid regime, the South African government lacks some of the statistics and tools necessary to monitor progress towards realising the MDGs. Not until 1993 did the government start to establish indicators to monitor living conditions in the country; this absence of data creates an information gap and prevents South Africa from having a benchmark against which to measure progress. The capacity may not exist yet for effective and credible monitoring as the government has focused its efforts on remedying the issues of inequities under the old regime. A full look at the status cannot be completed until South Africa achieves a 'culture of documentation' that records progress realised in advancing sustainable development and curbing poverty.

*What does the existing data reveal?* Poverty remains high—nearly 40% of the population live below the poverty line. In rural areas, the poverty rate is 71%. The increase in numbers of underweight children suggests that poverty is increasing. Further, the primary education rate in South Africa fell nearly 10% between 1990 and 2002 while child mortality increased slightly in the same period. Above all, the increasing prevalence of HIV/Aids threatens to undo the advances made in the region, while continuing natural resources stress threatens to undermine its environmental stability. (For a detailed look at the indicators in South Africa, please note Annex One.)

"Without a continued effort, we are in danger of not meeting the goals established by the Millennium Declaration. The cost of that might be unbearable. Let us be clear about the cost of missing this opportunity: millions of lives that could have been saved will be lost; many freedoms that could have been secured will be denied; and we shall inherit a more dangerous and unstable world."

*In Larger Freedom, Kofi Anan*

*South Africa needs to bridge an information gap and create a culture of documentation before progress on the MDGs can be measured.*

The government and CS in South Africa have both largely ignored the potential benefits of engaging with the MDGs. Why?

- South Africa is a latecomer to the international development process. The post-Apartheid government has focused on regaining international acceptance and becoming economically competitive at a global level.
- South Africa lacks the culture of documentation and the institutional capacity to monitor all of the indicators.
- The MDGs, as international documents, have not been articulated in a national context. South Africa does not share all of the concerns of a developing country, for example, it is not highly indebted. Universal MDGs, without significant efforts to localise them, cannot reflect the specific concerns of South Africa
- South Africa possesses a domestic poverty reduction strategy that has focused on income support, providing basic services to the poor, creating incentives for employment creation, deepening the skill base of the population, promoting private investment, advancing tax reform for growth, investment in infrastructure, and crime prevention. The MDGs may be seen as a competing agenda.



CSOs possess even less knowledge about the MDG process. They appear to have been discouraged from participation by:

- lack of knowledge of the MDGs; and
- the belief that there is no room for local participation in a global context.

This could not be further from the truth. As complex and multidimensional goals, the MDGs require a multi-faceted coalition to achieve success and to make a measurable difference in the lives of those living in poverty.



*South Africa must allow individuals and organisations to access the information they need for their work. This right of access forms the basis of Principle 10 of Agenda 21, an international plan to achieve sustainable development.*

## How can civil society engage with the MDG process in South Africa?

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The process of localising the MDGs and mainstreaming support for sustainable development in South Africa are very important and require CS support. Without participating in the process, there is the danger that the resulting MDG processes and monitoring will do little to ensure that that on-the-ground practices are improved.

- *Civil society should share best practices in promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty.* These best practices can be used by government officials to development strategies and policies at a national level. CSOs can rely on their wide geographical spread to compile practices from across the country to create a database of best practices that provide policy makers with a wide variety of examples.
- *Civil society should participate in the data collection and monitoring process.* CSOs, in particular community and regional organisations, can access data on sustainable development indicators. In this way, the information gap can be bridged. Further, this data collection function can help to determine which indicators best reflect poverty and sustainable development concerns in South Africa.
- *Explore the option of partnerships with stakeholders.* All levels of government are invested in the MDG process, as are international organisations and the private sector. Working within the common framework of the MDGs opens up new opportunities for partnerships.
- *Participate in events.* Attend the events organised by the SSA on the process of the MDGs. Attend local and regional conferences on the MDGs. By demonstrating a commitment to the MDG process and actively participating, CS can encourage greater participation and support for monitoring and achieving the goals. As part of this,

CS should lobby government officials to publicise the events that they organise; publishing a national calendar of events will allow CSOs to adequately budget to attend and participate in these events.

- *Develop and distribute position statements.* CSOs can contribute by drafting position statements addressing aspects of the MDG process, ranging from the selection of indicators to the involvement of stakeholders. The papers and positions will promote public dialogue on the MDG process and spread awareness of the issues involved.

## Who should be involved in the MDG process in South Africa?

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While all stakeholders invested in creating a more sustainable South Africa have an interest in the proceedings, certain stakeholders can play a key role:

- *Community-based organisations:* Because CBOs work at the local level, they deal on a daily basis with the constraints to overcoming poverty. Their work focuses on people, as should any sound sustainable development strategy. Their perspectives can help to ensure that the process results in South African goals that promote people-centred sustainable development.
- *Women and youth:* The MDGs offer an opportunity for women and youth (and CSOs advocating on their behalf) to get involved and participate. Many of the goals have a special significance for women and youth, who would be among the beneficiaries of realising the goals. Poverty disproportionately impacts women and youth; to achieve the MDGs, South Africa needs to consider poverty from their perspectives. These stakeholders have important considerations that should be reflected in South Africa's MDGs and the indicators used to measure progress.

- *Media:* There is a special and critical need for the engagement of the media in the process. From reporting on the MDG process and the process of developing goals and targets, the media can take the lead in spreading awareness of the issues. Further, in a multi-lingual nation such as South Africa, the local media plays the important role of ensuring that all have access to the information in their primary language.

## Who is running the process in South Africa?

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- From the government level, the agency facilitating the process around the MDGs is the Statistics South Africa.
- From a civil society perspective, SANGOCO has positioned itself as the leading agency for facilitating CS participation and communication around MDG issues.

## Concluding remarks

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The MDGs can be a useful tool for promoting sustainable development in South Africa. Instead of a top-down development agenda imposed from the outside, the MDGs offer a framework that focuses national attention on sustainable development. South Africa must monitor—and record—its progress in realising the MDGs. CS in South Africa needs to play a central role in this process so that South Africa takes ownership of the goals and uses them to promote people-centred development. CSOs can use the MDGs to strengthen their existing work, to monitor the government's actions and to form new partnerships. The MDGs can and should be an important part of efforts to advance a sustainable development agenda in South Africa. By engaging in the MDG process and localising the MDGs to reflect the South Africa's development priorities, CS can help to make a sustainable South Africa.

# Checklist for civil society organisations

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These questions are designed to prepare CSOs to effectively engage with the MDGs. These questions will help to familiarise CSOs with important information and processes, develop strategies for engaging with the MDGs, and targeting key policies, individuals, and groups.

- How can sustainable development be monitored in your community? What is the current state of sustainable development in your community? What are the key issues facing your community?
- What indicators should be used to assess progress in achieving the MDGs locally?
- What do you know about the MDGs? What does your community know about the MDGs?
- How do the MDGs fit into your organisation's work? How can you use the MDGs to strengthen your existing work?
- Consider the linkages between your community work and national work. How will your efforts at a local level impact national efforts to promote sustainability? How will national efforts impact your local efforts?
- Understand the local political context. What sustainable development policies exist in the community? How does your work intersect with these policies?
- Identify key contact people and key programmes. Which individuals in governments and NGOs are involved in sustainable development in your region? Are there opportunities for partnerships that exist?

- Are there other organisations in the region working on similar issues? These organisations may offer opportunities for the creation of networks and partnerships.
- Where can your organisation get more information about the MDGs or sustainable development?

## Where can civil society find more information

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about the MDG process and monitoring efforts?

### Important documents relating to the MDGs

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1. Millennium Declaration

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/55/2&Lang=E>  
(MDGs are attached at the end of the document)

2. Road Map Towards the Implementation of the UN Declaration

<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/dcs/56/a56326.pef>

3. United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/0302finalMonterreyConsensus.pdf>

4. Implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration:

<http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/506/69/PDF/N0250669.pdf?OpenElement>

5. Investing in development:

<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index.htm>

6. More background papers

<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/secretariatdocs.htm>

7. In Larger Freedom

<http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/>

## Resources on the internet

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UN Millennium Development Goals site

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

UNDP in South Africa

<http://www.undp.org.za/>

Other general sites of interest

[www.unhabitat.org/mdg](http://www.unhabitat.org/mdg)

[www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org)

<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/>

<http://www.un-ngls.org/mdg>

Two resource guides from UNDP

<http://mdgtoolkit.undg.org/>

[http://www.undg.org/documents/6223-How-to-Guide\\_to\\_MDG-based\\_National\\_Development\\_Strategies.pdf](http://www.undg.org/documents/6223-How-to-Guide_to_MDG-based_National_Development_Strategies.pdf)

African NGO Networks:

[www.anewnetwork.org](http://www.anewnetwork.org)

- Focuses on water issues
- South African contact: [martin@mvula.co.za](mailto:martin@mvula.co.za)

[www.afrodad.org](http://www.afrodad.org)

- Information resources, focusing on issues of debt and trade, as related to Africa

[www.cafod.org](http://www.cafod.org)

- Works through local partners to fund HIV Aid programmes and food security programmes
- Visit their Africa website for updates on local programmes: [www.cafod.org.uk/where\\_we\\_work/africa/south\\_Africa](http://www.cafod.org.uk/where_we_work/africa/south_Africa)

[www.civicus.org](http://www.civicus.org)

- Another MDG guide: [www.civicus.org/mdg/7-1.htm](http://www.civicus.org/mdg/7-1.htm)

[www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)

- Resource centre with many publications, focusing on the connection between the MDGs and sustainability.

[www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)

- Resources on the MDGs

[www.phmovement.org](http://www.phmovement.org)

- Promotes the health-related MDGs

[www.socialwatch.org](http://www.socialwatch.org)

- Good source of information on the MDGs, country by country

[www.sarpn.org.za](http://www.sarpn.org.za)

- Contains many resources

[www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org)

- Many policy documents relating to the MDG

[www.wfuna.org](http://www.wfuna.org)

- Report on lessons learned by civil society about engaging with the MDGs

[www.deat.gov.za/](http://www.deat.gov.za/)

- Information on South Africa's environmental legislation and sustainable development commitments



## Resources mentioned in this guide

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[www.sangoco.org.za](http://www.sangoco.org.za)

[www.idasa.org.za/index.asp?page=contact.asp](http://www.idasa.org.za/index.asp?page=contact.asp) (BIS and other services)

[www.tac.org.za](http://www.tac.org.za) (Treatment Action Campaign)

[www.emg.org.za](http://www.emg.org.za) (Water Leaks Project and publisher of this guide)

[www.ejnf.org.za](http://www.ejnf.org.za) (Environmental Justice Networking Forum)

## Government agencies

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*Integrated Health Management: Maternal, Child and Women's health issues*

Dr A Amos

Cluster Manager: Maternal, Child and Women's Health and Nutrition

Tel: (012) 312-0097/8

Fax (012) 328-6286

E-mail: [mhlane@health.gov.za](mailto:mhlane@health.gov.za)

Also, you can contact the integrated nutrition programme.

Contact information can be found at:

[www.doh.gov.za/programmes/index.html](http://www.doh.gov.za/programmes/index.html)

*The department working on HIV/AIDS education and reduction*

<http://www.doh.gov.za/department/index.html>

*Youth Health Care*

Provincial and national level contact information is listed

[www.doh.gov.za/department/dir\\_youth.html](http://www.doh.gov.za/department/dir_youth.html)

*Pharmaceutical procurement*

[www.doh.gov.za/departement/clus\\_pharma.html#1](http://www.doh.gov.za/departement/clus_pharma.html#1)

Advocating for 'a healthy environment for children'

[www.doh.gov.za/departement/dir-healthpro.html](http://www.doh.gov.za/departement/dir-healthpro.html)

*Gender equity in schools*

Gender Equity Directorate, of the Department of Education

Phone: 012.312.5420

# Annex One: South African status on the MDGs

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The data below is from selected indicators; some data is not available. All data is from [http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi\\_goals.asp](http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp)

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## Goal 1: Halving poverty

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- Proportion of the population below \$1 a day: 11% in 2000 (up from 10% in 1990)
- Poverty gap ration (incidence times depth of poverty): 1.7 in 2000 (up from 1.4 in 1993)

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## Goal 2: Achieving universal primary education

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- Net ratio in primary education: 89.5 % in 2001 (down from 91.3% in 1998)
- Proportion of pupils starting Grade 1 who reach Grade 5: 64.8 % in 1999 (down from 75.9 % in 1998)

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## Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

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- Ratio of literate women to men: 1.1 in 1990
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector: 39.5 in 1993

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## Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

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- Under-five mortality rate: 66 per 1000 in 2003 (up from 60 in 1990)
- Proportion of 1-year-old children immunised against measles: 83% in 2003 (up from 79% in 1990)

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## Goal 5: Improve maternal health

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- Maternal mortality ratio: 230 per 100,000 in 2002 (no change from 1990—estimated data)

## The Millenium Development Goals

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### Goal 6: Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases

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- HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years: In Gauteng, 31.6 % in 2002 (up from 29.8% in 2001)
- Death rate from TB: 28 per 100,000 in 2003 (down from 45 per 100,000 in 1990)

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### Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

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- Proportion of population with sustainable access to improved water source, urban and rural
  - Rural: 73% in 2003 ( up from 67% in 1990)
  - Urban: 98% in 2003 (down from 99% in 1990)
- Proportion of houses with access to secure tenure: 33.2% in 2001 (down from 46.2% in 1990)

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### Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

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- Unemployment rate of young people: 26.4% (total figure from Labour Force Survey 2004, Statistics South Africa)