

# What are the options for the Millennium Development Goals 2.0?

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The debate on what, if anything might replace the MDGs in 2015 is starting to emerge.

One might imagine three stylized options – more of the same, something that builds on the MDGs, or something completely new.

The first option, could be called MDGs 2020/2025 and would simply extending the deadline of 2015, perhaps with some minor changes to the indicators and goals in order to reflect that new timeline.

A second approach could be called MDGs+ and would still be a goal-led framework, but either set by national governments through deliberative processes, or by a combination of a streamlined set of global indicators (child nutrition, infant mortality and primary/secondary enrolment rates) with actual indicators and targets set by national governments via deliberative processes.

A third approach could be called a 'One World' or 'Global Challenges' approach and would be much bolder and more ambitious. It would build a global agreement binding both north and south, with poverty targets for the south and sustainable consumption targets for the north. This would thus build on the oft-neglected MDG 8 on global partnerships, and provide the basis for a genuinely new multilateralism to deal with global development in a more hostile climate. It could focus on global public goods and global issues, of which extreme poverty and climate-resilient development are central, or it could focus on the national dimensions in development in both north and south. Richard

Manning, former OECD-DAC chair and MDG architect, in his review of MDG impacts refers to this as a 'One World' approach.

How effectively do each of these broad approaches address the deficiencies of the MDGs; the changing context and changing poverty 'problem'; and the post-crisis rise of the G20 in global politics?

First, how does each approach address deficiencies of MDGs (e.g. deficiencies in indicators; questions over co-ownership and accountability; and lack of a pro-poorest focus)?

The MDGs 2020/25 approach may argue that the deficiencies of the MDGs are not so bad given the political trade-offs of agreeing a new framework. The MDGs+ approach would certainly address the deficiencies to a greater extent, because it revisits the indicators, adds local ownership (which could mean greater accountability in principle) and better addresses the missing poor/poorest through its 100 per cent targets strategy. The 'One World' approach would go furthest in the sense that it looks beyond a set of targets and towards global mechanisms in order to mobilise resources and policy. It would promote shared ownership, and its 100 per cent targets strategy would address the missing poor/poorest.

Second, how does each approach address the changing context (e.g. the increasing proportion of the world's poor living in middle income countries; climate-resilient development; and shifting and new

vulnerabilities due to demographics, food and energy prices and resource scarcity)?

Given that it is largely rooted in a world of the late 1990s, it is unlikely that the MDGs 2020/25 approach would address this new context at all. The MDG+ approach would do better by expanding ownership and accountability to the national level with deliberative processes. It would make ending world poverty more of a shared endeavour between donors and middle income countries governments in particular. In low income countries aid flows would remain important. Countries would address climate-resilient development and new vulnerabilities if national deliberative processes prioritised these. The 'One World' approach would be much better at addressing the changing context and new vulnerabilities, because it is largely driven by poverty reduction amid climate-resilient development. The design of the new system would take such issues as core objectives.

Third, how does each approach fit with shifting global politics (e.g. the role of the G20, emerging powers and new donors)? Some would say that extending the MDGs deadline after failing to achieve the Goals in the first instance would be politically difficult. However, others would note that this approach not only maintains the current consensus and momentum, but that it also (re)pressures rich countries to honour commitments and to stand by their pledges. Further, it may be easier to agree than other options. It also means political and technical energy can be focused on implementation rather than discussions about a new framework. However, it misses the 'once-every-25-years' opportunity to improve the targets and indicators to better capture the outcomes that matter most for poor people, and to develop a framework with stronger southern buy-in.

In contrast, in some ways MDGs+ complicates the simplicity of the MDG framework. New targets may be hard to negotiate, especially if politically awkward, as there will be many concerns and criticisms (think of setting targets for good governance). They may also still be regarded as donor led and reductionist. And in the event that locally selected targets are formulated and

adopted, cross-national comparison will be hindered. A 'One World' approach would be even harder to reach political agreement upon. Its strengths – being forward looking; addressing wider and intergenerational causes of poverty and vulnerability; and incentivising behaviour change through mutual self-interest and solidarity – might prove much harder to sell politically.

The MDGs were never internationally agreed, the Millennium Declaration was. In light of this, perhaps in 2015 it is enough simply to restate the Millennium Declaration and to develop the Goals via political compromise. Indeed, one could imagine a combination of options as possibly most attractive and amenable to political trade-offs. This might mean retaining a core set of MDGs (income poverty, hunger, education, child mortality) and setting new realistic global goals with regional subgoals (that can then be translated into national goals). In addition, one could have some key 'One World' indicators based largely on global public goods, such as eradication/vaccination/treatment of serious global diseases or mitigation of carbon emissions and adaptation to climate change, perhaps together with some global compact on results-based aid deliveries.

Whatever, finally emerges this debate will evolve rapidly over the next 18-24 months and is likely to play a role defining the global policy discourse for a decade or longer as the MDGs 1.0 have done.