



Economic
Commission
for Africa



Assessing Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals in Africa

2007



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African Center for Gender and Social Development
E/ECA/ACGS/MDGsPAM/2007

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March 2007

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This report is the latest update by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on the progress that Africa is making towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It builds on the first report prepared in 2005 in the preparation for the UN World Summit and mid-term review of progress towards the MDGs and is derived from ongoing work on a much fuller report¹ being prepared jointly with the African Union Commission (AUC) for the African Union (AU) Summit in July 2007. The report also complements the issues paper prepared for this Conference.

In 2005, the international community, at the UN World Summit re-affirmed its commitment to the (MDGs). The mid-point on the time-line to these goals will be reached in September 2007. This is a clear reminder to African countries that slightly over 7 years remain to achieve all the MDGs. Recent aggregate and disaggregated on progress made towards MDGs globally, regionally and at the country level continue to indicate that Africa is at risk of not meeting all the goals except in the North Africa region. However, there have also been positive developments in recent years which indicate that the challenge is not insurmountable, if both national and international policy measures are scaled up in a number of critical areas.

In the first instance, there continues to be encouraging developments with respect to a key ingredient for attaining MDGs in Africa: broad and sustained commitment to the MDG agenda, particularly at the highest levels of decision-making. Over the past three years African countries and the political leadership have demonstrated their commitment to the MDGs which continue to be at the centre of the NEPAD vision and domestic programmes. The AU concretely expressed its commitment to facilitating acceleration of progress towards the Goals by Africa countries through a Common Position that it discussed at its 2005 Summit and at the 2005 World Development Summit. The AU's commitment to the MDGs was reaffirmed at the AU Summit in Banjul, the Gambia, which also called on member States to adopt

1 Assessing Africa's Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals, 2007

concrete measures to scale-up interventions known to work. Finally, Africa's Ministers of Finance, Economic Planning and Development as well as the key Sector Ministries have consistently placed MDGs at the center of their Conferences and Meetings, particularly since 2005.

There have also been improvements in the political and economic environment, a crucial pre-condition for achieving the MDGs. Participatory democracy is increasingly taking hold and most countries have persevered with economic reforms. Concrete achievements have been made in containing the spread of conflicts in the continent. The number of countries experiencing active conflicts has reduced dramatically from the level a decade ago. However, beyond nurturing the requisite overall environment for making the desired progress towards MDGs, the tangible achievements on the economic growth front since 2000 continue to be sustained. When placed in a longer-term context, Africa's recent growth performance, which improved significantly from just under 3.0 per cent in 1999 to 5.4 per cent in 2004, 5.6 per cent in 2005, 5.2 per cent in 2006, but to a projected 6 per cent in 2007, has been quite impressive. The strong performance that has been maintained over the past 5 to 6 years has not been registered by only the oil-producing countries, but also a significant number of oil importing countries.

This growth has translated into a favourable per capita annual income growth of 3 per cent on average. Achievements with respect to key macroeconomic indicators have also been strong: average inflation levels have remained stable in single digits and budgetary deficits have largely been contained in most of the countries. In addition, current account deficits have become more manageable while debt sustainability has improved measurably owing to an increasing number of countries benefiting from the HIPC initiative. Clearly, the continent's persistence with sometimes difficult macroeconomic reforms during the last decade and half has begun to pay off. Meaningful progress has also been made by many countries towards some of these goals in, for example, education, HIV/AIDS, and gender parity in political leadership. However, most countries of the region continue to be off-track to meet all the goals by 2015.

Recognizing the imperative to intensify efforts to reach the goals, World leaders, in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit urged countries with extreme poverty to “adopt, by 2006, and implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.”² Operationalizing the time bound-MDG targets within national planning frameworks involves preparing strategies that are sufficiently ambitious, comprehensive enough to address all requirements and areas, grounded on robust financing strategy and macroeconomic framework and anchored on an implementation strategy incorporating measures addressing capacity constraints.

Two years on, some measurable progress has been made towards the formulation and implementation of MDG-based strategies. With initial impetus through the UN Millennium Project³ and subsequently UNDP in a broadening partnership including the development partners, UN agencies, ECA and the Bretton Woods institutions, thirty five (35) African countries⁴ have embarked on the process of preparing and implementing MDG-based national strategies and action plans. In all of these countries, requisite capacity, though of varying quality, has been created for carrying out needs assessments while there are high-level undertakings to ensure that plans derived from the assessments are MDGs-consistent. The prospects and possibilities of quick impact initiatives such as free malaria nets distribution, food subsidies for education, etc., have increasingly gained currency with countries registering advances in several MDGs. Nonetheless, evidence shows that the region's recent positive economic performance has not yet had a demonstrably meaningful impact on poverty and the other MDGs. According to recent estimates, the proportion of the population living under the poverty line is estimated to have increased from 45 per cent in 2000 to 47 per cent in 2006.

2 Article 22a-A/RES/60/1, 2005

3 UNMP ceased to exist in December 2006.

4 Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda.

The MDGs on gender equality and maternal health are of special concern. The importance of improved gender outcomes to achieve all the other MDGs has been well documented and it is acknowledged that progress on poverty, health, education and environmental outcomes is dependent to a great extent on improvements in the lives of women and girls. While many countries have made some progress towards the official MDG target of improving gender parity in education, overall levels remain low, especially at higher levels of education. Other dimensions of gender equality- equitable access to health facilities, access to basic infrastructure (water, energy, roads) to reduce time burden of poverty, political and economic participation of women and girls for example- show even less progress. Such gender inequalities also slow progress towards the achievement of the MDGs in the region.

This Section of this report presents evidence on progress by African countries towards the MDGs. The data for this report are from the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD⁵). No data were directly obtained from countries that may have much more recent data on the targets and indicators. There is thus the possibility that the data reported hereunder could differ from evidence from the more recent ones. Maps, attached as annexes to this report, present evidence on varying performance of countries on selected indicators⁶. The analysis clearly shows the variability of progress across countries and subregions of the continent.

5 See <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/.aspx>

6 The full set of maps, on which they are based and the tables can be found at <http://geoinfo.uneca.org>

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

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

This goal has two targets – the income target and the nutrition target on the income metric are scanty, sparse and unavailable for many countries. Very few countries have recent household surveys and the few household surveys that exist are too outdated to be useful for analysis. However, on nutrition are more complete. Hence, progress on hunger is what is reported hereunder.

Most (62 per cent) of the forty-six African countries, for which data are available (See Figure 1), experienced an improvement in hunger conditions during the period 1991-2002. By 2002, Djibouti, Gabon and Ghana had achieved the MDG goal of halving the population that is undernourished. Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Seychelles, and Tunisia, were on track to achieving the goal by 2015. The proportion of those undernourished increased in 11 countries including Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Sierra Leone Swaziland and Tanzania. The incidence of hunger worsened particularly in countries emerging from conflict such as Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, and Liberia.

However, other post conflict countries like oil-rich Angola and Mozambique have been quite successful in reducing the incidence of hunger. Fifteen per cent of the countries namely, Algeria, Libya, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe, experienced virtually no change in undernourishment. The reason for this is that most North African countries had very good initial conditions. From a subregional perspective, East Africa was the only region to experience, on aggregate, an increase in the incidence of undernourishment during 1991-2002. This was probably due to a 3-year drought in the region. No are reported for the Horn of Africa. Central Africa had the largest improvement in undernourishment followed by West, Southern and North Africa. Lack of more recent data remains a major constraint to monitoring progress.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

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

Many countries have made tremendous progress towards MDG 2. At current rate, a good number of countries will achieve all the indicators and more countries will achieve at least the indicator of universal primary enrolment. However, the second order effects of universal primary education are becoming evident in the bulge of applicants seeking places in secondary schools, high pupil-teacher ratios and decrease in quality.

Significant improvements in net enrolment ratio in primary education: The continent recorded significant progress in educating its children during 1990 to 2004, but the rate of progress is not enough to achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2015. Overall net primary enrolment ratio increased from 53 per cent in 1990 to 64 per cent in 2004. On country level, there are wide disparities and some success stories.

In the 31 countries for which reliable data are available, eight countries already have a primary enrolment rate exceeding 90 per cent (for both sexes). In this group are Algeria, Cape Verde, Egypt, Malawi, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe and Seychelles. But six countries - Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Mali and the Niger - have a primary enrolment rate of less than 50 per cent, More than 80 per cent of these 31 countries recorded an increase in net enrolment rates; thirteen recorded an increase of 20 per cent or more; and four recorded a decrease over the review period. Rural- urban disparities in primary school enrolment in many countries remain large.

Algeria and Mauritius have fully achieved the goal of universal primary education, according to reliable indicators. Countries that are on track to meet the indicator of universal primary enrolment of boys and girls alike include Cape Verde, Egypt, the Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Togo. A high number of countries appear to have “missed the boat” so far. Among these are Burundi, Burkina Faso, Djibouti and the Niger that started with very difficult initial conditions.

Primary completion rates lag behind enrolment rates: In eight of the 31 countries for which are available, more than 50 percent of pupils drop out of primary school before reaching grade five. The drop-out problem is especially serious in Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, and the Niger. There appears to be some relationship between the achievement of universal primary enrolment and the drop-out rate: In countries that have already achieved universal primary enrolment, the majority of the pupils also complete primary school. However, in countries where the enrolment rate is low, the majority of pupils drop out before reaching grade five as in Burkina Faso, Djibouti, and the Niger.

Youth literacy (15-24 year olds) has improved in 75 per cent of these countries: Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa and Zimbabwe⁷ have already achieved youth literacy of more than 90 per cent. Youth literacy improved in 75 per cent of the countries. Of these countries, Botswana, Burundi, Guinea, Malawi, Mauritania, the Niger, the Sudan, and Togo recorded youth literacy improvements of more than 10 per cent between 1990 and 2004. However, Youth literacy rates decreased in Chad, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Tanzania, and Zambia. Countries that have low youth literacy levels of less than 50 per cent include Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali the Niger, and Sierra Leone.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

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

The southern Africa Region is by far the best performer on this goal MDG 3, followed by North Africa, and then East Africa. West Africa (fourth) and Central Africa (fifth) need to work more on this goal.

Primary education: Most African countries are likely to reach the gender parity goal by 2015: Nine countries - the Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles and Uganda - had already reached

⁷ For Zimbabwe the data is from 1990.

gender parity in primary education by 2005. In some countries the enrolment of girls outpaces boys' enrolment. To tackle this problem, Lesotho and Namibia appear to have introduced proactive programmes to address this imbalance. The slowest on this target are the Central African Republic, Chad and Guinea Bissau.

Secondary education: progress toward gender parity is slower: The goal of gender parity in secondary education was achieved in 2004 in twelve countries. These are: Algeria, Botswana, Cape Verde, Lesotho, Libya, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland and Tunisia. Seventeen countries are likely to achieve the goal; of these Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, the Sudan and Zimbabwe are very close to achieving the goal. Kenya and Mauritius had already reached the goal in 2003 and 2004 respectively but their performance decreased slightly in 2004. The following eleven countries that have a good potential to achieve gender equality in secondary education by 2015 are: Congo, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, and United Republic of Tanzania. Rwanda, which had achieved gender parity in 1999 with an index of 1, has since regressed.

Tertiary education: the picture is gloomy: Gender disaggregated on tertiary education remain a challenge as data are not available for many countries. Nonetheless, available data show that nine countries - Algeria, Cape Verde, Lesotho, Libya, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Tunisia have achieved the target of gender parity in tertiary education. Madagascar and the Sudan are close to satisfying this indicator and three more countries - Botswana, Djibouti and Morocco - are likely to achieve gender parity in tertiary education by 2015. All the other countries are unlikely to achieve the goal by 2015.

Literacy rates of the age group 15-24 years: an optimistic trend: Of the 30 countries, for which data are available, 24 have either already achieved gender parity in literacy, or have the potential to do so by 2015. The eight countries that had already reached the goal of gender parity in literacy for the 15-24 age-group by 2004 are: Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, and Swaziland. A few other countries are close to achieving the target are: Algeria, Burundi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tunisia, Tanzania, and Zambia. Seven countries likely to reach the goal by 2015 are:

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Malawi, Mauritania, the Sudan and Uganda. All the other countries for which data are not available are unlikely to reach this target.

Women's representation in national parliaments remains low but progress is underway: Of the 32 countries for which data are available for 1990 and 2005, the following 12 countries have more than doubled the percentage of seats held by women in national parliaments: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Rwanda, Swaziland, South Africa and Tunisia. Eight other countries have made very significant progress, these are: Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Malawi, Senegal, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia. The highest achievers are Rwanda, with 48.8 per cent almost reaching gender parity, Mozambique with 34.8 per cent, South Africa with 32.8 per cent and Seychelles with 29.4 per cent of women parliamentarians. Nineteen countries have the lowest levels of women's parliamentary seats (less than 10 per cent) in 2005. Gender inequalities in representation in national parliaments have widened in ten countries. Liberia elected the first-ever female Head of State in Africa. Women are increasingly appointed to head important ministries. In the Gambia and Zimbabwe, the Vice President is a woman. South Africa has a female Deputy President. The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in Mozambique are women, Cape Verde has a female Minister for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, State Reform and National Defense, in Nigeria and Liberia, women are Ministers of Finance and in Nigeria and the Niger, women are also the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Women's share in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector remains low: Women's economic empowerment is measured through their share in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector. None of the countries for which recent data are available has reached gender parity in wage employment (50 per cent). The best performers are Southern and Eastern Africa, followed by Central Africa, which has made the most significant progress between 1990 and 2004. West and North Africa have experienced setbacks with negative changes.

Health MDGS

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds under 5 mortality rates between 1990 and 2015

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Target 6: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality rates between 1990 and 2015

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

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

There has been limited progress on the health MDGs during the period under review. Most countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa are significantly off-track. However, disaggregated by country or subregion reveal some progress by country and region but the aggregate rate of progress is not sufficient to enable the region as a whole to meet the health MDGs.

North Africa had a very good initial condition on child and maternal mortality and is therefore on track to reach all the health-related MDGs. Twenty-one (21) Sub-Saharan countries (SSA) have made some remarkable progress in under-5 mortality (an improvement between 10-30 per cent or more), albeit starting from a high initial level. Thus progress has been made, but still not enough to be on track. Under-5 mortality has fallen in 6 SSA countries by only between 0 to 10 per cent and risen in 11 others countries. Maternal mortality has remained in general very high in all subregions except for North Africa, although on this target are very scanty across the region. However, in 10 SSA countries starting from a high initial maternal mortality rate in 1990, by 2000 they had made significant progress, but still remaining off track. HIV prevalence rate has fallen in 18 SSA countries but has increased in 8 others. Southern Africa continues to have the highest prevalence rate. West Africa has higher malaria cases and related deaths. Tuberculosis incidence and mortality rates have increased in all sub-regions,

except North Africa. Tuberculosis treatment through Directly Observed Treatment Strategy (DOTS) has increased from 36 per cent in 1990 to 47 per cent in 2004.

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

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

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

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

The region as a whole is lagging behind on this MDG. However, disaggregated by country show individual country improvements and/or retrogressions.

In SSA, land covered by forest decreased by 9 per cent between 1990 and 2005. The highest rate of deforestation was experienced in West Africa. However, four African countries increased forest area by more than 25 per cent and two SSA countries have kept a high percentage (85 per cent) of country area covered by forest. All subregions of the continent have increased their biodiversity-protected area coverage; however, more than 20 countries did not increase biodiversity-protected area. Energy efficiency has not significantly improved. Although Africa contributes very little to greenhouse gas emissions, the impact of climate change is crucial. SSA has reduced per capita carbon dioxide emissions during the period under review. Eleven SSA countries reduced this trend by 25 per cent, whilst 13 African countries increased emissions per capita by 50 per cent. The urban population living in slums in SSA has not shown any change, but there is perceptible progress in North Africa. There was an increase in the proportion of people with access to improved water supply from 49 to 56 per cent over the period under review. Starting from an initial high coverage rate, North Africa is on track to universal coverage.

West Africa has the lowest improved drinking water and sanitation coverage. In Nigeria only 48 per cent of the population have access to improved drinking water; in the Niger, only 46 per cent do. The rural-urban gap with respect to clean water is high; however Central Africa improved access to clean water in rural areas by over 70 per cent, starting from a low level of 27 per cent. Fifteen countries have increased rural access to improved water by 25 per cent, but access decreased by over 10 per cent in six countries. Progress in respect of sanitation coverage remains poor. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen a very modest increase in sanitation coverage from 32 per cent in 1990 to 37 per cent. At a subregional level, all the sub-regions made positive progress in improving access to sanitation in rural and urban areas with the exception of Southern and Central Africa that experienced a decline in improved access to sanitation in urban areas. North Africa has the highest sanitation coverage in both urban and rural areas followed by Southern and West Africa. Sanitation coverage in Central and East Africa is still very low; more than half of the population in these regions do not have access to improved sanitation.

Urban areas have better water supply and this has resulted in a wider rural-urban sanitation gap. Burkina Faso, Liberia, the Niger have the largest urban – rural disparities in access to improved sanitation. But urban – rural disparities are large in Ethiopia (81 per cent urban and 11 per cent rural). However, Namibia and Malawi have exceeded their 2015 targets.

The loss of environmental assets in Africa in general, and SSA in particular is intimately linked to poverty. The use of biomass (wood fuel) as the only affordable fuel causes degradation of the environment, health hazards as indoor pollution increases. In addition, productive time spent by households in particular women and girls, is severely curtailed by fetching wood. Improved water and sanitation access particularly in rural areas remains a challenge. This has a spill-over effect on exacerbating water-borne diseases and a low health status.

The MDGs continue to be a major policy and operational challenge in Africa. A number of these challenges as they relate to accelerating growth and development in the continent to achieve the goals are discussed in the Issues Paper of this Conference, remain the major challenge in respect of monitoring and tracking progress towards the goals. It is, however, most acute with respect to Target 1 of Goal 1 – Reduce by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. Assessing progress using the income metric has been difficult because of the lack of household survey. These surveys are expensive but the lack of these is accentuated by weak statistical capacity in member States. ECA and the “Friends of ECA” are working very hard to remedy the deficiency. A measure of success on this score will be the number of African countries that conduct a census during this 2010 round of housing and population census. Addressing the cross-cutting dimension of gender in all the MDGs, remains a challenge as gender equality concerns do not shape sectoral policies, and proper monitoring systems based on gender sensitive indicators and sex disaggregated are missing.

Sustaining progress and preventing volatility in the indicators of success will increasingly become a challenge. As the statistical data show, some countries that had achieved early success in some of the indicators are beginning to experience reversals. Thus scaling-up public investments must be very cognizant of the real and present danger of early reversals of success. Finance is a major constraint to scaling-up interventions. Budgetary allocations to priority social sectors continue to remain low.

National capacity to design and implement policies to achieve the MDGs, continues to be weak. There are two components of weakness: weak human capacity to run existing institutions, no matter how flawed, and weak institutions themselves. Institutions may be weak, controlling for human capacity weaknesses, due to the weakness of enabling instruments to set them up or the overall regulatory framework or due to interest group reactions and poor overall governance. These constraints need to be adequately addressed.

Finally, many of the targets are weak or imprecise. Take the education MDG (MDG 2) for example. The goal is to ensure that all children complete a full course of primary schooling. The emphasis is on increasing enrolment but there is nothing said about the quality of that education. However, mass enrolment has consequences for quality and completion rates of pupils and for the distribution of scarce resources among the three tiers of education – primary, secondary, and tertiary. In some countries where free school feeding has been introduced, completion rates have dropped off significantly as has quality because of high pupil-to-teacher ratios. In addition, because of the under-emphasis of secondary and higher education, a “bulge” is beginning to develop in some countries where expansion of the secondary and tertiary sectors has not kept pace with the expansion of the primary education sector.

The world is on track to meet the MDGs. But Africa is not. Midway into implementing the MDGs agenda, valuable lessons have been learned. It is now known that economic growth alone will not be enough if countries are to meet the goals. Complementary policies such as social transfers, income redistribution, and the provision of facilitatory infrastructure and regional public goods are also necessary. It is also known that any effort to scale up many of the interventions will require the mobilization of additional resources and that it will take a combination of enhanced and improved domestic resource mobilization and increased ODA for this to be possible. The private sector also has a role to play in achieving the MDGs by paying their taxes regularly and on time and increasing the provision of education and essential health services.

Finally, it is known that political leadership and commitment are essential for success. It is the hope that this report will help sustain the commitment of African leadership to meeting the MDGs. The critical issue for most African countries is how can they become 'high-achievers' in meeting the MDGs? A number of goal-specific recommendations are set out in Table 1 below. There is no doubt that meeting the MDGs will require more resources from national budgets and official development assistance (ODA). The Monterrey Consensus provides a useful framework for scaling up resource mobilization to expand fiscal space to scale up interventions to meet the MDGs. The key action now is scaling up. Annex 1 summarizes goal-specific recommendations for actions.

During the period under review, ECA scaled up its activities to effectively support African countries in their development efforts. To buttress its support to member States and as part of its repositioning exercise, ECA created a new Section, the MDGs/Poverty Analysis Section in August 2006 within the African Centre for Gender and Social Development to serve as an anchor for the Commission's work in this area. The Commission undertook a knowledge audit of PRSP practitioners to determine the depth and breadth

of their knowledge on poverty reduction in order to better assist them bridge the gaps. Under the auspices of the Enhanced Knowledge Network Sharing Project, four electronic roundtables on various PRSP/MDG themes were organized. A community of practice on PRSP and MDGs has been established and an MDG mapping tool developed, to contribute to tracking and monitoring of progress towards the goals. The African Learning Group on PRSPs/MDGs (PRSP/MDG-LG) has facilitated capacity building and learning amongst member States. At the country level, ECA has also provided advisory services to Liberia, Ghana and Ethiopia to help policymakers design and implement MDG-based PRSPs.

Goal	Recommended Set of Actions for Accelerating Progress
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Goal 1 – Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target Assessed

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

- Promote and develop irrigation systems;
 - Provide other inputs such as fertilizers and weather information on a subsidized basis;
 - Improved funding for agricultural development;
 - Incorporate HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation in agricultural production and food relief efforts;
 - Improve marketing and transport infrastructure for food market integration;
 - Improve food security policies including strengthening of national strategic grain reserves, addressing land tenure and distribution problems;
 - Promote technologies that raise agricultural productivity and strengthen and build capacity;
 - Mitigate and remediate environmental degradation and minimize the effects of global warming.
 - Improve agricultural and food statistics;
 - Recognize that the most efficient way to achieve this goal is within the context of a country-owned MDG-based Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper or MDG-based national development plan.
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Goal 2 - Achieve Universal Primary Education

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

Interventions should aim not only at increasing the enrolment rates but also completion rates.

- Identify the underlying reasons for high drop-out rates and tailor interventions to encourage children to remain at school. Abolition of school fees, free school transport (in urban areas especially), school feeding programmes, separate latrines for girls have proved to be successful in several African countries.
 - Train more teachers to ensure the quality of schooling by improving pupil-teacher-ratio.
 - Targeted programmes for socially excluded children such as AIDS orphans are needed in order to increase school enrolment and completion.
 - Improve the availability of schools in remote areas or improve transportation in order to improve enrolment in rural areas.
 - Improve access to and quality of secondary and tertiary education through scaling up of investment and private provision;
 - Use peer learning, especially for countries that seem to have missed the boat. Most of these countries started with poor initial conditions or are just emerging from conflict.
 - Improve education statistics.
 - Recognize that the most efficient way to achieve this goal is within the context of a country-owned MDG-based Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper or MDG-based national development plan
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Goal 3 - Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target assessed

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

- North Africa needs to take measures to improve women representation in parliament, as well as gender parity in literacy for the 15-24 years old, and women's share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.
- East, West and Central Africa need to intensify their efforts in all six gender related indicators.
- Scale-up interventions known to increase enrolment and retention of girls in school like single-sex schools, separate latrines and urinals for girls in co-eds, special scholarships for girls, etc. Where boys' enrolment is lower than girls' enrolment, governments should scale-up interventions such as scholarships, free school feeding programmes,
- Countries should address the social biases and negative attitudes towards girls' education.
- With regard to women's representation in Parliament, all countries should enhance women's opportunities to take part in the electoral process. Special efforts should be made to encourage women to seek elected office and to succeed in the elections.
- Concerning gender differentials in wage employment, member States should encourage gender parity in recruitment through affirmative action in the hiring of civil servants.
- Provide the private sector with incentives to recruit more women
- Ensure that women have equal access to high quality training.
- Introduce measures to allow women to combine their reproductive role with paid employment.
- Recognize that the most efficient way to achieve this goal is within the context of a country-owned MDG-based Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper or MDG-based national development plan

Health MDGs:

Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality;

Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and other Diseases

Targets assessed

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

Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

- Increase budget allocations to 15 per cent of total expenditure as adopted in the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria;
- Scale-up interventions such as free immunizations, insecticide-treated bed-nets, ante-natal care services; hygiene and sanitation education that have been shown to work;
- Increase in domestic resource mobilization including non-governmental provision of care.
- Special tax incentives could be used to encourage private provision of essential public health interventions such as immunizations;
- Reform, improve and strengthen health systems, including improving health infrastructure;
- Harmonize and better coordinate the many “vertical” programmes in health to reduce transaction costs;
- Promote strong stewardship and leadership for a multi-sectoral approach in providing health care ensuring that the wider social, cultural and economic barriers to health are addressed;
- Improve capacity and retention of health workforce; urgently address the “brain drain” problem;
- Improve health statistics;
- Recognize that the most efficient way to achieve this goal is within the context of a country-owned MDG-based Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper or MDG-based national development plan.

Goal 7 - Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Targets assessed

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

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

- Increase budget allocations to water and sanitation;
 - Scale-up “quick impact” interventions known to work – public water pumps;
 - Provide low-cost alternative energy sources – such as subsidized kerosene, coal briquettes - to alleviate deforestation and stem desert encroachment;
 - Provide public health education to improve sanitation;
 - Encourage water security through incentives.
 - Address policy and institutional weaknesses, for example public utilities regulatory agencies, technical know-how is imperative;
 - Improve statistics;
 - Recognize that the most efficient way to achieve this goal is within the context of a country-owned MDG-based Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper or MDG-based national development plan.
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