Research Paper Political-Science

Millennium Development Goals : Progress and Pathway

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ABSTRACT

On 8 September, 2000, United Nation Millennium summitconcluded with the adaptation of the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) as a global vision for the future. It created a momentum that brought the issue of development back in the international agenda, since their inception in 2001, it played a positive role in drawing attention to development aid. However the current scenario of socio-economic development –increasing inequalities, strong GDP growth in emerging countries , climate-change, as well as current geopolitical changes call a blueprint for post-2015 framework .Such a post-2015agend needs to be based on global social contract, relevant to people in the south and the north, rather than being dominated by development aid professional.

The proposed research paper aims to examine and evaluate since 2001 various perspectives on MDGs, their progress and their future prospects for how it could inform and enrich the process for post-2015.

KEYWORDS

Introduction

'We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalizationbecomes a positive force for the entire world's people.'

Millennium Declaration

The United Nations Millennium Summit concluded with the adoption of the Millennium Declaration as a global vision for the future. The Declaration is based on a set of fundamental rights – freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility and structured according the followings_

- Peace, security and disarmament;
- Development and poverty eradication;
- Protecting our common environment;
- Human rights, democracy and good governance;
- Protecting the vulnerable;
- Meeting the special needs of Africa; and
- Strengthening the United Nations.

In September 2000, the United Nations (UN) organized the Millennium Summit which was attended by a record number of Heads of States and policymakers worldwide. The Summit issued a Millennium Declaration which was unanimously adopted and signed by 189 governments. The agreements in the Declaration covered wide ranging actions and targets which are collectively aimed at tackling developmental challenges primarily facing developing countries including ridding the world of poverty and working together to address human development issues through global partnership. The UN Secretariat soon thereafter translated and developed the Declaration into eight Goals, which became known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)-

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria, and other preventable diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Development Vision for Post-2015 Framework:

Developments since the formulation of the MDGs in 2000, in particular the triple crisis offood, finance and the environment , as well as the Arab Spring, have givenmore urgency to a number of additional development concerns that were not adequatelyaddressed in the MDGs. A post-2015 framework will have to create a framework thatenables sustained, equitable and inclusive growth. These emerging concerns need to be part of evaluating the role and functioning of the MDGsand also need to inform the formulation of development goals in a post-2015 framework.The challenges and trends described above point towards the need to go beyond the MDGs, and address several issues to achieving sustainable and more inclusive development. The Millennium Declaration outlining a broader vision of development that includes environmental sustainability, human security, rights and good governance beyond poverty eradication, could provide a good starting point for this. Going beyond the MDGs and including environmental aspects raises three more important issues. A question for debate is whether a post-2015 framework should also focus on means or rather be solely concerned with ends. Linking strategies and means to objectives bears the risk to be overly prescriptive and falling in to the 'one size-fits-all' trap. Yet, achieving a set of goals will require additional resources and policy support. While ODA (Official Development Assistance) is an important source of development finance, achieving goals that go beyond the MDGs towards sustainable development require policies that help creating conducive environments for development, and thus a strengthening of policy coherence for development. Global collective action is required, for example in the area of climate change. At the same time middle income countries with poor populations may increasingly be able to finance their own development through domestic resources and need support in building tax systems.

A Changing Geo-political and Poverty Landscape:

One of the most important trends of recent years is the rapid growth of large developing countries such as China, India and Brazil.The changing geopolitical landscape and the diversity of developing countries, as well as the fact that the poor live in countries of radically different development levels and development patterns all imply that a post-2015 development framework needs to give much more attention to development patterns, goals and targets at the national level. An emphasis on the national level would also allow strengthening the special position of the least developed countries and the poor which are living in these countries. A post-2015 framework could continue to give special attention to least developed countries.

Employment: Globalization and especially financial globalization have had a huge impact on working conditions and employment security. The nature of work is changing: more flexible work in developed countries and a continuously high or even growing role of informal work in many developing countries. Work opportunities in the formal sector may have increased in more dynamic developing countries, but were accompanied by increasing wage inequality and increasing insecurity. Financial globalization started in the 1990s with the liberalization of banking systems in many developed countries. At the same time, the Bretton Woods institutions exerted growing pressure on developing countries to liberalize external capital markets. This has given rise to eight trends on labour markets worldwide:

1. An increase in service employment
2. Declining labour-force participation, especially of males
3. A continuously high share of workers in the informal economy
4. Continuing or increasing youth unemployment
5. A declining wage share in national income
6. Increasing wage and income inequality
7. Growing importance of multinational enterprises
8. A growing number of migrant workers in industrialized countries.

Inequality
Attention towards inequality should be a basic element of all targets, and that they should be broken down for different socioeconomic classes or for different income groups. This would reveal whether poorer income groups orexcluded socio-economic classes have gained access to social services or gained fromincreases in national income. These arguments have recently been strengthened by analysisthat shows that greater equality and more equal access to government services will alsocontribute to improved and sustained development in general.However, for a workable post-2015 framework, more visibility of its impact on poorergroups and suggestions for correctives in terms of public and development aid expenditurewill not be sufficient. There is a need for a better understanding of the underlying causes of enormous inequalities. Such analysis would inform whether a post-2015 strategy should explicitly incorporate economic policies that are propoor and that reduce inequalities.

A post-2015 framework therefore should not only give more attention to inequalities, but should also be more explicit about the causes of substantial and growing inequality. It should further incorporate goals and targets in relation to social and economic systems, which will lead to reduced inequality.

Environment
A post-2015 framework needs to be more conscious of challenges to the environment and energy consumption. In the discussions leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), various proposals were made. The High Level Panel on Global Sustainability (2012) underscores the following issues:

1. The number of people living in poverty is declining, but the number of hungry people is rising;
2. Inequality in wealth distribution is rising;
3. Access to clean water is increasing, but 2.6 billion people lack access to modern sanitation;
4. By 2030, demand for food will rise by 50 per cent, demand for energy by 45 per cent and demand for water by 30 per cent;
5. Women are too often excluded from economic opportunities;
6. The financial crisis was partly caused by market rules that encourage short-termism and do not reward sustainable investment; and
7. The current economic model is "pushing us inexorably towards the limits of natural resources and planetary life support systems".

Human Rights
Although in terms of Rights theMDGs are an important milestone in achieving economic, social and cultural rights. Conversely, human rights strategies support achievement of the MDGs, because they address the discrimination, exclusion and accountability failures that often underlie poverty and development problems. In a human rights approach, promoting development is not seen as charity. "Development is considered to be the right of every individual and it is the duty of the state to guarantee it. A human rights approachprovides principles on which action should be based. They include non-discrimination, human dignity, participation and accountability"

Global Social Contract for Post- 2015
If greater attention is given to the inclusion of developing countries in preparations for thepost-2015 agenda, and if inequality and human rights become an integral part of the agenda,then the post-2015 development agenda essentially becomes a global social contract.

Global Governance
The most important aspect of an improved global governance system is enhanced policy coherence in economic, social and environmental policies, both at the national and the international level. A post-2015 agenda for development therefore needs to contain an expression of the various sets of global public goods, how they are financed, and which global institutions can be held accountable for the provision of these global public goods.

Conclusion
Almost 15 years' experience with the MDGs has revealed a lot of strengths and weaknesses.Framing the deliberations for a post-2015 Development Framework on the Millennium Declaration would thus base its preparations on a set of issues that carry aglobally accepted political consensus and would thus avoid a laundry list of good intentions.The MDGs have played a positive role in drawing more attention to development aid since their inception in 2001. But current socio-economic developments, notably increasing inequality, strong GDP growth in emerging countries and climate change, current geopolitical changes as well as changes in the poverty landscape call for a new approach to a post-2015 framework. A new framework has to be based on a global social contract, relevant to people in the South and the North, rather than being dominated by development aid professionals and merely applicable to the South. A global social contract strives for sustainable and equitable growth in all countries, while paying particular attention to employment, inequality, sustainable development, human rights, a global social floor, and to improved global governance. The establishment of a Global Economic Coordination Council will result in better policy coherence between economic, social and environmental policies at national and international level, as well in a better provision of a number of essential global public goods. It will thus be an important element to achieve improved global governance to post-2015 MDGs framework.

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