Building on the MDGs in shaping the post-2015 development agenda: Some regional perspectives

ESCAP/ADB/UNDP Sub-regional Workshop on Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda for South-East Asia
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Sudip Ranjan Basu
Economic Affairs Officer
Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division
UN-ESCAP
Outline

• Asia-Pacific MDGs: Who are left behind?

• Evaluation of MDG framework: Strengths and Weakness

• MDGs in shaping the post-2015 development agenda:
  • Lessons learned
  • Thematic think-pieces
  • Emerging challenges

• Way forward for Asia-Pacific region
Asia-Pacific MDGs: Who are left behind?
Reflections

• The MDGs served as rallying point for development in the AP region:
  – common worldwide development framework to address poverty and put human progress at the forefront

• A message to the poor that world community was serious about reducing poverty

• Progress of development in AP region: **Mixed and uneven** across countries
  – Comparing AP performance between 2003 and 2011/12:
    **Targets**- same (4/10), deteriorated (1/10), **improved (5/10)**
  – Comparing country performance in income poverty before and after Millennium Declaration:
    **Countries**- same (13/23), deteriorated (5/23), **improved (5/23)**
  – Comparing earliest and latest Post- Millennium Declaration Country Performance:
    **Countries**- same (14), deteriorated (21), **improved (20)**
Reflections (cont.)

- Progress in Countries with Special Needs: Impacts mixed in achieving targets

- Least Developed Countries: [ same (3/13), deteriorated (3/13), improved (7/13)]
- Landlocked Developing Countries: [ same (4/12), deteriorated (3/12), improved (5/12)]
- Small Island Developing States: [ same (5/17), deteriorated (10/17), improved (2/17)]
- g7+fragile states: [ same (0/4), deteriorated (2/4), improved (2/4)]

- No country in the AP is on track (or better) with respect to all of the targets (2011/12 Regional MDG report)
Example 1: Extent of Disparities Between Countries

There are wide disparities in MDG outcomes between countries.

- **Income poverty**
- **Infant mortality**
- **Underweight children**
**Example 2: MDGs Progress in South-East Asia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Targets showing improvement</th>
<th>Targets showing deterioration</th>
<th>Net improvement (+), Deterioration (-), No Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>LDC, LLDC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>SIDS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>LDC,g7+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MDGs Progress:** Performance evenly divided

• Issue 2

Evaluation of MDG framework:
Strengths and Weakness
Strengths

- Based in visionary, human-development centred Millennium Declaration (MD)
- Focus on a limited set of time-bound, common and concrete quantitative development goals and targets
  - Simplicity and transparency helped rally broad support
  - Multi-dimensionality and emphasis on human development shifted policy attention well beyond economic growth objectives
  - Helped to set priorities for national, regional and international development priorities
  - Basis for advocacy tool (ODA, market access, debt relief etc)
Strengths (cont.)

• Concept of time-bound, clear goals and targets helped to identify set of indicators to track progress:
  – Planning, monitoring, accountability and evaluation

• This in turn highlighted the need for the strengthening:
  – National statistical systems and the use of timely and reliable statistics

• Focus on Results/Outcomes

• Agenda setting, but not prescriptive

• Strengthen global partnership for development, e.g., LDCs
**Weaknesses**

- No provision of vision on how to address root causes of poverty and unmet basic human needs
- One-size-fits-all goals and targets may have missed the point
- Too much focus on ends, too little (or nothing) on processes/enablers
- **MDG 8**: Global partnership for development was defined rather imprecisely, thereby weakening accountability for promised international support
  - Access to development finance, export markets, technologies and medicines

*Source of issue 2: UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda Report*
Weaknesses (cont.)

- Lack of consultations to underpin ownership
- Some targets weren’t adequately accounted for:
  - Sustainability
  - Persisting disparities including income inequalities
  - Social protection
  - Productive employment and decent work
  - Violence against women
- Some targets weren’t adequately formulated:
  - Peace and security
  - Governance and the rule of law
  - Human rights and right to development approach
• Issue 3

**MDGs in shaping the post-2015 development agenda**
Lessons learned

• The core values contained in the MD seem to be as valid as an expression of the development challenges of the world today as they were in 2000.

• The new agenda should reflect need for transformative change and serve multiple purposes:
  – advocacy tool, policy guide for national and global policies, instrument for policy coherence

• Format of time-bound goals, concrete targets and indicators should be retained:
  – MDG targets were realistic, which made them credible, but realism needs to be balanced against the need to be ambitious in, for example, combating climate change and preserving environmental sustainability.
Lessons learned (cont.)

• One-size-fits-all approach should be avoided
  – Targets need to be tailored to regional, national and sub-national realities
    • Country and regional consultations critical in formulating the agenda and adaptation of targets to country / regional contexts
  – The extent of within-country disparities in many Asia-Pacific countries is large
    • e.g., China, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Thailand
  – Need to track sub-national progress along lines of administrative regions, urban-rural locations, sex, age, education, ethnicity, caste, language, etc.
    • Need for sub-national data!
Lessons learned (cont.)

• Focus on ends should be retained
  – Every country is different in terms of geography, demography, urbanization, etc., so there can be no blueprints for national development strategies
  – However, general guidance on policies that foster productive investment, employment and decent work and growth-oriented macroeconomic policies could be considered as enablers

• Keep long time horizon (say, 10 to 15 years) but add intermediate milestones (say, every 5 years)

• Define global partnership for developments better and make sure it’s truly “global”
Key thematic think pieces

- Countries with special needs
- Culture
- Disaster risk and resilience
- Education and skills
- Employment
- Hunger
- Governance and development
- Health
- Human rights
- Addressing inequalities

- Science, technology and innovation and intellectual property rights
- Macroeconomic stability, inclusive growth and employment
- Migration and human mobility
- Peace and security
- Population dynamics
- Social protection
- Sustainable development
- Sustainable urbanization

Source: UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda Report
Emerging Challenges 1: Macroeconomic policies

- Managing the growth and inflation balance
- Asia-Pacific generally has room for fiscal and monetary policy responses
  - But fiscal space appears more limited in South Asia given higher public debts
- The concern with enactment of fiscal stimulus measures is their impact on inflation
- Policymakers need to find their preferred inflation-growth nexus

Source: ESCAP Economic and Social Survey 2012
Emerging Challenges 2: Employment

- Insufficient job creation in the formal sector in developing countries
- High youth unemployment: the young are over 3 times more likely to be unemployed
- Over 1 billion workers are in vulnerable employment
- Employment policies should improve productivity and working conditions and increase youth employment opportunities

Source: ESCAP Economic and Social Survey 2012
Emerging Challenges 3: Addressing disparities and inequalities

- Rising income and social inequalities
- Growth helped reducing poverty but income inequality on the rise
- Gini index rose worryingly from 32 to 38 in the past decades
- Social development has been significantly constrained by the levels of inequality
- Ensuring equal opportunities to those who have been left behind

Source: ESCAP Economic and Social Survey 2012
Emerging Challenges 4: Disaster risk and resilience

- Damages and losses in Asia-Pacific are at least $294 billion
  - Large spillovers to other economies in regional production networks

- Need to invest more in disaster risk reduction

- Government to take a leading role in disaster prevention and management, and in better utilizing regional cooperation frameworks

Source: ESCAP Economic and Social Survey 2012
Emerging Challenges 5: Sustainable development

- Rebalancing towards inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth
- The medium-term need for the region continues to be to redirect its growth drivers from extra-regional demand to intra-regional and domestic demand

- Policies should be designed to:
  - Increase the inclusiveness of growth
    - Broadening social protection and providing quality public service delivery
  - Foster the development of the agricultural sector
    - Sustainable, knowledge-intensive “green revolution”
  - Sustainable energy access for all
    - Reducing CO2 emissions, increasing renewable and energy efficiency
  - Exploit the potential of regional economic integration
    - A pan-Asia-Pacific integrated market and enhanced physical connectivity
    - South-South cooperation in finance, energy, food security
• Issue 4

Way forward for the Asia-Pacific region
Asia-Pacific is the learning site:
Inclusive and sustainable development

- Asia-Pacific has increasingly emphasized inclusive and sustainable development as a development priority:
  - “Sufficiency philosophy” and “creative economy” (e.g., universal health) in Thailand
  - Emphasis on sustainable development and social equity in Vietnam
  - Social transfer programmes to enhance access to education and healthcare services in the Philippines
  - Right to food and employment pillars of inclusive development in India
  - Maximizing “gross national happiness” in Bhutan
  - “Harmonious society” and growth with equity in China
Promoting inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for post-2015 in Asia-Pacific

- **Economic**: Ensure equal economic opportunities
  - Providing equal access to education, healthcare, public infrastructure and public utilities, and improve rural-urban linkages

- **Social**: Generate productive and decent employment opportunities
  - Reducing vulnerable and youth unemployment
- **Strengthen social safety nets**
  - Unemployment and disability insurances
  - Old-age pensions and protection for informal workers
- **Environment**: Support the “green economy”
  - Access to modern energy for all and green-jobs creation
  - Public-private finance and low-cost access to technology
Asia-Pacific consensus: Post-2015 development agenda

- A more inclusive, sustainable and resilient future
- Priority support for countries with special needs [LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS], including working with the g7+ group of fragile states
- Undertake reforms to build a more development-friendly international financial architecture and governance
- Capitalizing the most of this opportunity – and to meet the challenge set by UN member States to build new, better models for 21st century economies, including perspectives with an open and inclusive process
Thank you


Email: basu@un.org
Key Points for Discussion in Session 3

Building on the MDGs in shaping the Post-2015 development agenda: Some regional perspectives

Issue 1: From your perspective (country, areas of work, etc) what were the strengths and weaknesses of MDG framework?

Issue 2: What did the MDG framework leave out which should be reflected in the Post-2015 development agenda?

Thank you!