



While the Millennium Declaration should remain the basis to drive future actions in development, options for any future agenda should recognise both the strengths and limitations of the MDG framework.

A: The MDGs: benefits and limitations

1. To what extent has the MDG framework influenced policies in the country/ies or sectors you work in/with?

The MDGs have had an impact on policies in many developing countries, as well as on the policies and programmes of donors such as the EU. Among donors in particular, the MDGs have been used as an overarching framework for development cooperation and responding to poverty. Working towards achieving the MDGs has been an important part of donors' development cooperation policy and practice. The influence that the MDGs have had on policies in the development cooperation sector in general has, in turn, had an impact on the disability and development sector. Persons with disabilities have not been explicitly included in the MDG framework, whether in the Goals themselves or in the associated targets and indicators. The race to achieve the MDGs, which many donors have embraced wholeheartedly, has left little space for other sectors and for vulnerable and marginalized groups who are included only implicitly in the framework

Because the MDGs have not explicitly mentioned persons with disabilities, the MDG framework has required the disability sector to approach development policy in a number of ways. By highlighting the way that disability intersects with the MDGs, some awareness has been raised in certain sectors of the importance of including people in development policies. For example, the UN estimates that one third of out of school children have a disability, and so the goal of universal primary education will not be achieved unless children with disabilities are included. Secondly, through the signing and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) by many countries, including the European Union, disability has been recognized as a development and rights based issue, and the convention legally requires governments to act. As such, the UNCRPD has been a much greater influence on policies in the disability sector than the MDG framework.

2. To what extent has the MDG framework been beneficial for the poor in the country/ies or sectors in/with which you work?

The MDG framework does not explicitly mention persons with disabilities at any stage or level. Persons with disabilities were not included in the design stage of the MDGs, and as such have been marginalized throughout the implementation of MDG-driven processes despite the fact that in order to achieve any of the MDGs, persons with disabilities need to be included. The World Report on Disability, carried out by the UN, estimates suggest that 15% of the global population lives with a disability, and many countries have made commitments to engage in inclusive development through their signing and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), yet disability has had very little visibility in the mainstream development conversation.

The links between poverty and disability are complex but there is evidence that persons with disabilities are often poorer and have fewer opportunities than non-disabled people. The exclusion of persons with disabilities from many MDG efforts therefore has a detrimental effect on the some of the poorest people. As disability is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, this is disturbing. As many of the MDGs use aggregates to measure their success, progress towards achieving them can be made without focusing on the poorest people, but rather focusing on making improvements where they are easier, excluding populations that are harder to reach or who are at the bottom of the poverty scale, including persons with disabilities. Progress towards achieving the MDGs overall does not necessarily translate into progress for persons with disabilities. Progress can be made without changing the situation of the poorest and most vulnerable groups in a country. National progress on MDG targets can sometimes even mask worsening conditions for the poorest or those with disabilities.

As such, the MDG framework could be said to have had a minimal or even negative effect on persons with disabilities in low income countries.

3. What features and elements of the MDG framework have been particularly valuable in the fight against poverty?

The MDG framework has galvanized donor governments in making commitments on Official Development Assistance and has led to greater awareness of development issues among policy makers and the public. This has enabled civil society to attempt to hold governments to account for their commitments, and given a platform from which to lobby. However, because the MDGs did not explicitly mention disability, it has not been a strong framework for the sector.

4. What features and elements of the MDG framework have been problematic, in your view?

Persons with disabilities were not included from the start of the MDG process. This has meant they were invisible in development processes design and implementation. Yet, the UN estimates that 15% of the world population lives with a disability. Furthermore, about 80% of those are living in developing countries, and multiple barriers lead to their social and economic exclusion and, consequently, they're facing higher poverty rates and experiencing more inequalities. Achieving the MDGs has been impossible without including the most vulnerable demographics, such as persons with disabilities.

Each of the 8 Goals can be seen failing to address issues faced by persons with disabilities in developing countries:

GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER – The exclusion of persons with disabilities from MDG processes maintains the barriers keeping persons with disabilities from realizing their socio-economic participation. Poverty is the main cause of impairments, half of which could be prevented.

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION – Children with disabilities are the least likely to receive education in most countries. This goal will not be achieved unless children with disabilities are included in approaches to increase school enrollment rates.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN – Effective responses to the “multiple discrimination” faced by women and girls with disabilities are still lacking, as shown by the UN Thematic Study on violence against women and girls with disabilities.

GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY – Children with disabilities continue to be “allowed” to die solely based on the discriminatory attitudes to their disability; malnutrition is a main cause for impairments, which frequently lead to disability.

GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH – Assumed to lead “asexual” lives, women with disabilities are the least likely to receive reproductive health care services.

GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES – HIV/Aids prevalence in mothers of children with disabilities is twice as high as in other groups.

GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY – Persons with disabilities, as the poorest of the poor are the least equipped to deal with the

challenges of climate change and are also rarely considered in planning emergency relief programs.

GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT – Due to the lack of reference to excluded groups, such as persons with disabilities, the birth of a global partnership for development is unlikely to happen/has hardly happened. If a global partnership means the sharing of responsibility among all partners and stakeholders, it cannot be created as long as it won't adopt a participatory and holistic approach

5. In your view, what are the main gaps, if any, in the MDG framework?

The focus on low-income countries, while relevant in the early days of the MDGs, does not follow the shift of the global distribution of poverty: indeed, 72% of the world's poorest people now live in Middle-Income Countries (MICs), which bear the brunt of malnutrition, disease and mortality.

The focus on percentages as a measure of progress for the MDGs (and the use of regional means) tends to overlook the situation of the poorest people, including persons with a disability.

The current understanding and definition of poverty, progress and development should be revised beyond income, consumption and wealth.

The framework also fails to acknowledge the fact that disability is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, and international policymakers and stakeholders have not yet recognized and prioritized this issue within international development efforts such as the MDGs.

Human rights are not a not currently included within the MDG framework. This lack of focus on a rights based approach is an important gap for the disability sector.

A post-2015 framework has the potential to play a catalytic role in addressing important development and other global challenges and could help to fulfill individuals' rights and needs. It could also foster a new approach to equitable access to, and protection of, global public goods.

B. Feasibility of a future framework

6. In your view, in what way, if at all, could a future framework have an impact at global level in terms of global governance, consensus building, cooperation, etc.?

Any new global framework will be measured against its real impact on people's lives and whether it succeeded in addressing the main concerns expressed by people across the globe. Consequently, it has to be built as a fully inclusive process, providing space for people and institutions to dialogue and eventually to agree on actions. This dialogue process has to ensure full participation of everyone, making all efforts to open it up for those who are often voiceless. Persons with disabilities and other minority groups should therefore be enabled to play a key role in the formulation and implementation of the new development framework. Such a participatory process at global level would constitute a major innovation which would also have a positive impact on its subsequent implementation. This could pave the way to a new global partnership for development that truly addresses rights and needs of citizens and promotes principles of mutual accountability and responsibility.

7. To what extent is a global development framework approach necessary or useful to improve accountability with regard to poverty reduction policies in developing countries?

A global development framework is very useful when progress is required to be measured accurately in order to assess development. It is a very important part of the process to define relevant goals and targets that are adapted to the national and local context,

Accountability needs to be achieved also via a strengthened international, national and sub-national accountability mechanism. It is vital that marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and DPOs are enabled to play a key role in those accountability mechanisms.

Local and national accountability, and particularly downwards accountability to the population of each country is just as important as global and upwards accountability to the UN, for example.

8. What could be the advantages and disadvantages of a global development framework for your organisation/sector, including how you work effectively with your partners?

The main advantages of a truly global development framework are efficiency in our work; common understandings between organizations and partners, wherever they may be.

Depending on the design and implementation process for a global development framework, it could prove beneficial for the disability sector. An inclusive participatory process and a focus on inequality and on the poorest and most marginalized populations, including persons with disabilities, could have a strong galvanizing effect for the disability sector and could help address the rights of persons with disabilities in all countries. However, only if the global development framework includes persons with disabilities at the design and implementation phases will these advantages be felt

Any future framework should be designed in such a way as to recognise that political, economic, social and environmental challenges are linked and need to be addressed at the global level, requiring all countries to take on responsibilities, irrespective of their level of development. At the same time it must not overlook national challenges as well as individual issues, including the special needs of the poorest.

C. The potential scope of a future agenda

9. In your view, what should be the primary purpose of a future framework?

The primary purpose of any future framework would be to tackle causes as well as effects of poverty, most notably high inequalities, be it global or intra-country. High levels of inequalities can inhibit growth, discourage institutional development towards government accountability and undermine civic and social life, leading to conflict and the undermining of human rights.

This framework should always be underpinned by disability-inclusive development that adopts a human rights-based approach in line with the principles of empowerment, equality, and non-discrimination, with a focus on the poorest, most marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities.

10. In your view, should its scope be global, relevant for all countries?

The framework's scope should definitely be global, as poverty, as well as inequality affects all countries, rich or poor. The best proof of this is the prevalence of poverty in middle- and even high-income countries at the moment. However, international cooperation will remain the key priority in the context of a post-2015 framework; the

focus of the framework should remain developing countries and particularly those with the poorest and most marginalized populations.

In the specific context of the disability sector, we have noted an apparent relationship between disability and poverty. As disability can be considered universal and relevant to all populations across all countries, as well as being both a cause and a consequence of poverty, an inclusive development framework must also be global in nature

11. To what extent should a future framework focus on the poorest and most fragile countries, or also address development objectives relevant in other countries?

Fragile countries are generally the most off-track for the MDGs and are difficult environments in which to achieve development objectives and poverty reduction. They will therefore require specific attention in any future framework. However, the majority of the world's poor live in Middle-Income Countries and it will be important for a future framework to also focus on the challenges that the poorest populations of these countries. There should be no one-size-fits-all approach to different countries. It will be important for a future framework to address development objectives in all countries, adapted to the national context, and with a focus on the poorest and most marginalized populations in each country, particularly persons with disabilities.

13. How could a future framework support improved policy coherence for development (PCD), at global, EU and country levels?

In the current debate on the post 2015 agenda, many actors - including IDDC - are pleading for a comprehensive framework that goes beyond the traditional definition of development. This means that the future framework should tackle questions related to e.g. social justice, inequalities, human rights, climate change, natural and man-made disasters. In the context of such a comprehensive approach, it will be critical to ensure coherence between the various areas. The concept of PCD offers the greatest potential in this respect, as it will allow not only for coherent policies, but also for keeping a focus on the developmental outcomes. Implementing PCD will also strengthen the collaboration between a wide range of actors at the global, regional, national and local level. This is a precondition for making the post 2015 agenda a success.

14. How could a new framework improve development financing?

Although it is widely acknowledged that the post 2015 agenda should not be driven by the question of financing, it is obvious that without adequate funding its objectives

won't be met. In the current context of new actors entering the international development arena, those new actors have the responsibility of adding their contribution to development funding. The post 2015 process also offers an excellent opportunity to work on an international agreement on new and innovative means of financing for development such as a financial transaction tax. Furthermore, in the discussions how to resource the post 2015 development objectives, all stakeholders should be guided by long-term thinking rather than considering the current context of crisis as the predominant paradigm. This is due to the duration of the post 2015 development framework that is supposed to be in place for 10 to 15 years.

When designing the framework, an important consideration will be to strike a balance between ambition, comprehensiveness, achievability and accountability.

D. The potential shape of a future agenda

15. What do you consider to be the "top 3" most important features or elements which should be included in or ensured by any future development agenda?

- Disability Inclusive Development, Human Rights-based
- Focus on inequalities
- Support for analysis and collection of disaggregated data cf. disability

16. What do you consider to be the "top 3" features or elements which must be avoided in any future development agenda?

The priority setting of the new development agenda should be based on the lessons learned from the current MDG process. From our point of view, it should not:

- Be a top-down process that largely ignores/or does not include voices of citizens in developing countries, especially representatives of the most marginalised groups of the population such as persons with disabilities.
- Leave too much room for interpretation as far as the implementation of the agreed objectives is concerned.
- Repeat the exclusion of human rights as an over-arching issue, as in the case of the MDGs.



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