

LOOKING FOR EQUALITY

A gender review of National MDG Reports

2005

Bureau of Development Policy - UNDP

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The views expressed in this report do not represent the official position of UNDP.

FOREWORD¹

In September 2001, the largest gathering of Heads of State in the history of the United Nations, comprising of representatives of 189 countries, unanimously endorsed the **Millennium Declaration**, a blueprint to build a better and safer world for the next century through a global partnership for development. The Millennium Declaration owes its vision to the commitments made by the global development community at the UN Conferences of the previous two decades. Freedom from hunger and fear, democracy, equality, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility for development, peace and security – these are affirmed not only as the essential values that give direction and meaning to development, but as the inalienable rights of every human being.

• **Freedom.** *Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.*

• **Equality.** *No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured.*

• **Solidarity.** *Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.*

• **Tolerance.** *Human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted.*

• **Respect for nature.** *Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants.*

• **Shared responsibility.** *Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development, as well as threats to international peace and security, must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally. As the most universal and most representative organization in the world, the United Nations must play the central role.*

The Millennium Declaration

¹ To be signed by Director, BDP

The Millennium Declaration commits the international community and member states of the UN to the achievement of eight major developmental goals.

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger
- Achievement of universal primary education
- Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women
- Reduction of child mortality
- Improvement in maternal health
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensuring environmental sustainability
- Developing a global partnership for development.

These goals - the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** have come to be acknowledged as an over-arching framework that places human rights and human poverty at the centre-stage of development policy. At the national level, the MDGs have created the opportunity for enlarging pro-poor policy choices through bringing a more integrated and holistic perspective to macroeconomic policy instruments like Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. At the global level too, the MDGs allow development partners to arrive at a consensus around aid priorities and ensure coordination among donors.

National MDG Reports (MDGRs) are emerging as important instruments for tracking and monitoring progress on the achievement of the MDGs at the country level.

National MDG reports are key tools for awareness raising, advocacy, alliance building, and renewal of political commitments at the country level. They can catalyse national debates on how the MDGs apply to each country's situation, and can make visible the links between the global goals and national development priorities and policy choices. The process of national reporting provides an opportunity to bring different sectoral data sets and analyses together around each of the goals, and can provide national policy makers with critical inputs into national planning and budgetary processes. In addition, the process of production of a national MDGR can itself build national capacity for monitoring and reporting on goals and targets.

All developing countries are expected to have produced at least one report by the time of the global review of progress on the MDGs at the UN General Assembly in September 2005. As the scorekeeper and campaign manager for the MDGs, the United Nations Development Programme has been supporting and monitoring the process of preparation of national MDGRs.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the achievement of the MDGs – not only as just and desirable ends in themselves, but as vehicles for the achievement of all the other Goals. Effective mainstreaming of gender in the national MDGRs can contribute to a range of actions for gender equality, from internal policy dialogues and strengthening of national capacities and statistical systems for data collection and reporting leading to more gender-responsive programming and resource allocation.

In pursuit of this objective, the Bureau of Development Planning, UNDP commissioned a pilot gender scan of a few selected MDGRs². The scan found that gender concerns and perspectives were not mainstreamed adequately across goals in the majority of reports. References to women and gender continued to be ‘ghettoised’ under Goals 3 and 5. Discussions on Goal 7 were almost completely gender-blind in the majority of the reports studied. Disaggregated data were seldom provided except under Goals 2 and 3, where they are a specific requirement. In most of the reports scanned, women continued to be cast as mothers and victims rather than agents of development. Attempts to “step out of the box” and place discussions on issues such as poverty and HIV/AIDS in the larger context of gender equality and women’s rights and freedoms, were infrequent exceptions.

The results of the pilot exercise were presented at the International Workshop on Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals, jointly sponsored by the UN Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality, and the Multilateral Development Bank Working Group on Gender (November 19-20, 2003, World Bank, Washington, D.C.). The workshop was attended by international gender experts and senior policy-makers including the President of the World Bank.

Participants at the workshop found the review exercise extremely useful and recommended that it should be continued and expanded to cover as large a number as possible of national MDG reports. It was also suggested that the results of the review be published and presented by UNDP during the 2005 MDG Review and at the Beijing Plus 10 meeting in 2005.

We are happy to present this report and the results of the expanded review exercise covering 78 national MDGRs. We hope that this exercise will contribute to strengthening the integration of a gender equality perspective into national MDGRs, and add to and enrich the global review of progress on the MDGs in September 2005.

Shoji Nishimoto

**Assistant Secretary General
Director of the Bureau for Development Policy
United Nations Development Programme**

² Countries covered under the pilot were Albania, Armenia, Bolivia, Cameroon, Egypt, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania and Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is the foundation for the MDGs

“Gender equality and empowerment of women” – Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals - are at the core of all the MDGs, from improving health and fighting disease, to reducing poverty and mitigating hunger, to expanding education and lowering child mortality, to increasing access to safe water, to ensuring environmental sustainability. **Attempting to achieve the MDGs without promoting gender equality will both raise the costs and decrease the likelihood of achieving the other goals.**

Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- *Gender equality in capabilities and access to opportunities can accelerate economic growth.*
- *Equal access for women to basic transport and energy infrastructure (such as clean cooking fuels) can lead to greater economic activity.*
- *Gender equality in farm inputs helps increase agricultural production and reduce poverty because women farmers form a significant proportion of the rural poor.*
- *Equal investment in women’s health and nutritional status reduces chronic hunger and malnourishment, which increases productivity and well-being.*

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

- *Educated girls and women have greater control over their fertility and participate more in public life.*
- *A mother’s education is a strong and consistent determinant of her children’s school enrolment and attainment and their health and nutrition outcomes.*

Goal 4 Reduce child mortality and Goal 5 Improve maternal health

- *A mother’s education, income, and empowerment have a significant impact on lowering child and maternal mortality.*

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

- *Greater economic independence for women, increased ability to negotiate safe sex, greater awareness of the need to alter traditional norms about sexual relations, better access to treatment, and support for the care function that women perform are essential for halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other epidemics.*

Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- *Gender-equitable property and resource ownership policies enable women (often as primary users of these resources) to manage them in a more sustainable manner.*

Goal 8 Develop a global partnership for development

- *Greater gender equality in the political sphere may lead to higher investments in development cooperation.*

(From “Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women”. Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005.)

The reverse is equally true – achievement of Goal 3 depends on progress made on each of the other goals. Tracking gender gaps and inequalities in relation to each of the other MDG targets and indicators is therefore as critical as accurate reporting against Goal 3..

Achievement of other Goals in critical for Goal 3

Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

• Failure to design actions that reduce poverty equally for women and men will leave significant pockets of female poverty in many countries.

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

• Failure to achieve universal primary education has significant consequences for girls' enrolment and completion of higher levels of education and hence their ability to access resources and opportunities to the same extent as boys.

Goal 4 Reduce child mortality

• Child mortality is one reason why fertility remains high in some parts of the world. High fertility is associated with greater unpaid work burdens for women, and multiple pregnancies are associated with elevated risks of disability or death. In some countries child mortality partly reflects discrimination against girls in nutrition and medical care. Reducing child mortality in these countries will mean ending such discrimination.

Goal 5 Improve maternal health

• Women cannot enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and voice with men if they continue to suffer the ill-health, disability, and risks of dying associated with pregnancy and childbirth. The ability to have the number of children they desire when they desire is also critical if women are to take control of their lives and contribute productively to their families, communities, and societies.

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

• Because the HIV/AIDS pandemic is rapidly being feminized, both in risk of becoming infected and in the burden of care, failure to control this epidemic is likely to leave girls and women increasingly vulnerable.

Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

• Because women are the major food producers in the developing world, failure to ensure environmental sustainability is likely to damage their ability to feed themselves and their families. Failure to limit certain types of pollutants, such as indoor smoke from cooking fires, will also have particularly deleterious effects on the health of women and children.

(From "Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women". Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005).

No time to lose on Goal 3!

Global reviews undertaken over the last year, as well as the picture emerging from national MDG reports, indicate that a majority of countries will be unable to meet the Goal 3 target of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by the 2005 deadline.

Since gender equality is the essential underpinning for the achievement of all other Goals, the failure to achieve gender equality targets will have a domino effect, compromising progress on other Goals and targets.

Accelerating progress on Goal 3 is therefore an urgent necessity for all actors in development.

Over the past three decades women have made some gains, particularly in health and education. Despite these gains, it is clear that the first deadline for the MDG target of Goal 3 - eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels of education no later than 2015 – will be missed. This will be the first visible MDG failure. But instead of serving as an opportunity to underscore the failures of the international community, 2005 should be used to issue a clarion call for reenergizing efforts so that the second deadline for the target – 2015 – is honored.

MILLENNIUM PROJECT TASK FORCE
ON GENDER EQUALITY
INTERIM REPORT, 2003

Making MDG reporting gender-aware

National MDG Reports are the primary instrument for tracking progress on MDG targets. They are expected to be widely disseminated and discussed by policy-makers, donors and a wide range of actors in development, including local communities, civil society groups and citizens. They are instruments for public information, advocacy, policy and accountability.

Making sure that national MDG reports are gender-aware and that gender equality issues are adequately addressed in reporting on each of the Goals is essential to their purpose.

- The national MDG report is a snapshot showing where the country stands in relation to the achievement of the MDGs. Since gender equality and empowerment of women underpin all the MDGs, they must be reflected adequately throughout the report. **Restricting gender concerns to Goal 3 would amount to presenting a distorted picture of reality.**
- The MDGs have become the over-arching framework for national development, and are the reference point for pro-people and pro-poor policy making. A gender-aware national MDG report **would catalyse gender-responsive policy-making and programming, and would facilitate more optimal resource allocation.**
- Policy-makers are aware that not everything that needs to be done for gender equality lies in their domain – individuals, families and communities all need to become actively involved in social transformation. A gender-aware national MDG report would be **a tool for public advocacy on gender equality and a means to**

- create a supportive environment** for translating commitments into actual results on the ground.
- A gender-aware national MDG report would be **a platform for partnerships between national governments and civil society groups committed to women's rights**, and would enlarge the space for dialogue and joint action on critical gender issues.
 - The national MDG report is an instrument for transparency and accountability. Making gender issues visible across Goals **broadens the scope of accountability on women's rights** and increases its relevance and value to citizens, civil society groups and gender equality advocates.
 - The national MDG report is expected to be translated into a range of advocacy products such as films, booklets, posters and fact-sheets which will spark a media campaign for national commitment to the Goals. Making gender issues visible across Goals will **add value to media products** and give **greater public visibility** to efforts being made by governments to achieve gender equality.
 - Gender equality is common to the mandates of all UN organisations and donor agencies, and is an explicit national goal in the majority of countries. **Commitment to gender equality is the “glue” that allows diverse actors in development to come together**, reach a consensus on a common agenda and direct resources where they are most needed.

Putting national MDG reports under a “gender lens”

This report documents the findings of a gender review of national MDG reports, and covers all 78 of the English, French and Spanish national reports from developing countries published up to December 2004. Four reports from developed countries have also been scanned as a part of this exercise.

The scanning exercise identified and recorded the extent to which gender equality concerns are reflected in the reports. In particular, the following parameters were tracked.

- Whether gender inequality has been identified as a key determinant in fulfilment of any/all Goals.
- Whether gender equality and/or women's rights issues have been adequately/effectively highlighted in the text of the report.
- Whether sex disaggregated data have been presented and used effectively.
- Whether gender dimensions of poverty, education, infant mortality, maternal mortality, health, environmental sustainability and development cooperation have been made visible and substantiated with data.
- Whether strategies and/or resources for addressing gender inequality have been committed or clearly identified.

Strategic priorities for gender equality

To ensure that Goal 3 is met by 2015, the task force has identified seven strategic priorities. These seven interdependent priorities are the minimum necessary to empower women and alter the historical legacy of female disadvantage that remains in most societies of the world:

- 1. Strengthen opportunities for post-primary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education.*
- 2. Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights.*
- 3. Invest in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens.*
- 4. Guarantee women's and girls' property and inheritance rights.*
- 5. Eliminate gender inequality in employment by decreasing women's reliance on informal employment, closing gender gaps in earnings and reducing occupational segregation.*
- 6. Increase women's share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies.*
- 7. Combat violence against girls and women.*

(From "Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women". Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005.

- Whether additional gender targets/indicators relevant to the specific country situation have been developed and incorporated in the report.
- Whether the strategic priorities for gender equality identified by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality have been flagged and discussed.

GENDER SCAN OF NATIONAL MDG REPORTS 2005

LIST OF COUNTRIES COVERED

PILOT STUDY 2003	AFRICA	ARAB REGION	ASIA PACIFIC	CENTRAL EUROPE AND CIS	LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN
1. <i>Cameroon</i>	1. <i>Ethiopia</i>	1. <i>Bahrain</i>	1. <i>China</i>	1. <i>Albania</i>	1. <i>Bolivia</i>
2. <i>Mauritius</i>	2. <i>Ghana</i>	2. <i>Kuwait</i>	2. <i>Bhutan</i>	2. <i>Bosnia- Herzegovina</i>	2. <i>Brazil</i>
3. <i>Mozambique</i>	3. <i>Gambia</i>	3. <i>Jordan</i>	3. <i>Afghanistan</i>	3. <i>Georgia</i>	3. <i>Guyana</i>
4. <i>Tanzania</i>	4. <i>Kenya</i>	4. <i>Syria</i>	4. <i>Cambodia</i>	4. <i>Romania</i>	4. <i>Argentina</i>
5. <i>Nepal</i>	5. <i>Namibia</i>	5. <i>Yemen</i>	5. <i>Indonesia</i>	5. <i>Azerbaijan</i>	5. <i>El Salvador</i>
6. <i>Vietnam</i>	6. <i>Zambia</i>	6. <i>Lebanon</i>	6. <i>Mongolia</i>	6. <i>Croatia</i>	6. <i>Guatemala</i>
7. <i>Albania</i>	7. <i>Rwanda</i>	7. <i>Palestine</i>	7. <i>Philippines</i>	7. <i>Kazakhstan</i>	7. <i>Honduras</i>
8. <i>Armenia</i>	8. <i>Botswana</i>		8. <i>Thailand</i>	8. <i>Kosovo</i>	8. <i>Panama</i>
9. <i>Lithuania</i>	9. <i>Uganda</i>		9. <i>Vietnam</i>	9. <i>Slovakia</i>	9. <i>Paraguay</i>
10. <i>Poland</i>	10. <i>Benin</i>		10. <i>E. Timor</i>	10. <i>Slovenia</i>	
11. <i>Bolivia</i>	11. <i>Burkina Faso</i>			11. <i>Tajikistan</i>	
12. <i>Egypt</i>	12. <i>Cap Verde</i>			12. <i>Bulgaria</i>	
13. <i>Saudi</i>	13. <i>Cote d'Ivoire</i>			13. <i>Czech Republic</i>	
	14. <i>Guinea</i>			14. <i>Hungary</i>	
	15. <i>Mauritania</i>			15. <i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	
	16. <i>Senegal</i>			16. <i>Ukraine</i>	
	17. <i>Togo</i>			17. <i>Turkmenistan</i>	
	18. <i>Congo</i>				
	19. <i>Gabon</i>				
	20. <i>Sao Tome</i>				
	21. <i>Chad</i>				
	22. <i>Cameroon</i>				

GOAL 1: THE “POVERTY GOAL”

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- *Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day*

Indicators: Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day

Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty)

Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

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

Indicators: Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age

Proportion of population under minimum level of dietary energy consumption

Poverty has a gendered face

Millions of women around the world are disadvantaged in ways that make them vulnerable to poverty – whether defined in terms of money (income poverty) or in terms of well-being (human poverty).

- Gender inequality distorts women’s **access to assets** – in the majority of countries, women do not have legal rights to land and property, rendering them economically insecure and depriving them of the economic returns, such as access to credit, decent work and an assured income, that ownership would bring.
- Gender inequality distorts **access to public goods and services** that are designed to improve well-being. For instance, in many developing countries, women are expected to remain within the home and are not expected to take decisions that affecting their own lives. They are thus unable to avail of available opportunities for education, health care and skill-enhancement that are designed to reduce poverty and increase well-being.
- Gender inequality dictates unequal **distribution of resources within the family** – for instance, in many countries tradition dictates that women and girls eat last and least. The outcome - higher rates of malnutrition and anaemia among women and girls, in comparison to men and boys from the same families.
- Women’s **access to employment** is gendered. On the one hand, more and more women are entering the global work force and becoming the main bread-earners for their families. On the other hand, they generally earn a far lower wage than men doing the same kind of work. Moreover, women workers are concentrated in the informal sector where wages are lower. Jobs in the formal sector show a

- pattern of segregation by sex, with jobs at the lower end of the scale usually earmarked for women.
- Women are constrained by **time poverty**, a result of the **unequal distribution of care work**, or the work of nurturing and sustaining families and communities - tasks like cooking, cleaning, looking after and teaching children, caring for old people and those who are ill, and meeting the water, fuel and fodder needs of the household. All these tasks are essential for survival, but are not valued or acknowledged as contributions to development. The burden of care work limits women's chances of taking advantage of opportunities for education and employment, and seriously constrains their involvement in development.

Apart from all the above, there is evidence from several countries of the increasing numbers of poor households that are headed or maintained by women. This phenomenon is often referred to as the **feminisation of poverty**, and can be understood as an outcome of all the above factors which combine to create poverty for women.

A gendered perspectives on poverty can add value to National MDG Reporting

National MDG Reports are conceptualised as key instruments for tracking and monitoring overall progress on national poverty goals. Ideally, it should reflect an accurate picture of reality by reporting how the country as a whole is progressing and making visible how different vulnerable groups are faring. Without a gendered approach, the fact of women's special vulnerability and its linkage with gender inequality will remain hidden and invisible – making the MDG Report less accurate and blunting its effectiveness as a means of public advocacy.

As a public document that is expected to be widely disseminated and discussed, the national MDG Report can play a role in creating a national consensus on gender equality by making visible the high costs to society of gender inequality and highlighting the contributions that women make to economic development.

Despite the global consensus on the need to go beyond economic criteria in defining and tackling poverty, the policy framework in most countries continues to be driven by purely economic considerations, with poverty reduction being seen as an automatic by-product of economic growth and macro-economic stability. A gendered approach to reporting under the Poverty Goal would convey a strong message – that the government places as high a value on equity and social justice as it does on economic growth, and recognises that it cannot hope to reduce, far less eliminate, poverty without addressing gender inequality.

Such an approach would mark a significant departure from the “twin track” approach that relegates macroeconomic policies and social policies to different domains and would make a strong case for investing in women through targeted interventions in key areas. Programmes to increase women's access to productive assets and employment opportunities, to widen the coverage and eliminate gender biases in the delivery of social

services and public goods, ensure the availability of survival needs such as drinking water and fuel, to support technological innovations to reduce the drudgery of domestic work - all these would conceivably be components of a gender-responsive national poverty strategy.

How gendered is reporting on Goal 1?

It is encouraging to see that 42 reports (54 per cent) out of the 78 national MDGRs covered in this study make specific mention of women's special vulnerability to poverty. This seems to be an advance over the pilot gender scan of 13 MDGRs carried out in 2003, where women found mention as a vulnerable group in only 6 reports – less than 50 per cent of the sample.

***A positive trend
- disaggregated poverty data***

- ***Nutrition/malnutrition levels of children by sex*** (Benin, Cap Verde, Guatemala, Paraguay, Syria)
- ***Employment/unemployment rates by sex*** (Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Kosovo)
- ***Comparative poverty of male-headed and female-headed households*** (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Botswana, Jordan, Rwanda)
- ***Levels of satisfaction of basic needs by sex of household head*** (Lebanon)
- ***Labour market status of Roma women and men*** (Hungary)

In comparison to a single report in the pilot study, 22 per cent of the reports now include sex-disaggregated data on poverty indicators to support the statement that women are a particularly vulnerable group. This is an extremely positive trend. Statistics are far more persuasive than unsupported statements - disaggregated data provides 'hard' evidence of women's situation and makes the case for a sharper policy focus on specific aspects of women's poverty.

By presenting sex-disaggregated poverty data, these reports have made visible some key aspects of gender inequality and poverty in the concerned countries. The inclusion of such information as part of reporting on Goal 1 is likely to have far-reaching impacts on national poverty policies.

Although only 11 of the reports (14 per cent) make specific mention of the link between women's poverty and gender inequality, a slightly larger number (13 reports, 16 per cent of the sample) include empowerment of women and actions to advance women's rights and reduce gender inequality among strategies for poverty alleviation. **As many as 15 reports (19 per cent) state that targeted interventions for women are included in their national poverty strategies.**

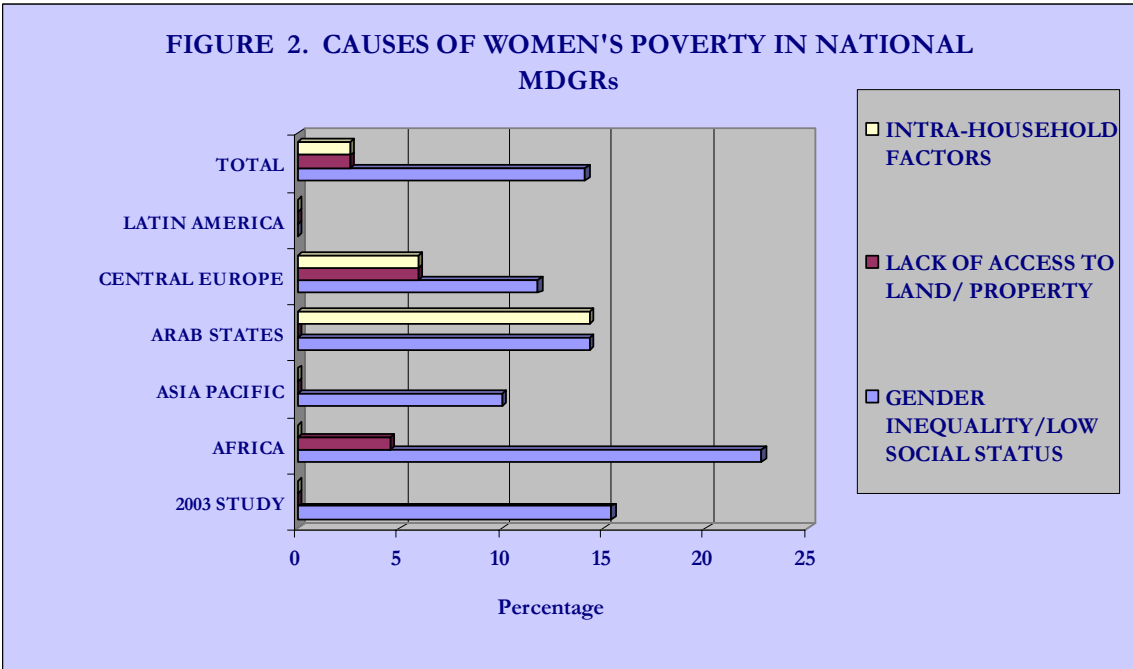
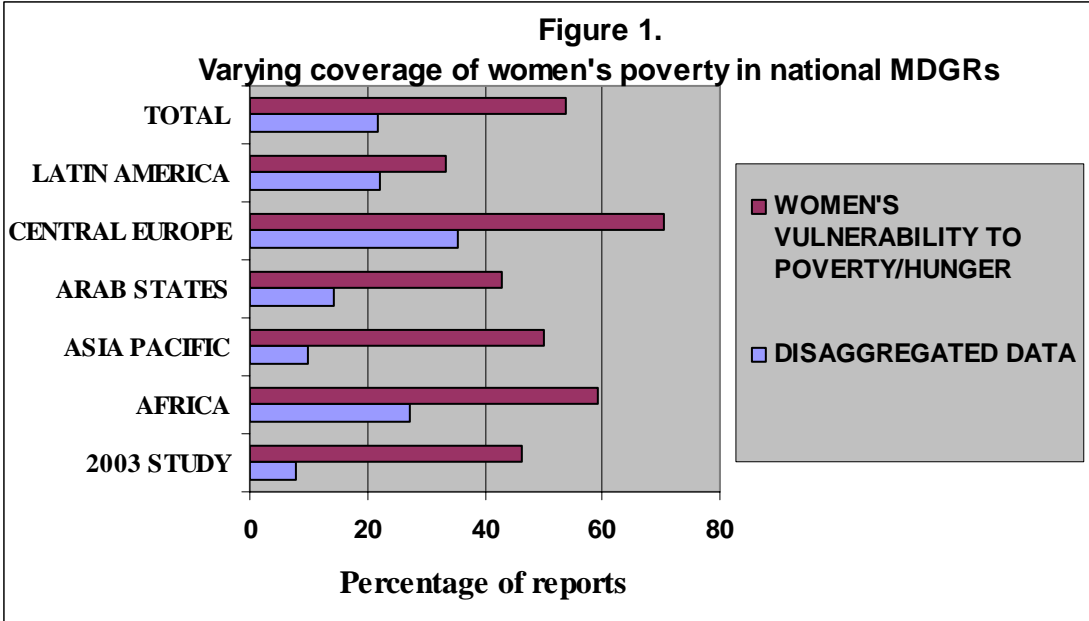
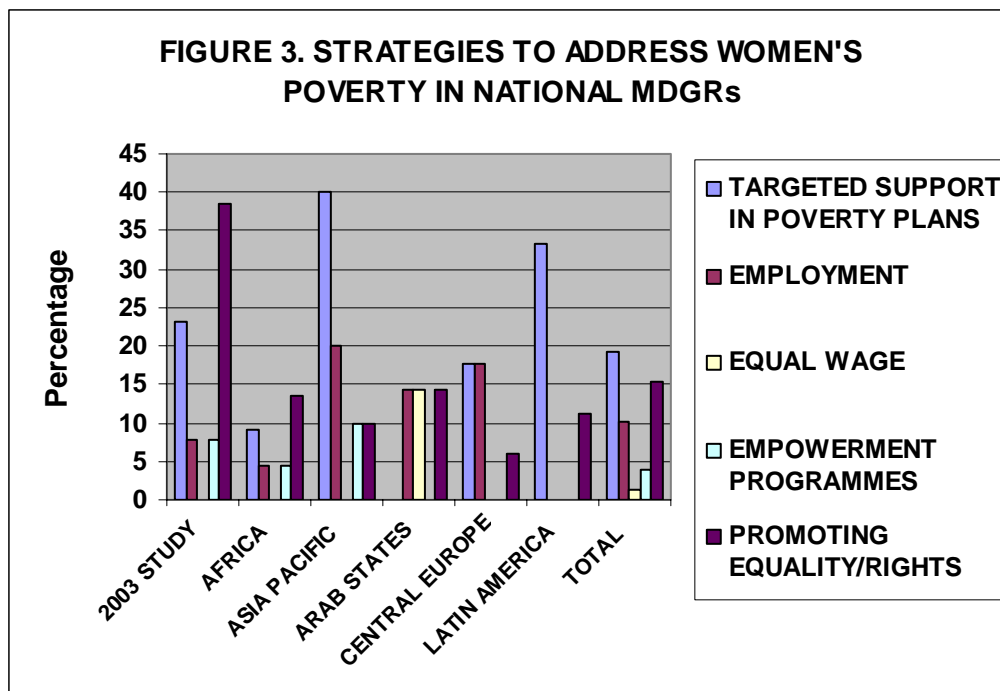


FIGURE 3. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S POVERTY IN NATIONAL MDGRs



A notable “missing link” in MDG reporting is the connection between women’s poverty and HIV/AIDS.

A UNIFEM study in Zimbabwe found that women constituted 77 per cent of individuals facing ‘negative income shock’ (a sharp and sudden drop in income) as a result of HIV/AIDS

In much of Africa, subsistence farming of food crops, which is predominantly a women’s activity and which is often all that stands between poor families and starvation, has been severely affected by the pandemic.

Caring for affected people has increased women’s workloads and made it even more difficult for women to take up paid work.

The omission of these issues from the poverty discourse is both a symptom and a cause of policy failure in dealing with the larger economic implications of the epidemic.

The Millennium Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has identified seven strategic priorities for action on gender inequality. Three of these priorities are designed to address poverty - investing in infrastructure to reduce women’s and girls’ time burdens; guaranteeing women’s and girls’ property and inheritance rights; and eliminating gender inequality in employment by decreasing women’s reliance on informal employment, closing gender gaps in earnings, and reducing occupational segregation.

These strategic priorities are largely invisible in the surveyed reports. Only two reports mention women’s lack of land

and property rights as a cause of poverty. Only two refer to intra-family gender issues such as domestic violence and unequal access to food. While eight reports (10%) mention

increased access to employment for women as a strategy for poverty reduction, only one mentions the wage gap.

Including issues such as occupational segregation and wage gaps under the discussion on the Poverty Goal can make the powerful point that improving women's access to productive resources and addressing gender discrimination in labour markets are effective and efficient poverty reduction strategies, not just "gender" strategies. Reporting on these issues exclusively under Goal 3 therefore represents a missed opportunity to bring a gendered focus to the poverty discourse.

Recognition of strategic issues

- **Access to land** (Bosnia, Burkina-Faso, Vietnam)
- **Discrimination in the family** (Bosnia, Jordan)
- **Wage gap** (Jordan)
- **Link between gender equality and agricultural productivity** (Ghana)

How can reporting on Goal 1 be strengthened?

- Presenting **sex-disaggregated data** on poverty.
- Identifying and, wherever possible, presenting sex disaggregated data for **specially vulnerable groups** – whether landless agricultural workers, racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, single-parent households and households affected by HIV/AIDS, pensioners or communities living in conflict-affected areas.
- Contextualising and **localising poverty indicators**.
- Using qualitative data to highlight **connections between poverty, gender equality and other Goals**.
- Making the **"money trail"** visible through highlighting allocations for women and gender equality under poverty programmes.

Gender and Poverty: Key Messages

- *Gender equality in capabilities and access to opportunities can accelerate economic growth.*
- *Equal access for women to basic transport and energy infrastructure (such as clean cooking fuels) can lead to greater economic activity.*
- *Gender equality in farm inputs helps increase agricultural production and reduce poverty because women farmers form a significant proportion of the rural poor.*
- *Equal investment in women's health and nutritional status reduces chronic hunger and malnourishment, which increases productivity and well-being.*

(From "Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women". Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005.

A gendered view of the "education-poverty" link in Egypt

"Education of the household head has a strong influence on the household's poverty status... On the other hand, it is interesting to note that gender bias exists regardless of the household status: both in poor and in non-poor families the illiteracy rate for girls aged 11-15 is twice that of boys."

From the Egypt MDGR

***Harmonisation of poverty reduction strategies
Bosnia***

The MDG Report, the Human Development Report and the PRSP have been aligned and synergies between immediate, medium-term and long-term policies has been ensured.

***Unpacking 'feminisation of poverty' in
Vietnam***

"...female-headed households reported poverty rates of 20% in 2002 (down from 28% in 1998) whereas male-headed ones reported poverty rates of 31% (down from 40% in 1998). This finding needs to be interpreted with some caution, however, since there are important difficulties at establishing who is the household head, and data is not disaggregated between married female-headed households and unmarried ones, an area for further development in forthcoming surveys. Moreover, many married female-headed households are recipients of large remittances from their migrant husbands working elsewhere in the country or overseas. In addition, female headed households tend to have a smaller size, an important determinant of poverty levels. The further gender disaggregation of data from the living standards surveys is a critical need to evaluate in depth the relative situation of women in Vietnam."

From the Vietnam MDGR

GOAL 2: THE “EDUCATION GOAL”

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

Indicators: *Net enrolment ratio in primary education*

Proportion of pupils starting Grade 1 who reach Grade 5

Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds

Education is the key to building women’s capabilities

Education is a key strategy for gender equality and women’s empowerment. Primary education is the first step towards acquiring the basic tools of learning, and can open the doors to a much wider world of knowledge and information than would otherwise be inaccessible to women. Education expands opportunities for women, equips them to make more informed choices, empowers them to resist oppression and enables them to claim their rights. The right to education is inextricably linked to other basic human rights including the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to work and the right to participate in decisions affecting one’s self and one’s community.

Gender parity in access to schooling is the first step toward gender equality in education. However, the world is still far from achieving gender parity in enrolment and completion rates, particularly in secondary school.

Worldwide, it is estimated that 54–57 percent of all out-of-school children are girls.⁷ In South Asia girls constitute two-thirds of all out of school children (UNESCO 2004).

(From “Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women”. Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005).

Yet, millions of women around the world are living with the consequences of not having completed five years of schooling, or not having been to school at all. What is worse, the processes that kept them out of school still operate to deny an estimated -- million girls their right to education.

Multiple factors operate to deny girls their right to education

- **Patriarchal attitudes** that define girls’ destiny in terms of marriage and family, so that parents see little value in educating girls. Even if they are sent to school for some years, **early marriage** and **pregnancy** force girls to drop out before completion.
- Girls’ contribution to the family economy in

terms of **unpaid work**, both inside and outside the house, are another reason for parents to keep them at home or pull them out of school in times of economic

stress. Even if they do go to school, girls have to make up their quota of work before and after school, and are often too exhausted to learn.

- **Distance and physical infrastructure.** Concerns about safety and ‘honour’ make parents reluctant to send girls to schools that are far from the home or outside the village, particularly in situations of conflict. Similarly, the lack of security in school buildings and the absence of amenities such as separate toilets can be barriers to access for girls.
- The **school environment.** Going to school can expose girls to sexual harassment and abuse from teachers and boys. In such situations, the presence of **women teachers** can help in convincing parents that schools are safe places for girls.
- The **content and process of education.** Curricula are often dull and irrelevant to real life. Textbooks can reinforce gender stereotypes by casting women in subordinate roles. Methods of teaching are often gender biased, with boys getting more attention and affirmation from teachers than girls.
- **Poverty and the rising cost of schooling** is a major factor. Cuts in the education budget in many countries have resulted in increases in school fees and the levying of ‘informal’ user charges such as school maintenance fees. **Discontinuance of incentives** such as free textbooks and school meals adds to the costs of schooling. In such situations, poor families often decide to use their scarce resources to send their sons to school while keeping girls at home to contribute to the family economy.
- **HIV/AIDS** has become a major barrier to girls’ participation in education. In countries affected by the pandemic, girls often become the major bread-earners and care-takers of families where most adults are either ill or dead. In such circumstances, they have no option but to drop out of school.

In a UNICEF study in Cameroon (2002), as many as 27 per cent of girl students reported having had sex with a teacher.

(From “Toward Universal Primary Education: Investments, Incentives and Institutions”. Task Force on education and Gender Equality, UN Millennium Project 2005)

Some countries show a **reverse gender gap** in education – a situation where fewer boys than girls are in school. The reasons could include a ‘macho’ culture where boys are on the streets from an early age, families putting boys to work because they can earn higher wages than girls, the perception of education as irrelevant to men’s ‘real’ life and work, and the involvement of boys in crime. Although seen only in a few countries, this is a serious gender issue and needs to be addressed through focused strategies.

Putting primary education under a gender lens can add value to MDGRs

The factors that keep girls from enrolling in school, or push them out before they have completed the full course of primary education are well-known, as are the strategies that can be put in place to address them. Yet, a significant number of countries are still far from meeting the goal of universal primary education, primarily because large numbers of

Girls' education is instrumental in achievement of MDGs

- *Women who have some education have access to diversified opportunities for employment and command a higher wage, thus reducing poverty and contributing to national economic growth.*
- *Education can help women get information on protecting themselves from HIV/AIDS, and can even increase their ability to negotiate safe sex.*
- *Women with six or more years of education are more likely to seek prenatal care, assisted childbirth and postnatal care, and are more likely to immunise their children than mothers with no schooling.*
- *Most farmers in the world are women. Education for women can give women access to knowledge and technologies to increase agricultural productivity.*

girls are out of school. Increasing girls' enrolment is therefore central to meeting Goal 2 in most countries. Moreover, because it is the primary agent in enhancing women's capabilities, education for girls is integrally linked to achievement of other MDGs.

Highlighting the issue of gender disparities in primary education in the national MDGR is therefore vital and can spur a change from "business as usual" to significant shifts in approaches to education for communities and citizens, as well as for policy-makers and donors.

Merely presenting disaggregated data on enrolment can highlight the gender gap and provide a rationale for increased investments in girls' education. In a context where several countries are experiencing cuts in the education budget as part of macro-economic policy adjustments, it is important to emphasise the need to step up investments in education and emphasise the instrumental value of access to education as a long-term strategy for poverty reduction.

In addition, by identifying the barriers to universalisation, the MDGR can make a case for focused interventions to enhance access for girls from specially disadvantaged groups.

How gendered is reporting on Goal 2?

Less than half of the reports reviewed (33 out of 78 reports, or 42%) present disaggregated data on primary education under Goal 2.

Of the 78 reports surveyed, 13 (17 per cent) state that gender parity has been achieved while four countries (Bhutan, Brazil, Lebanon and Slovak Republic) mention a reverse gender gap.

... everything else being equal, countries in which the ratio of girls' to boys' enrolment in primary or secondary education is less than 0.75 can expect levels of GNP that are roughly 25 percent lower than countries in which there is less gender disparity in enrolments.

... countries that fail to meet the goal of gender parity in education will face considerable costs, both in forgone economic growth and in reductions in fertility, child mortality and malnutrition. And without appropriate action, these costs will increase over time.

(From "Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women". Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005).

Only 23 reports (30 per cent) have any mention of the factors underlying the gender gap in primary education. It is noteworthy that all these reports include an explicit commitment to reducing the gender gap in education.

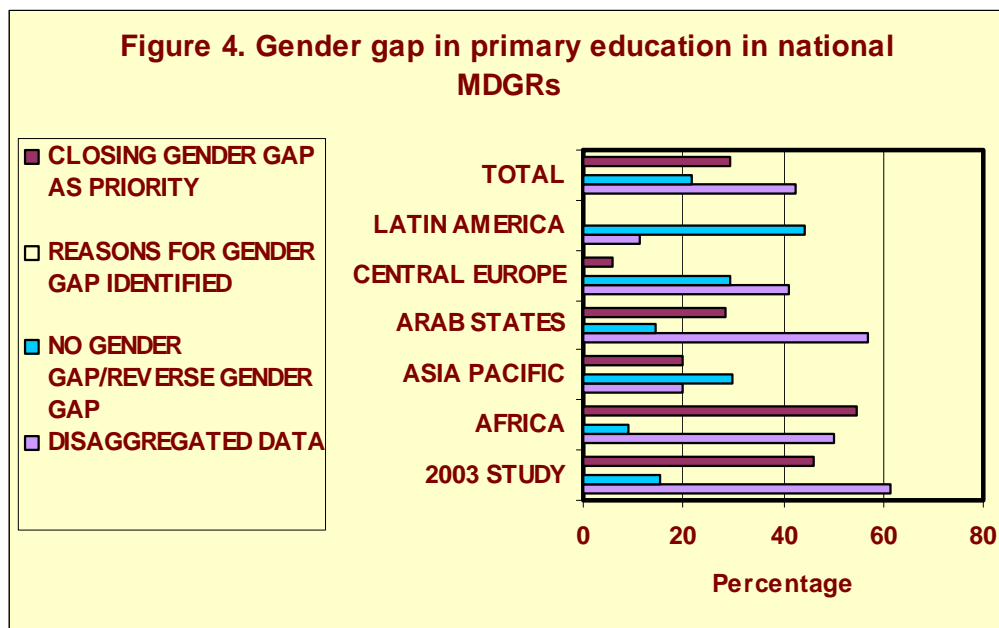
Only five (6 per cent) of the surveyed reports ((Albania, Ghana, Gambia, Mauritius and Tajikistan) make the connections between girls’ education and poverty. Again, while a few reports make mention of the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the education sector, none of them make any specific reference to HIV/AIDS as a barrier to girls’ schooling in the discussion on Goal 2.

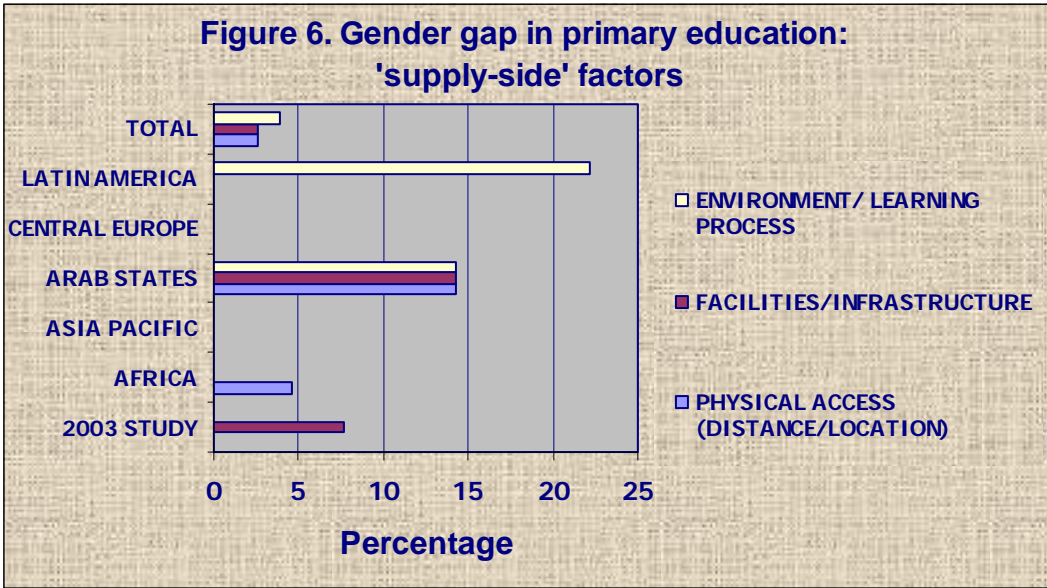
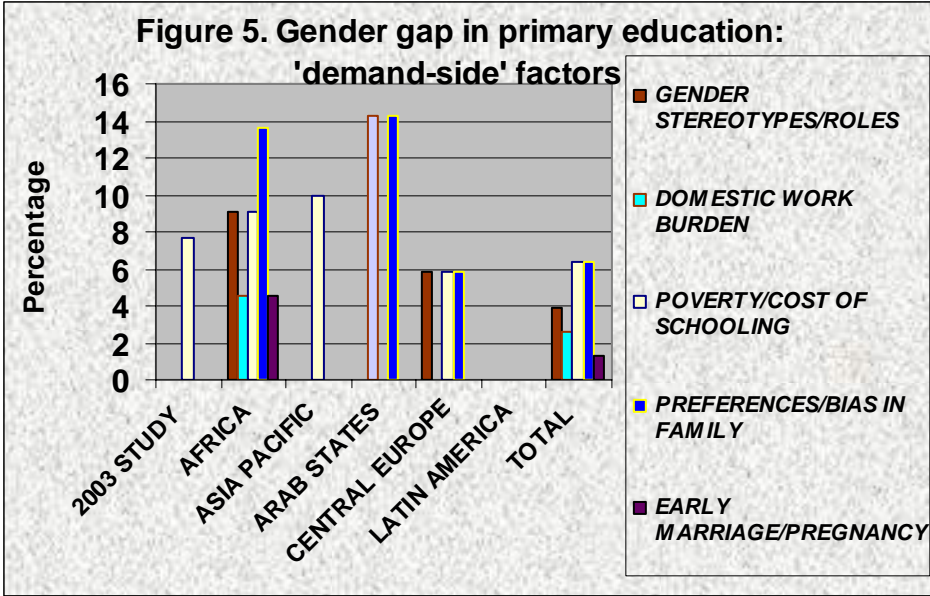
In as many as 21 reports (27%), the issues of girls’ education and the barriers to access have been extensively discussed under Goal 3. However, only one report (Honduras) has a cross-reference to Goal 3.

While this is certainly a function of the overlap in the targets and indicators for goals 2 and 3, it need not have been a limitation – countries could well have chosen to present disaggregated data on primary education under Goal 2 and on secondary and tertiary education under Goal 3. **That comparatively few countries have chosen to do so is an indication of the limitations of “reporting by the book” – even if more data is available, most countries choose to report only against the minimum set of suggested indicators.**

**Gender gaps in education
- ‘naming’ the causes**

- **Gender biases in family** (Chad, Guinea, Sao Tome, Tajikistan, Yemen)
- **Poverty and high cost of schooling**(Albania, Ghana, Gambia, Mauritius, Tajikistan)
- **Stereotypes about women’s roles** (Guinea, Sao Tome, Tajikistan)
- **Burden of domestic work** (Ghana, Yemen)
- **Location of school** (Gambia, Yemen)
- **Conditions in schools** (Egypt, Yemen)
- **Classroom environment** (El Salvador, Paraguay)
- **Early marriage and pregnancy** (Sao Tome)





How can reporting on Goal 2 be strengthened?

- Making it mandatory to provide **sex disaggregated data** on the standard minimum set of indicators.
- **Mapping** the national education database and listing the indicators for which sex disaggregated data is available for inclusion in the MDGR. Several countries now routinely collect disaggregated data on enrolment, drop-out and completion rates. Many have carried out gender analyses of textbooks and classroom transactions.
- Identifying and **listing the main obstacles** to girls' education in the specific country context, and prioritising data collection on these issues. Data available from micro studies can be creatively used.
- **Localising and contextualising** indicators and providing data on the situation of especially marginalised groups of girls (for instance, girls in families affected by HIV/AIDS, girls in remote rural communities, girls from migrant communities, street children, girls who have been married at an early age and so on).
- **Cross-referencing** between data provided under Goals 2 and 3 to underline the connections between education and empowerment.
- Making the **“money trail”** visible by reporting on budget allocations for programmes to address barriers to universal primary education.

Re-evaluating economic restructuring

The Albania report includes a detailed discussion on the impacts on education of economic restructuring and cuts in social sector spending. One consequence is the early entry of boys into labour force, creating a reverse gender gap in primary education.

Unpacking ‘achievements’

The Vietnam MDGR tackles the difficult issue of ‘quantity versus quality’ in education.

“As indicated in previous MDG reports, a number of quantitative achievements continue to mask significant shortcomings in quality. For example, primary school pupils spend less than half the normal school day in class compared with many other countries in the region and elsewhere. Moreover a significant share of teachers in the more remote areas of the country lacks adequate qualifications and training. While primary school enrolment rates are quite high, some 23% of pupils still fail to complete to grade 5.”

From the Vietnam MDGR, “Overview and Summary”

GOAL 3: THE “GENDER EQUALITY GOAL”

Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women

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

Indicators: Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education

Ratio of literate women to men ages 15-24

Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Gender equality and women’s empowerment have multiple dimensions

The Task Force on Education and Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women set up by the UN Millennium Development Project defines gender equality in terms of transformations in three domains of women’s lives.

- The **capabilities domain** refers to basic human abilities as measured by education, health, and nutrition. These capabilities are fundamental to individual well-being and are the means through which they can access other forms of well-being.
- The **access to resources and opportunities domain.** This refers primarily to equality in the opportunity to use or apply basic capabilities through access to economic resources (such as land, property, infrastructure, income and employment) and the opportunity to participate in and influence political processes (through representation in parliaments and other political bodies). Without access to economic and political resources and opportunities, women will be unable to put their capabilities to use in enhancing well-being for themselves, their families, communities and society.
- The **security domain**, which refers to reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict which can result in physical and psychological harm and can undermine the ability of individuals, households and communities to fulfil their potential. Violence is a constitutive element of patriarchy and is used against women and girls to threaten and terrorise them into accepting their subordination.

These three domains are inter-related, but the linkages are mediated by many factors in the social context – change in one is essential to but does not guarantee change in the others. Thus, simultaneous action for change in all three domains is necessary for the achievement of gender equality.

Empowerment is the outcome of change in all the three domains. To be empowered, women must gain equal capabilities and equal opportunities, as well as the agency to use their rights, capabilities and opportunities to control their own lives and destinies. Freedom from the fear of violence and coercion is essential for the exercise of women's agency.

Indicators to measure progress on Goal 3 have limitations

The four indicators suggested by the UN Expert Group for measuring progress on Goal 3 have all been critiqued on technical grounds.

- **Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.** This indicator does not provide information on the relative

Gross enrolment ratio – a flawed measure?

Gross Enrolment Ratio can show progress even when the absolute levels of enrolment are low. For instance, a country in which 30% of girls and 30% of boys of the appropriate age are enrolled will show a better score than a country in which 95% of boys and 80% of girls are enrolled.

proportions of girls and boys in the school-going age group who are going to school and does not reflect drop out rates. It does not take into account the fact that even if girls go to school, their levels of achievement may be very different from those of boys.

- **Ratio of literate females to males among 15- to 24-year-olds.** Different countries have widely varying definitions of literacy. The way in which literacy data is collected may be technically flawed.
- **Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.** This

indicator measures only the proportion of women in this sector relative to men, but not the differences in their conditions of work. In addition, it is not reflective of differential access of women and men to the labour market and paid employment. It ignores the agriculture sector where most poor women are concentrated.

- **Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments.** Again this indicator reflects numbers rather than access to decision-making in governance and ignores women's political participation at the grassroots.

The Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has suggested a set of 12 additional indicators to track and measure progress on Goal 3. However, even these alternative indicators are restricted only to capturing parity between women and men rather than the quality of outcomes of parity. The Task Force has emphasised the need to develop qualitative indicators to measure the process and outcomes of change.

Proposed indicators for Goal 3

Education

- *The ratio of female to male gross enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.*
- *The ratio of female to male completion rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.*

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

- *Proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied.*
- *Adolescent fertility rate.*

Infrastructure

- *Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel.*

Property rights

- *Land ownership by male, female, or jointly held.*
- *Housing title, disaggregated by male, female, or jointly held.*

Employment

- *Share of women in employment, both wage and self-employment, by type.*
- *Gender gaps in earnings in wage and self-employment.*

Participation in national parliaments and local government bodies

- *Percentage of seats held by women in national parliament.*
- *Percentage of seats held by women in local government bodies.*

Violence against women

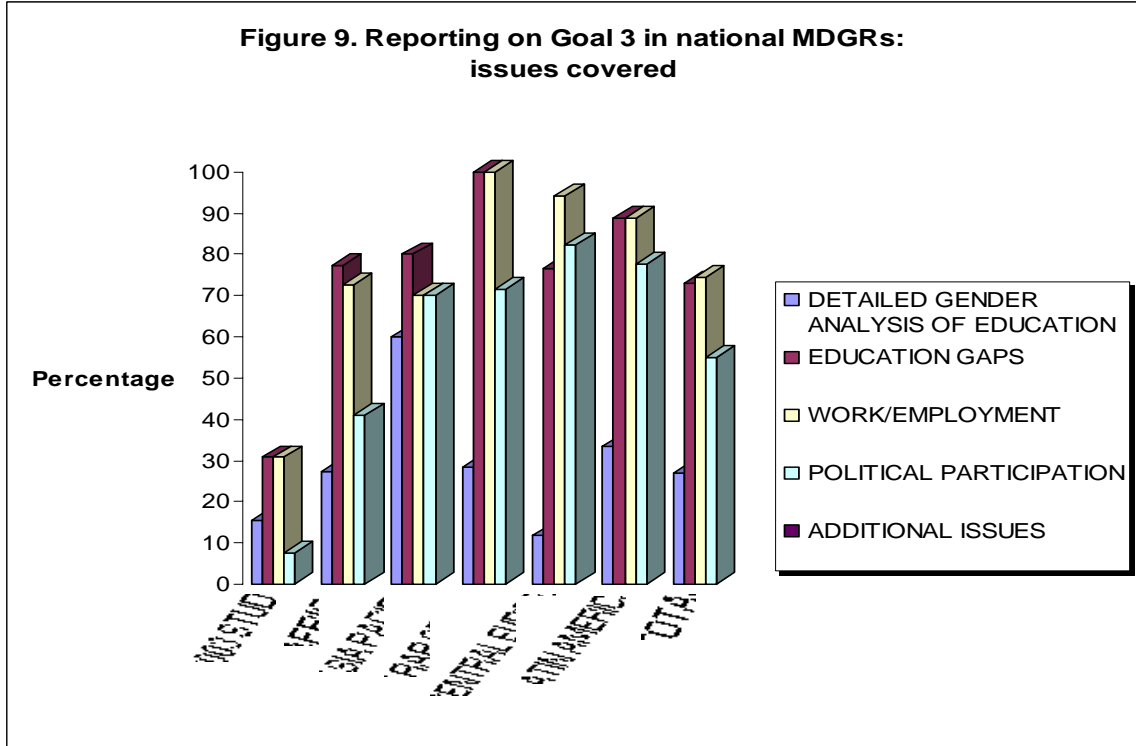
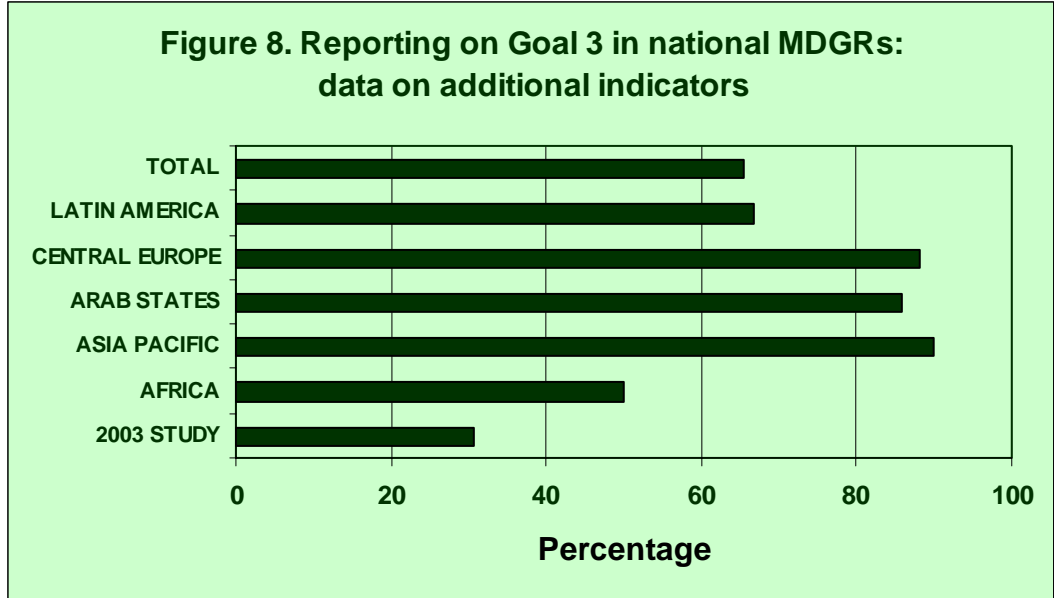
- *Prevalence of domestic violence.*

(From "Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women". Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005.

How strategic is reporting on Goal 3?

As many as 51 of the 78 reports surveyed in 2004(65%) have reported against more than the standard recommended set of indicators. **Countries have been creative and strategic in using available data to illuminate key elements of gender inequality.** The number and range of additional indicators presented represent a significant advance over the pilot study, where only 5 per cent of the surveyed reports used additional indicators.

Interestingly, some countries have used indicators broadly along the lines suggested by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. **The apprehension in many quarters that expanding the range of indicators for Goal 3 would be intimidating and would make reporting more difficult would therefore appear to be unjustified.**



Additional indicators used for tracking Goal 3

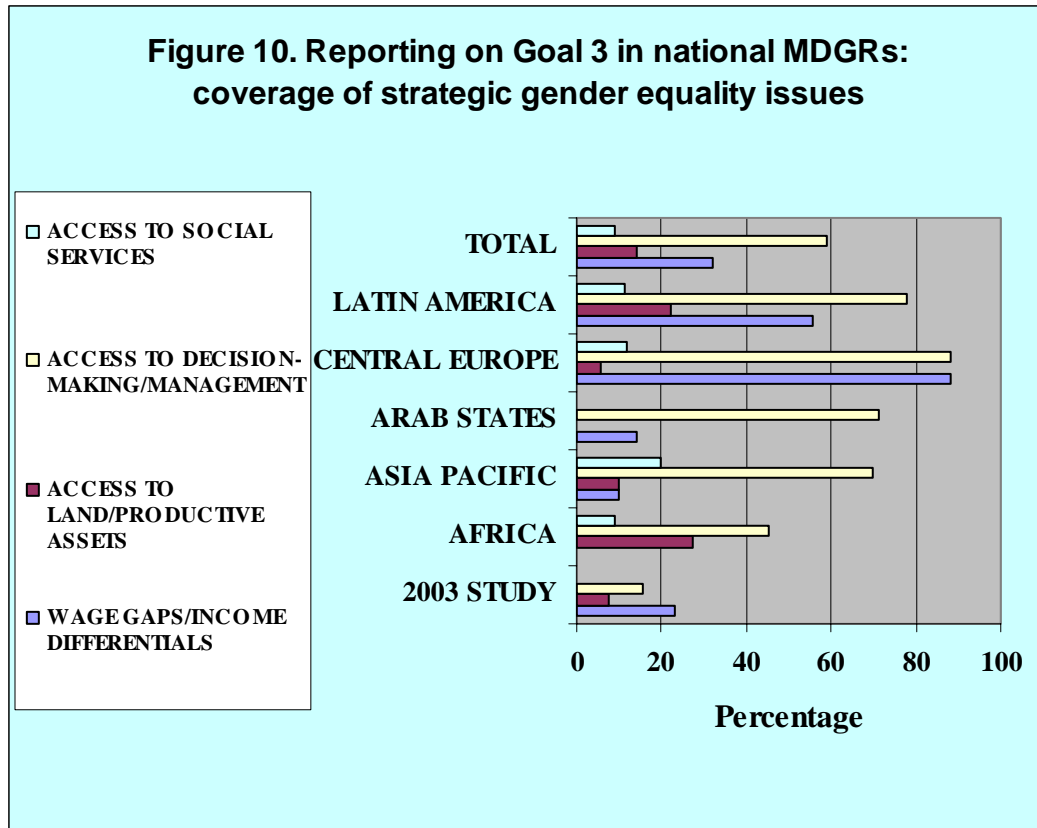
The comparison of data and information provided under Goal 3 with that presented under Goal 2 throws up some interesting insights. While only 30 per cent of reports made any mention under Goal 2 of the factors underlying the gender gap in education, as many as 27 per cent of the surveyed reports included detailed analyses of the barriers to girls' education under Goal 3.

Overall, 57 per cent of the reports contain data and information on the causes of the gender gap in primary education. **However, the placing of this information under Goal 3 rather than under Goal 2 represents a missed opportunity for mainstreaming.** Moreover, bringing a gender focus to bear on the policy discourse on education would provide the rationale for increased funding through the Education budget, to programmes for girls' education.

The overlap of targets for Goal 2 and Goal 3 has created a situation where reporting under Goal 3 focuses overwhelmingly on education in about 25% of reports. **Shifting the primary education target to Goal 2 is therefore strategic in terms of encouraging countries to focus on other issues under Goal 3.**

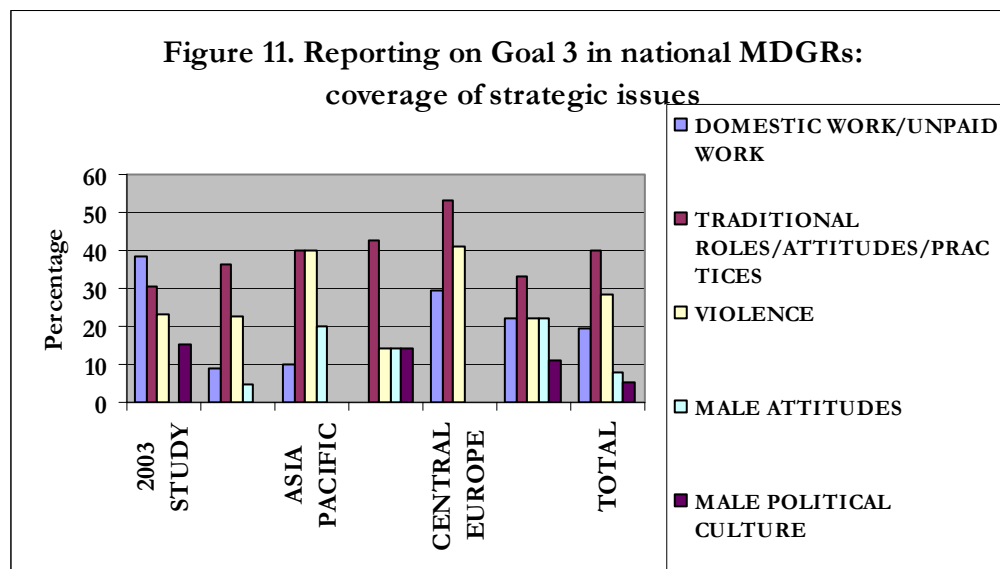
Trends in reporting under Goal 3 bear out the observation that countries tend to report "by the book", confining discussions only to issues connected with parity in education, literacy, non-agricultural employment and political participation, even if data on other indicators is available. While the majority of countries have addressed these issues under Goal 3, discussion on other issues is somewhat patchy.

**Figure 10. Reporting on Goal 3 in national MDGRs:
coverage of strategic gender equality issues**



A wide range of concerns is covered in those of the reviewed reports that have “gone outside the box” to look at issues other than education, non-agricultural employment and political participation. Apart from gender gaps in education, non-agricultural employment and political participation, the issues most frequently mentioned are traditional roles, stereotypes and discriminatory practices (40 per cent), wage gaps and income differentials between women and men (32 per cent), violence against women (28 per cent), legal barriers to equality (23 per cent), domestic work and unpaid work (19 per cent), negative impacts on women of economic policies (14 per cent), access to land and assets (14 per cent) and gaps in the policy framework (13%).

A few of the reports mention additional issues such as the national capacity for gender mainstreaming (9 per cent), women’s differential access to social services (9 per cent), male attitudes (8 per cent), lack of resources for gender mainstreaming (8 per cent), violations of the rights of women workers (6 per cent) and the need for institutional change and transformation (6 per cent).



A positive trend - some difficult issues brought into the light!

- ***Increase in violent crimes against women (Botswana, Thailand, Jordan)***
- ***Male political culture as a barrier to women's political participation (Kuwait, Brazil)***
- ***Patriarchy and women's subordination (Brazil, Georgia)***
- ***Sexual and reproductive rights (Kosovo, Rwanda)***
- ***Domestic violence as a cause of suicide (China)***
- ***Insensitivity of policy makers to violence against women (Mongolia)***
- ***Discrimination in citizenship rights (Lebanon)***
- ***Recent revival of anti-women traditions (Yemen)***
- ***Barriers to justice for women facing domestic violence (Czech Republic)***
- ***Women's involvement in drug trade (Kyrgyzstan)***
- ***Marginalisation of women in process of democratisation (Bosnia-Herzegovina)***
- ***Child sexual abuse (Congo)***
- ***Son preference (China)***
- ***Gender biases in customary law (Togo)***
- ***Possible link between violence and women's role in market economy (Vietnam)***

Some reports are notable for raising extremely sensitive issues under the discussion on Goal 3.

The fact that these issues are included in the report is an indication of the depth and rigour of the process adopted in its preparation. "Breaking the silence" around these issues increases the social change potential of the report.

It is a matter of concern that only two of the reports mention the role of the media in creating or countering popular misconceptions and negative stereotypes of

women. Negative portrayals of women in the popular media and media insensitivity to women's rights have been identified as major impediments to

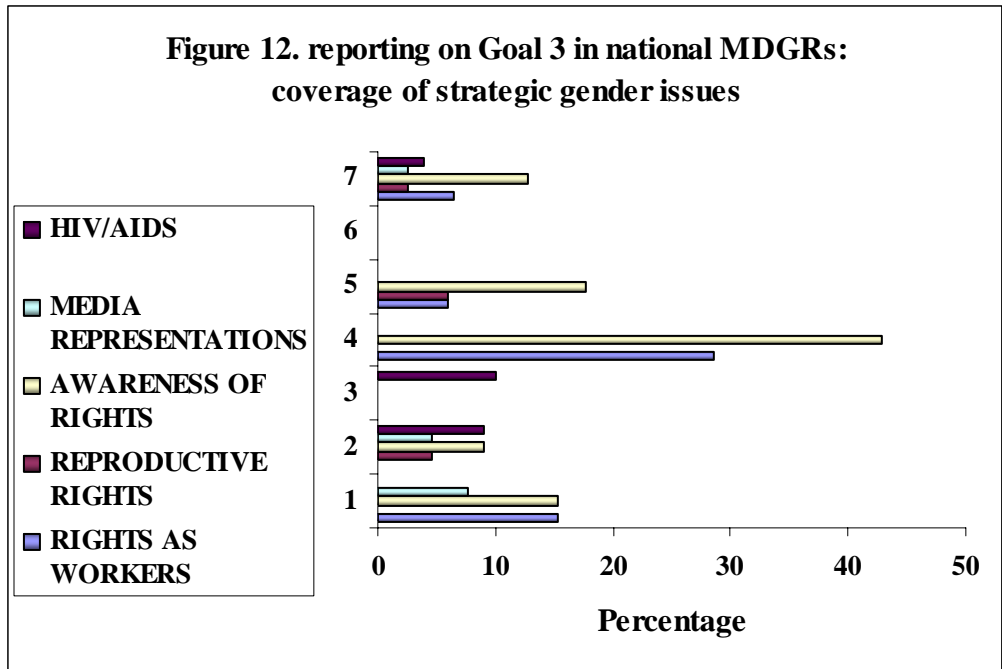
gender equality in many countries by governments and civil society groups alike. In such a situation the silence on the role of the media in the overwhelming majority of reports surveyed is an unfortunate omission.

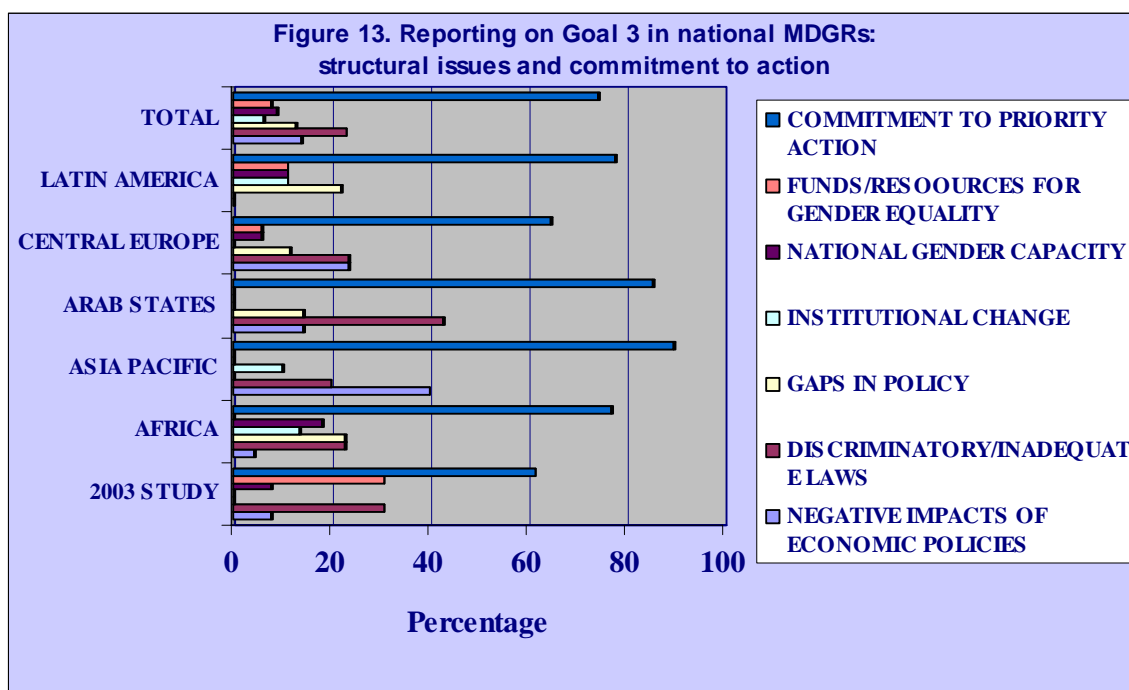
HIV/AIDS barely finds mention under Goal 3 in the surveyed reports – only four countries (5 per cent) have any discussions on the implications of the epidemic for women. Once again, the reason for this omission seems to be the fact that this issue has been covered under Goal 6. In the process, the opportunity has been missed of making direct linkages between HIV/AIDS and gender inequality under Goal 3 and reinforcing the argument for a gendered approach to the epidemic.

Goal 3 offers countries an opportunity to...

- *Make visible the connection between HIV/AIDS and gender inequality (China, Guatemala, Namibia, Rwanda)*
- *Highlight the role of the media (Albania, Gambia)*

... ignoring these aspects can have long-term consequences!





How can reporting on Goal 3 be strengthened?

- **Localising and contextualising targets and indicators** to ensure that they reflect the situations, needs and priorities of women in the country.
- Scanning national databases and **identifying key data sets** that can highlight specific aspects of women’s reality and the implications for gender equality.
- Presenting **qualitative data** wherever available, including from micro studies at the community level to illustrate key issues
- Disaggregating data by (for instance, by **region, class, ethnicity and age**) to reveal the special vulnerabilities of different groups of women.
- Wherever possible, presenting data separately on **adolescent girls** in order to highlight the special needs and priorities of this group.
- **Presenting data from costing exercises** to demonstrate the economic benefits of gender equality.

“... an interesting finding is that reducing social inequity such as gender disparity contributes positively to the growth of the Ethiopian economy. Based on inferences from cross-country studies, it is possible for Ethiopia to register an increase to the tune of 0.4 percentage points in the growth of per capita GDP if gender disparity in primary enrolment was reduced by more than 0.5 percentage points every year.”

- from the Ethiopia MDG Report

- Making the “**money trail**” visible by reporting on budgetary allocations for gender equality, including support to national women’s machinery and programmes for empowerment of women.

Localised goals and targets in Vietnam MDGR

Goal2. Universalise education and improve education quality

- ***Target 2, Eliminate the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005, and the gap between ethnic minorities and others by 2010.***
- ***Increase literacy to 95% of under-40-year-old women by 2005 and 100% by 2010.***
- ***By 2010 have improved the quality of education and increase full-day schooling at primary level.***

Goal 3

- ***Target 3. Ensure that the names of both husband and wife appear on land use certificates by 2005.***
- ***Reduce the vulnerability of women to domestic violence.***

Making the connections

- ***Afghanistan:*** Introduction of a gender perspective into the medical curriculum identified as essential to address women’s health issues.
- ***Vietnam:*** Cross-cutting gender issues specially highlighted (land ownership, violence, data and political participation).

Localised indicators in Ethiopia MDGR

Goal 1

Women’s ownership of land and livestock

Goal 3

- ***Proportion of women in police, law-making and policy-making bodies***
-

GOAL 4: THE “CHILD MORTALITY GOAL”

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

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

*Indicators: Under five mortality rate
Infant mortality rate
Proportion of one-year old children immunised against measles*

Child survival depends on gender equality

It is easy to think of infant mortality and child survival as purely health issues which can be addressed through medical interventions such as prenatal and postnatal health care, safe childbirth, good nutrition and timely immunisation. Such a view would however be a seriously limited one. While medical factors and the state of the health infrastructure in the country are important, infant mortality and child survival are closely dependent on multiple social factors, the most critical of which is gender equality.

- The basic foundation of child survival and health is determined during pregnancy. **Poor health** (particularly anaemia and malnutrition) is a fact of life for millions of women, which is compounded during pregnancy by **overwork, under-nutrition and chronic ailments** that directly affect the health and survival chances of the foetus.
- The mere existence of infrastructure and facilities for newborn care is not enough to ensure access. In many instances, **decisions around childbirth are taken by the husband and older women in the family** – traditional norms, lack of faith in modern methods, misconceptions about immunisation and most of all, the low value placed on the mother’s life and health often operate to deprive infants of emergency care immediately after birth.
- Women’s own understanding about safe childbirth and appropriate child care is inadequate. **Access to information** is constrained not only by women’s **lack of freedom in decision-making**, but is clearly linked to their levels of **capability**. Numerous studies have shown that women with even a few years of education are better equipped to locate and access information, and have more **bargaining power within the family** on decisions related to her child’s health.
- Patriarchal traditions and cultural norms sanction the **neglect of girl children** in infancy. As a result, baby girls are given less care and fewer months of breastfeeding, are less likely to be taken to a doctor when they

are ill and may not even complete a full course of immunisation. In some regions of the world, the bias against girls is even more extreme and goes to the extent of **female foeticide and female infanticide**. While such practices are shrouded in secrecy, the highly imbalanced sex ratios in these countries reveal the true picture of gender inequality.

- Women’s **poverty and lack of access to productive resources** are a direct cause of infant mortality. In many countries, the introduction of user charges in the public health system has reduced the access of poor women and children to basic nutrition and essential medical care.
- Gender inequality in employment and **women’s dependence on low-paid and insecure jobs** without the assurance of minimum wages or paid leave is a factor directly linked to child survival. For poor women in many countries, taking a day off to care for a sick infant or go to a doctor for help, would mean not only the loss of a day’s wage, but would put her at risk of losing her job.
- Often, the **distance between the home and a health facility, accessibility to all-weather roads and cheap transport** are the factors that can save a child’s life in an emergency. However, these links are not always visible to planners and policy makers who take decisions on investments in infrastructure. The vertical segmentation of government departments, with child survival being the concern of the health department and issues such as rural roads and rural transport being dealt with under other departments, acts as a barrier to gender-responsive investments in infrastructure.

How gendered is reporting on Goal 4?

Sex-disaggregated data can provide compelling evidence of the links between gender inequality and child mortality. Unfortunately, only seven of the 78 reports surveyed (less than 10 per cent) present sex-disaggregated data on the indicators of infant mortality and child survival. No single report provides disaggregated data against all three indicators.

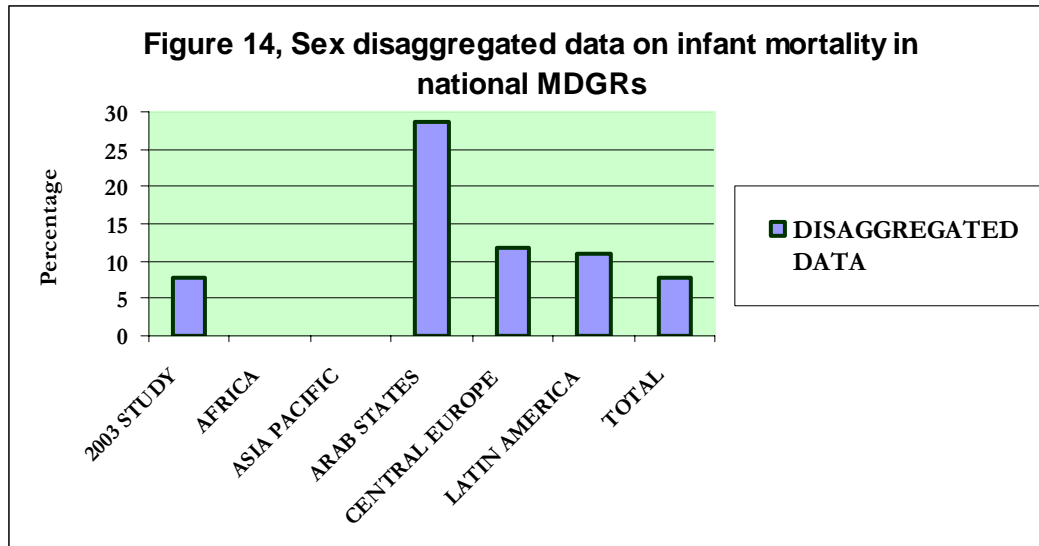
Official data on infant mortality may have inbuilt biases. The Kazakhstan report points out that data collected from women in the course of a survey on fertility history indicated higher rates of infant mortality than the official figures.

Official figures are based on registered births. In many countries, a girl infant who dies soon after birth is buried quietly and never enters the statistics.

The fact that sex-disaggregated data on infant mortality is available in comparatively few countries is a reflection of the continued prevalence of a bio-medical approach to the issue – particularly unfortunate because the inadequacy of such an approach has been amply demonstrated by studies and researches across the world.

Disaggregated data on child mortality

- **Infant mortality and under-5 mortality** (Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria, Slovakia, Paraguay)
- **Age-specific death rates** (Poland)
- **Proportion of children immunised against measles** (Syria)
- **Sex ratio** (Tajikistan)



A more encouraging trend is visible in the extent to which women’s capabilities have been identified as critical determinants of child survival. Although only seven reports (less than 10 per cent) make specific mention of the links between child mortality and gender inequality, as many as 25 (32 per cent) mention the mother’s health status as a major factor in child survival. The mother’s level of education and access to information

is mentioned in 16 reports (21 per cent) as an important determinant of child survival. This recognition of women’s health and education as important issues within the child health discourse is to be welcomed.

***Gender inequality and child mortality
- tracking the links***

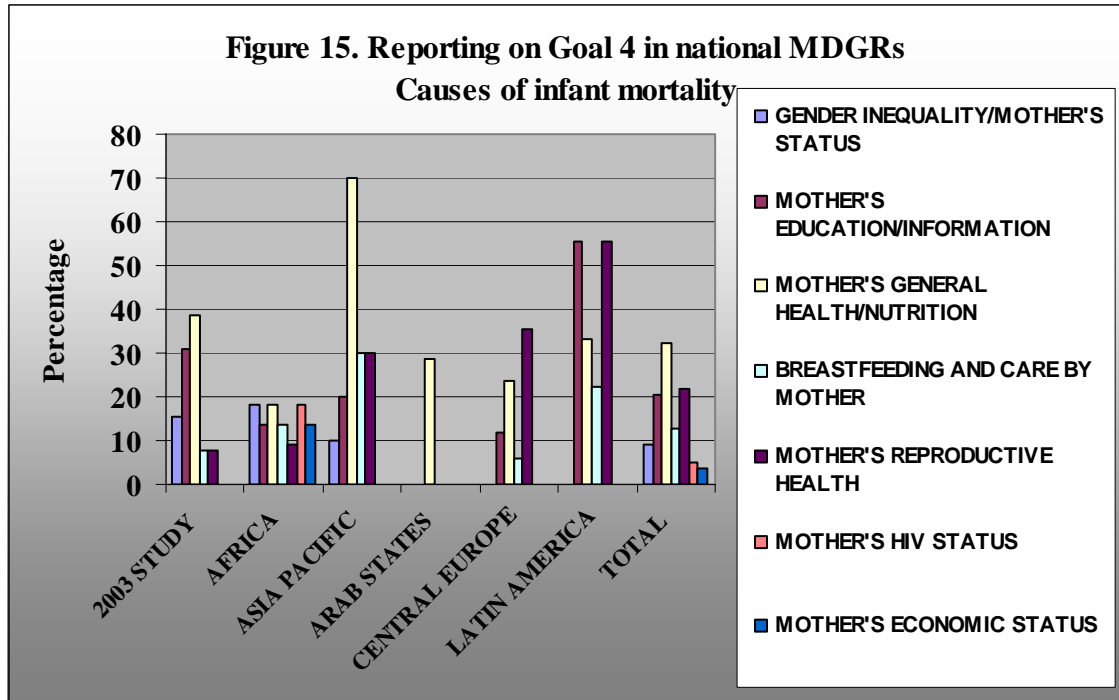
- ***Low status of women as a cause of infant mortality (Kenya)***
- ***Inability of teenage mothers to overrule husbands and exercise choices (Botswana)***
- ***Early pregnancy related to negative male attitude towards condoms (Uganda)***
- ***Cultural preference for educating boys rather than girls (Uganda)***
- ***Discrimination in health care for baby girls (Egypt)***
- ***Interventions for women’s empowerment as part of community health programme (Ghana, Timor)***
- ***Son preference (Albania, Egypt)***
- ***Gender equality identified as priority (Egypt)***

However, it should be recognised that a purely instrumental concern for women’s health and education – simply because they are necessary to ensure child survival - need not necessarily translate into greater gender equality. Indeed, the majority of the references to the need for women’s education and access to information are made in the specific context of equipping women to better care for their babies, rather than as a way of empowering women and strengthening their capabilities across the board.

One of the seven strategic priorities identified by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality A more positive indication comes from the fact that reproductive health is mentioned as an important determinant of child survival in 17

reports (22 per cent). Although this term is not defined or unpacked in all cases, it signifies a positive trend, since the reproductive health framework implies affirmation of women’s right to control over their own body and fertility.

A major missing link in reporting is the connection between poverty and infant mortality - something that would seem to be the most obviously visible issue. Only three countries (Ghana, Cote d’Ivoire and Rwanda) have mentioned poverty and resource constraints under this Goal. Needless to add, the issue of infant mortality does not come up for discussion under Goal 1 in any of the surveyed reports.



Ten reports (13 per cent) mention insufficient or inappropriate care by mothers as a leading cause of infant mortality.

In the absence of any data to substantiate this assumption and without any explanation of the reasons underlying it, this statement appears in tune with the tendency to place the entire responsibility of child care and child survival on mothers.

On the other hand, placing this statement in context by juxtaposing it with the limited resources, support and freedom of choice available to women, would be an effective way to draw attention to the need for a sharper focus on gender equality within strategies for reduction of infant mortality.

How can reporting on Goal 4 be strengthened?

- Presenting **sex-disaggregated data** against the mandatory set of indicators.
- Collecting and presenting data on **additional contextual indicators** such as sex ratio and rates of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.
- **Underlining the links** between gender inequality and various determinants of child mortality such as mother's education and health status.
- Using the **reproductive health approach** to make visible the linkages between child survival and women's capabilities, voice and agency.
- Making the **"money trail"** visible by reporting on targeted spending to enhance women's capabilities, make the health system more accessible to women and increase women's access to reproductive choices.

***Tracing the links:
- HIV/AIDS and child mortality***

The Botswana report points out how the policy of restricting the access of pregnant women to information about their HIV positive status prevents them from taking precautions to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus.

GOAL 5: THE “MATERNAL MORTALITY GOAL”

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

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

Indicators: Maternal mortality ratio

Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

A matter of life and death

For millions of women in countries across the world, maternity means unnecessary suffering, illness or death. More than half a million women die annually of pregnancy related complications, a vast majority in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

As in the case of infant mortality, maternal mortality is not a bio-medical phenomenon. The lack of accessibility and poor quality of health services is only one aspect. Far more serious is the impact of gender inequality.

- The **control of women’s sexuality** is central to patriarchal societies. Concerns about ‘purity’ and ‘honour’ are the most often cited causes for practices such as female seclusion, female genital mutilation, child marriage and other forms of violence. Apart from the direct impacts of these and similar practices, the indirect effects can include **denial of access to education, health care and employment** leading to undermining of women’s capabilities.
- The high incidence of **nutritional deficits, anaemia and chronic ill-health** are visible reflections of women’s subordinate social status and increases the risks of childbirth. Despite this, the construction of **motherhood as women’s destiny** underlies the pressure on women to bear children regardless of the consequences. **Early and frequent pregnancies**, in complete disregard of the consequences to women’s health and lives, are a major cause of maternal death.
- Women’s **ignorance about their own bodies** and biology increases their vulnerability during pregnancy and childbirth. While some traditional practices are based on sound principles, some are harmful to the health of both mothers and infants.
- Women usually bear the entire **burden of reproductive and care work**, and continue to do so through pregnancy. Women not only do all the work of cooking, cleaning and caring for children and elders, but have to collect water, fuel and fodder and contribute their unpaid labour to the family farm or

The Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has identified ensuring reproductive and sexual health and rights of women and girls as one of the priority actions for gender equality.

enterprise, often while working at another full-time job outside the home. The physical consequences of overwork greatly increase the risks of maternity.

- Women's subordinate status limits their ability to negotiate the terms of sexual relationships, increasing **vulnerability to violence, abuse and unsafe sex**. The consequences are physical and emotional trauma, unwanted pregnancies and higher

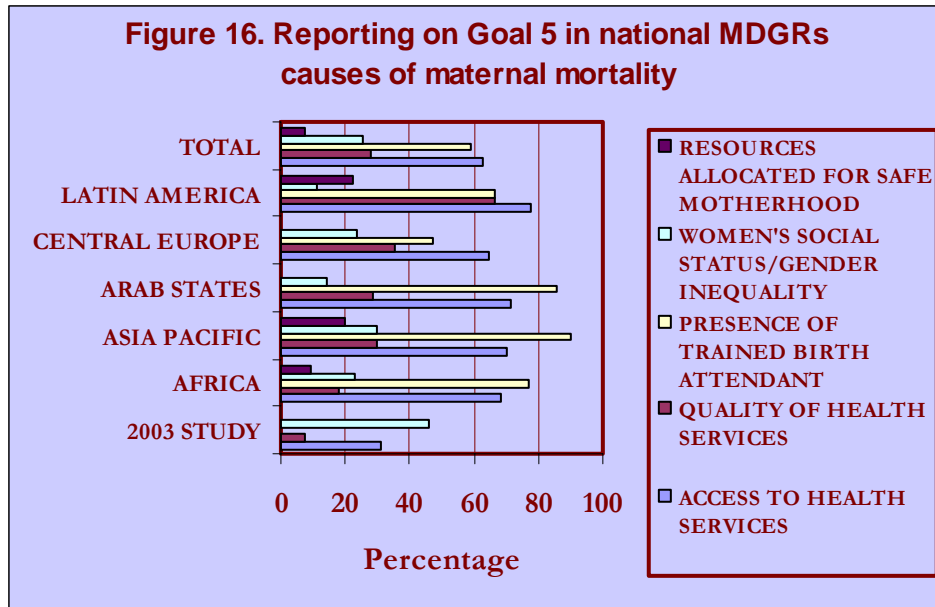
rates of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, all of which contribute to increased maternal mortality.

- Lack of information and difficulties in accessing **safe and reliable contraception** compounds the chances of unwanted pregnancies. In many countries, the non-availability of legal, affordable and safe abortion services forces women to risk their lives with unreliable and unsafe methods in the hands of unskilled practitioners. Even if safe abortion is available as part of public health services, the lack of confidentiality and privacy is a deterrent for most women. Fear of the **moral condemnation** attached to pre-marital or extra-marital sex and **religious pronouncement against abortions** force women and adolescent girls to rely on risky methods.
- The **secrecy and silence** surrounding sex and sexuality operate to create taboos and distorted notions about this aspect of life. As a consequence, young women (and men) are ill-equipped to deal with these issues in a mature or informed way, thus increasing the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

Bringing a gendered perspective to reporting on Goal 5 makes these connections visible and can create an enabling environment for achievement of targets for Goals 3,4 and 5.

How gendered is reporting on Goal 5?

Other than Goal 3, Goal 5 is the one most directly concerned with women. However, only 20 of the reviewed reports (26 per cent) mention gender inequality and women's status as causes of maternal death. The continued dominance of a techno-medical approach to maternal mortality is reflected in the fact that 40 reports (78 per cent) mention physical access to health services and the level of health infrastructure as the main cause of maternal mortality. The quality of health services – in terms of infrastructure, equipment to handle emergencies and trained personnel – is mentioned in 22 reports (28 per cent). However, the issue of resource allocations for safe motherhood is hardly visible, being mentioned in only 8 per cent of reports.



There is wide variation between reports in the extent to which the connections between maternal mortality and the status of women have been made visible. Recognition of the instrumental value of building women’s capabilities is indicated by the fact that the mother’s health status is highlighted in 24 reports (31 per cent) while level of education is highlighted in 29 reports (37 per cent). In contrast, women’s inability to take decisions

regarding their own health – a factor that reflects women’s agency and is a critical marker of gender inequality – is not widely visible in reporting and is mentioned in only 6 reports (8 per cent).

Attitudes are important!

Two reports (Brazil and Uganda) have highlighted the issue of how poor women are treated by health care providers.

Insensitive or discriminatory treatment by health providers are among the reasons why poor women choose to deliver at home rather than in a health facility. A gendered analysis makes the connections between these two issues visible and underscores the need to build the capacities and sensitivities of health care providers both within and outside the formal system.

Adherence to harmful traditional practices is mentioned as contributing to maternal mortality in 10 reports (13 per cent). The uncritical acceptance of traditional practices is again a reflection of women’s lack of agency and voice – often, the decisions on management of pregnancy are made by older women in the family rather than by the pregnant woman herself.

The need for births being supervised by trained personnel has been flagged in 46 reports (59 per cent). These reports stress on the need for building the capacities and skills of traditional birth attendants, and improving the outreach of maternity services to remote and rural areas. However only 20 countries (26 per cent) provide data on the number of births attended by trained personnel.

Poverty has been identified as a determinant of maternal mortality in 15 reports (19 per cent). However, there is a notable silence on the connections between macroeconomic policies and maternal mortality. Linkages between cuts or stagnation in social sector and health spending, and maternal health, would have enriched the reports and strengthened the case for engendering macroeconomic policies.

The issue of access to safe abortions is discussed in depth in 88 per cent reports from Eastern Europe and the CIS region, where lack of access to cheap and reliable contraceptives pushes women to use abortion as a method of contraception.

A very positive element of reporting under Goal 5 is the shift away from a purely medical approach and the recognition of some key concerns around reproductive health. Early marriage and frequent pregnancies are mentioned as factors contributing to increased maternal mortality in 22 reports (28 per cent). Access to contraceptives is highlighted in 42 reports (33 per cent) while the need for access to safe

abortions is mentioned in 40 reports (31 per cent). The importance of male involvement and male responsibility for ensuring safe motherhood is underlined in 11 reports (14 per cent). In most cases, the connections between these issues and gender inequality are sharply delineated in the majority of reports. .

Adolescent girls are identified as a high risk group and 13 reports (17 per cent) include discussions on issues of vulnerability for girls, including the need for reproductive health education and focused policies for adolescent reproductive health.

This issue of HIV/AIDS as a factor in maternal mortality has been mentioned in 10 reports (13 per cent).

Far less attention is given to the crucial issue of resource allocations for maternal health in national budgets. Only six reports (8 per cent) mention resources as a concern – an omission all the more unfortunate because most of the countries covered in the review have yet to achieve desirable levels of spending on health.

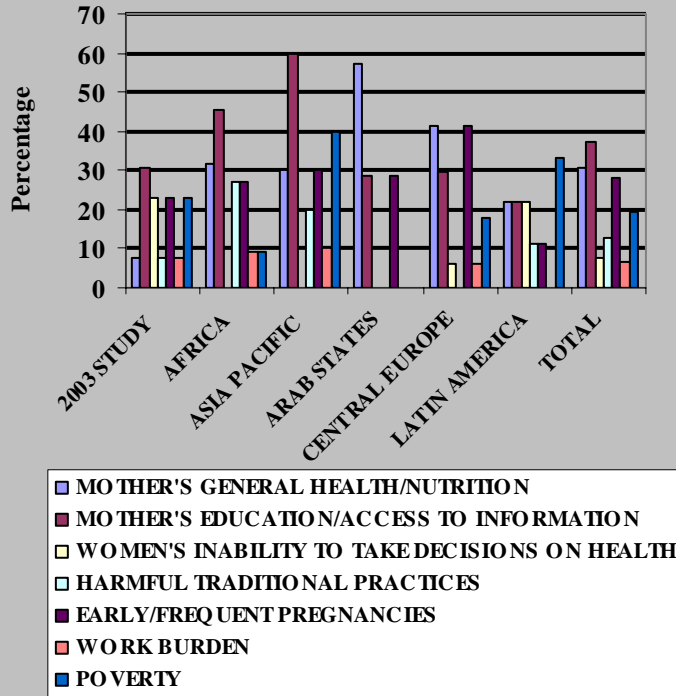
Adequate resources are essential!

- ***Low allocations (Congo, Senegal)***
- ***Dependence on foreign aid (Afghanistan)***
- ***High investments as reasons for progress on targets (Mauritius, Paraguay)***
- ***Need for adequate budgets (Paraguay)***

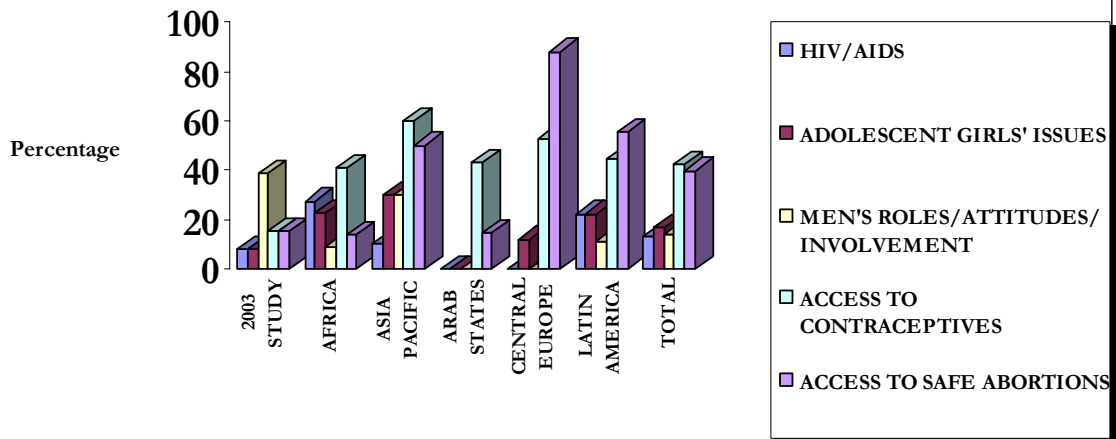
Recognition of special needs of adolescents

- ***Exclusion of teenage girls from reproductive health services (Tanzania, Philippines, Indonesia, Georgia)***
- ***Need for policy on adolescent sexual health (Zambia)***
- ***Higher rate of abortions for adolescents (Kenya, Croatia)***
- ***Priority attention to adolescents in reproductive health programmes (Benin, Senegal)***
- ***Need for reproductive health education (Mongolia, Georgia, Brazil, Honduras)***
- ***Data on teenage pregnancies (Uganda, Brazil)***

**Figure 17, Reporting on Goal 5 in national MDGRs
Causes of maternal mortality**



**Figure 18. Reporting on Goal 5 in national MDGRs
focus on strategic issues**



How can reporting on Goal 5 be strengthened?

- Identifying and reporting on **non-medical factors** implicated in maternal mortality.
- Identifying and present **data on indicators of local relevance** where reliable data is available.
- Flagging local issues and challenges, and highlighting their connections with other Goals and other aspects of gender equality.
- Using a **reproductive rights framework** to highlight key areas for action including access to contraception, access of adolescents to health information and services and vulnerability to violence.
- Highlighting the situation of **specially vulnerable groups**, such as poor women, women living in remote areas, women belonging to marginalised communities, women living with HIV/AIDS.
- Making the “**money trail**” visible by reporting on budgetary allocation for safe motherhood and reproductive health programmes.

Outstanding examples of gender-responsive reporting on Goal 5

- ***Exposing the essence of the tragedy.** The issue is dramatically underlined in the opening statement of the **Afghanistan MDGR**: “Life is a matter of death, as a woman dies every half an hour trying to give birth.”*
- ***Going below the surface of statistics.** The **Vietnam** reports points out that poor families cannot afford to register maternal deaths, and statistics are therefore incomplete.*
- ***Giving space to women’s voices.** The **Uganda** report highlights the connection between rural infrastructure and maternal mortality. A boxed quote from a woman at a village meeting describes how women in labour give birth on the roadside as they are being carried to the nearest hospital which is 10 km away.*
- ***Putting reproductive health in a wider social context.** The links between reproductive health and a social environment supportive of gender equality are highlighted in the **Chad** report. Social mobilisation through women’s organisations and the passage of a Family Code are specifically mentioned.*

GOAL 6: THE “HEALTH GOAL”

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

- *Target 7. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.*

*Indicators: HIV prevalence among pregnant women ages 15–24
Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate
Condom use at last high-risk sex
Percentage of 15- to 24-year-olds with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans ages 10–14*

- *Target 8. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.*

*Indicators: Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures
Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS)*

A gendered perspective reveals the connections between macro policies and health

Like gender equality, health is central to the achievement of the MDGs not only as the subject of Goals 4, 5, and 6 but as a contributor to the achievement of other goals. Bringing a gendered perspective to addressing HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis can help to unpack these linkages and underline their need to develop multi-pronged policy responses to ensure the achievement of targets under Goal 6.

- Women now constitute the majority of people with HIV/AIDS. **Women’s vulnerability** to the virus is primarily a consequence of their subordinate status and **powerlessness to negotiate safe sex** and to resist **violence** and other violations of sexual and reproductive rights. This is compounded by their **lack of access to information** and knowledge on how to protect themselves from becoming infected.
- Even when they are not themselves affected, women bear the major share of the consequences of HIV/AIDS, carrying the load of **caring for affected individuals** and working harder to survive **income shocks**, as well as dealing with **shame and stigma**, and consequent **exclusion** from access to resources and opportunities.

Lack of inheritance rights can leave women destitute if they lose a father or husband to the disease.

- **Undermining of capabilities and productive power** are consequences of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as chronic ailments such as **anaemia**

“... the AIDS epidemic cannot be understood, nor can effective responses be developed, without taking into account the fundamental ways that gender influences the spread of the disease, its impact and the success of prevention efforts....decisive success against the epidemic will require attacking gender inequities themselves”

- from “Combating AIDS in the Developing World” UN Millennium Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB and Access to Essential Medicines. Working Group on HIV/AIDS

and **untreated gynaecological infections**. These, as much as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis all result in **increased risks of maternal mortality**, and have serious consequences for newborns.

- In many countries, TB is a far more serious women’s health issue than HIV/AIDS. The general **neglect of women’s health**, the **stigma** attached to the disease, the **costs of treatment** and the absence of **female doctors** are all barriers to accessing treatment – in fact, statistics show that more men are diagnosed than women. Women in their productive years are most affected, and the impacts are felt by their families in

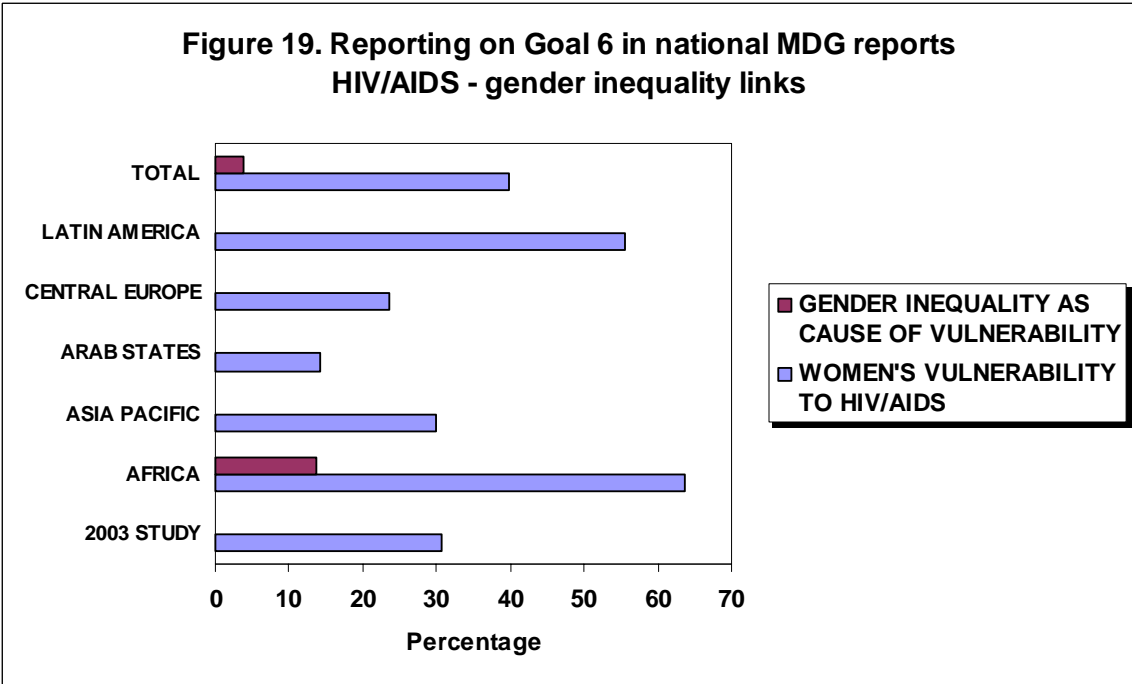
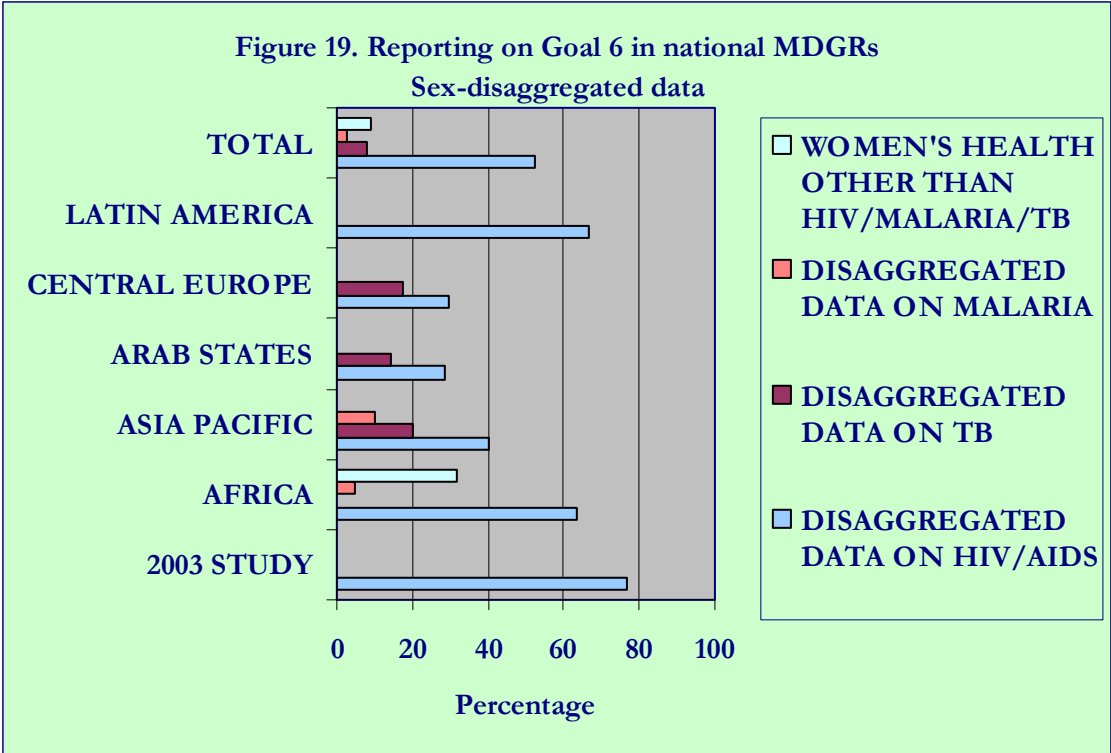
terms of **increased poverty**.

- **Resources and research** are directed overwhelmingly at reproductive and maternal health, ignoring the health costs of **nutritional insufficiency, overwork and lack of care** - all direct consequences of gender inequality and all of which lower women’s resistance and make them more vulnerable to almost all diseases.
- The ongoing reform of the health sector in many countries involves the introduction of **user charges for primary health services**. The impact is disproportionately felt by women and girls, for whom this is an additional **barrier to access**.

How gendered is reporting on health?

More than half of the 78 reports surveyed (59 per cent) present sex-disaggregated data on HIV/AIDS. Sex disaggregated data on TB and malaria is available in far fewer reports – only six countries have presented data on TB and two countries on malaria separately for women and men.

- **Sex disaggregated data on TB** (Afghanistan, Philippines, Lebanon, Czech Republic, Lithuania)
- **Sex disaggregated data on malaria** (Kenya, Indonesia)



Despite the stated emphasis on a gendered approach to the HIV/AIDS epidemic advocated by all the actors involved, only 31 reports (40 per cent) even mention women's greater vulnerability to infection or discuss the impact of the epidemic from a gendered perspective.

Only three reports (4 per cent) recognise gender inequality and women's subordination as causes of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Women's inability to negotiate safe sex is mentioned as a cause of vulnerability in only three reports (4 per cent). Women's lack of awareness of the need for safe sex and limited access to information on protection from HIV/AIDS is mentioned in only eight reports (10 per cent).

An understanding of the enhanced vulnerabilities of women routinely exposed to unprotected sex (such as sex workers, rape victims and women in regions affected by war and conflict) is reflected to a greater extent and finds mention in 21 of the reviewed reports (27 per cent).

According to the report of the Working Group on HIV/AIDS of the UN Millennium Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB and Access to Essential Medicines, violence against women is the underpinning of the pandemic. Apart from the direct role of coerced sex inside and outside marriage and in conflict situations, the threat of violence is the mechanism for enforcement of subordination in all other spheres.

HIV/AIDS through a gendered lens

- ***Women's inability to negotiate safe sex inside and outside marriage (Kenya, Indonesia, Bosnia)***
- ***Need for gender equality (Zambia, Botswana)***
- ***Need for change in sexual behaviour (Botswana)***
- ***Gender inequality and vulnerability of young girls (Burkina Faso)***
- ***Burden of care borne by young girls, link with school drop-out (Kenya)***
- ***Care burdens for women (Burkina Faso)***

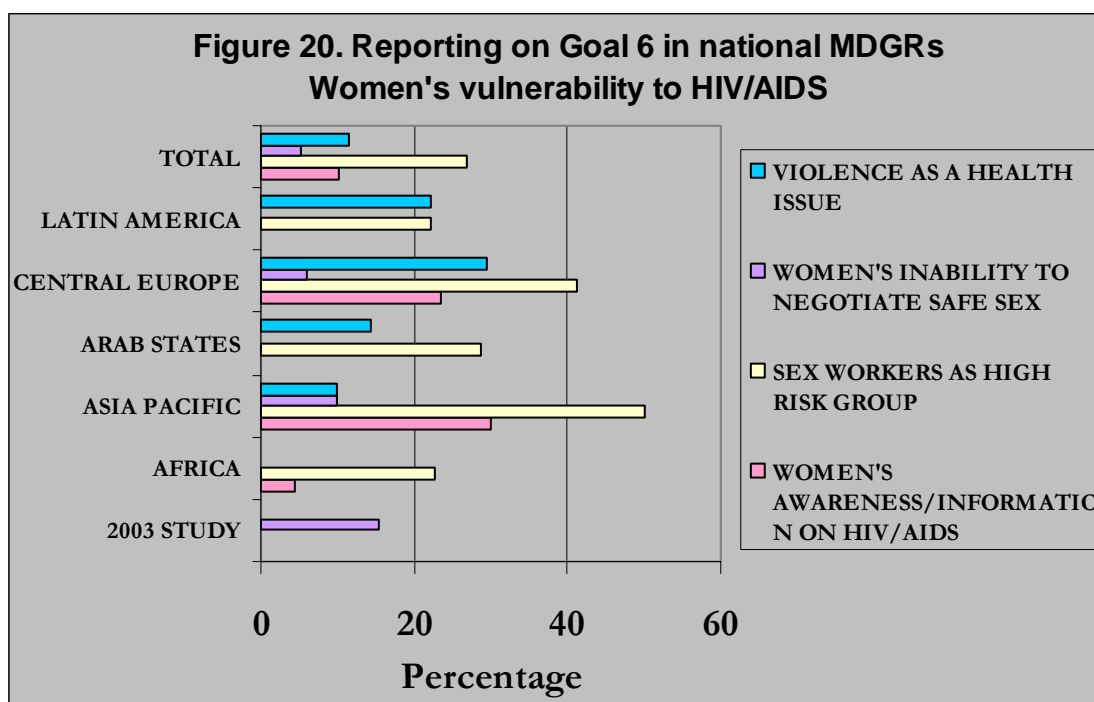
Figures on HIV incidence among pregnant women in the reproductive age group are likely to be underestimations.

From a gendered perspective, this indicator has a built-in sampling bias. Not all pregnant women in developing countries attend maternity clinics. Those who are excluded are likely to be from poor families, marginalised communities or remote rural areas.

In many countries, human rights activists and women's groups have voiced misgivings about the extent to which HIV tests in maternity clinics are voluntary and based on informed consent.

The response of the health system in case of a positive test is equally gendered, and is an area of concern for rights advocates.

Unfortunately, recognition of violence against women as a health issue is reflected in only two of the reports surveyed. Action against violence is one of the seven strategic priorities identified by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, and is one of the priority actions identified by the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS as necessary for reversing the course of the HIV/AIDS. The silence on violence in reporting on Goal 6 should therefore be taken to indicate the need for a much sharper focus on this issue.



Women's health is not only about HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB!

- **STDs and RTIs (Bolivia)**
- **Chagas' disease (Argentina)**
- **Diabetes and hypertension (Mauritius)**
- **Breast cancer (Jordan)**
- **Mental and emotional health (Bosnia)**
- **Cancer (Croatia, Czech Republic)**
- **'Lifestyle' diseases, link with socio-economic status (Hungary)**
- **Cardiovascular diseases (Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary)**
- **Suicide data and reasons for suicide (Lithuania)**
- **Crime against women (Lithuania)**

Recognition of violence as a health issue

- **Effect of violence on physical and mental health (Bosnia)**
- **Action on domestic violence prioritised as a health policy goal (Czech Republic)**

In yet another instance of the tendency of countries to stick to "reporting by the book" against the minimum set of recommended indicators, only seven reports (12 per cent) make any mention of health issues other than HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB. While the absence of reliable data on these issues may be cited as a reason for this "tunnel vision" on women's health, it is nonetheless alarming. Given the serious issues around women's health in most of the countries in question, such a limited focus will have serious consequences if it is the basis for policy-making and resource allocation in the health sector.

How can reporting on Goal 6 be strengthened?

- **Localising** issues and indicators – identifying and reporting on the most serious and widespread challenges to women’s health in the country.
- Collecting and presenting **sex disaggregated data** on all key indicators.
- Identifying the factors that increase **women’s vulnerability to ill-health** and

*Priorities identified by
Global Coalition on Women and AIDS
2004*

- *Prevent infections among girls and young women*
- *Stop violence against women and girls*
- *Protect women’s property and inheritance rights*
- *Ensure equal access to care and treatment for women and girls*
- *Support improved community-based care*
- *Promote access to new prevention options for women (including microbicides)*
- *Support ongoing efforts for universal education for girls.*

- from “Combating AIDS in the Developing World” UN Millennium Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB and Access to Essential Medicines. Working Group on HIV/AIDS

making the links with gender inequality and poverty visible.

- Reporting on actions being taken to address **priorities for change** identified by the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS in 2004.
- Making the “**money trail**” visible by reporting on budgetary allocations for targeted programmes on women’s health and increasing women’s access to health services.

GOAL 7: THE ‘ENVIRONMENT GOAL’

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.*

Indicators:

Proportion of land area covered by forest

Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area

Energy use (kilograms of oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)

Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (ODP tons)

Proportion of population using solid fuels

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

Indicators: Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural

Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural

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

Indicators: Proportion of households with access to secure tenure

Environmental sustainability is inextricably linked to gender equality

Understanding and taking account of the linkages between environmental sustainability and gender inequality are not only essential to the achievement of Goals 3 and 7, they are essential to reducing poverty.

- Poor households are dependent for survival on **common property resources** (fallow lands and grazing grounds, forests, water bodies and wetlands), which are the main sources of food, water, fuel, fodder, building materials and livelihood. Even comparatively well-off households rely on these resources during lean seasons or in times of crisis. Women are the main users of these resources, and are often custodians of a rich store of **traditional knowledge** on their sustainable use. Women’s **access and control of environmental resources** is therefore central both to environmental sustainability and poverty reduction.
- Since women do not have access to land, they have customarily engaged in survival agriculture on common lands. Women are therefore disproportionately impacted by **environmental degradation**, as well as by measures such as restrictions of access to forests, leasing or sale of common lands to private entrepreneurs and conversion of common lands to other uses.

- Apart from exacerbating women's **time poverty**, the need for daily **collection of fuel, fodder and water** is a factor forcing girls to drop out of school in many developing countries, thus contributing to undermining the capabilities of the next generation of women.
- Women are the primary managers of **domestic energy resources**. Collection of fuel takes up a major share of the time of poor women. The non-availability of cheap and clean fuels forces women to rely on **wood, dung and biomass fuels**, with adverse impacts on their health and the health of their children.
- Women bear the brunt of **natural disasters**, and carry the primary responsibility for enabling the family to deal with and survive the trauma and impoverishment that may follow. Gender inequality places limits on women's capabilities, reduces their agency and excludes them from decision-making in the aftermath of a disaster. Gender equality is therefore essential for **vulnerability reduction**.
- Recent moves towards introducing **pricing and cost recovery** as measures for water conservation have contributed to **women's poverty**. Women, who are responsible for supplying and managing the family's water needs, either deprive themselves of other essential goods and services to pay for water, or walk for miles to get water from unsafe but free sources.
- Women are disproportionately impacted by the lack of **sanitation facilities**. Poor sanitation is a major cause of **water-borne diseases**, which are directly responsible for most infant deaths in developing countries. In the absence of sanitation close to their homes, women are forced to forego privacy and security and are often rendered vulnerable to **infections, harassment and abuse**. Lack of **separate toilets in schools** has been identified as a cause of girls dropping out of school when they reach puberty.
- Women in **urban settlements** have different priorities for **services and infrastructure** such as transport, water supply, sanitation and housing. An increasing number of urban households in most developing countries are sustained exclusively or primarily by **women's labour**. Women's vulnerability to sexual and physical harassment in urban environments constrains their freedom of mobility and limits their work opportunities. The low representation of women in **urban governance** in many countries contributes to their invisibility in urban planning.

Putting women at the centre of environmental policies increases sustainability

Environmental sustainability, like gender equality, is a cross-cutting issue. Integrating gender equality concerns into environmental policy and planning has been identified as a key priority by the Millennium Project Task Force on Environmental Sustainability. Taking women's needs and priorities into account and involving women in environmental policy-making has multiple benefits in terms of better targeting and increased efficiency of policies and programmes.

Making the links between environmental sustainability and gender equality visible in the national MDG report can contribute to increasing coordination and integration of

environmental policies into other sectoral policies. Moreover, it can enhance public awareness of women's roles and create space for women to directly engage in actions for environmental sustainability at the community level.

The report of the Millennium Task Force on Environmental Sustainability lists these, and underlines their relationship of Goal 7 with other Goals.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- *Livelihood strategies and food security of the poor often depend directly on functioning ecosystems and the diversity of goods and ecological services they provide.*
- *Insecure rights of the poor to environmental resources, as well as inadequate access to environmental information, markets, and decision making, limit their capacity to protect the environment and improve their livelihoods and well-being.*

2. Achieve universal primary education

- *Time that children, especially girls, spend collecting water and fuelwood can reduce study time.*

3. Promote gender equality and empower women

- *Time that women spend collecting water and fuelwood reduces their opportunity for income-generating activities.*
- *Women's often unequal rights and insecure access to land and other natural resources limit opportunities for accessing other productive assets.*

4. Reduce child mortality

- *Water and sanitation-related diseases and acute respiratory infections, primarily caused by indoor air pollution, are leading causes of mortality in children under the age of five.*

5. Improve maternal health

- *Indoor air pollution and carrying heavy loads during late stages of pregnancy put women's health at risk before childbirth.*

6. Combat major diseases

- *Environmental risk factors account for up to one-fifth of the total burden of disease in developing countries.*
- *Preventive environmental health measures are as important, and at times more cost-effective, than health treatment.*

7. Develop a global partnership for development

- *Since rich countries consume far more environmental resources and produce more waste than poor countries, many environmental problems (such as climate change, loss of species diversity, and management of global fisheries) must be solved through a global partnership of developed and developing countries.*

- from "Environment and Human Well-being: A Practical Strategy". Report of the Task Force on Environmental Sustainability. UN Millennium Project 2005. The Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, USA.

How gendered is reporting on Goal 7

Given the amount of research and advocacy on gender issues and concerns in environment and urban development in the past decades, it is disturbing to see the almost total invisibility of gender concerns in reporting under Goal 7. **Only eight of 78 reports surveyed (10 per cent) even mention women as stakeholders in environmental issues.**

This situation is both a reflection of and a contributor to the gap between environmental policies and gender equality concerns. Despite the visible evidence of women's involvement in management of natural resources like water and forests, they are not recognised either as significant actors in conserving and sustaining these resources, or as stakeholders in planning.

Gender issues in reporting on Goal 7

- ***Need to involve women for sustainable management of water (Gambia, Kenya, Indonesia)***
- ***Time spent in fetching water (Kenya)***
- ***Safe water linked with reduction in IMR and MMR (Ethiopia)***
- ***Discrimination against female-headed households in urban areas (Uganda)***
- ***Tenure/land rights for women in municipal housing projects (Brazil)***
- ***Women as stakeholders in National Environment Action Plan (Guinea)***

Sex disaggregated data

- ***Access to water supply for male-headed and female-headed households (Guatemala)***

Given the considerable body of research on the inter-linkages between gender inequality, poverty and degradation of common property resources, the silence on this issue in the surveyed reports is disappointing. The implications of environmental degradation for girls' education, maternal health

and child survival have been completely ignored – instead, practically all the reports approach the issue of environmental sustainability from a technical perspective.

Strengthening reporting on Goal 7

- Providing **sex-disaggregated data** and information on access to water, sanitation and housing.
- Gendered reporting on **regional environmental issues** identified by the Millennium Project Task Force on Environmental Sustainability, all of which have significant implications for women's poverty and gender equality.
- Even where there is no data, **highlighting the connections** between Goal 7 and the other MDGs with qualitative information on key gender issues such as women's access to water and sanitation, urban safety and participation in planning and implementing environmental programmes.

Region-specific issues

- ***Latin America*** - deforestation, pollution, and damage to coastal and marine ecosystems.
- ***Small island developing states including Caribbean and Pacific islands*** - climate change, marine ecosystem health, alien invasive species, and pollution.
- ***Sub-Saharan Africa*** - soil and land degradation, depletion of forests and freshwater resources, and poor indoor air quality.
- ***Middle East and North Africa*** - declining per capita water resources, loss of arable land, pollution-related health problems, and weak environmental institutions and legal frameworks.
- ***South Asia*** - freshwater scarcity and pollution, and soil and land degradation.
- ***Central Asia*** - land cover change and freshwater degradation.
- ***East and Southeast Asia*** - soil and land degradation, deforestation, and poor urban air quality.

- from " *Environment and Human Well-being: A Practical Strategy*".
Report of the Task Force on Environmental Sustainability. UN
Millennium Project 2005. The Earth Institute at Columbia University,
New York, USA.

GOAL 8. THE “PARTNERSHIP GOAL”

Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

- *Target 12. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system, includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction both nationally and internationally.*
- *Target 13. Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes: tariff and quota-free access for least-developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction.*
- *Target 14. Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States.*
- *Target 15. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.*

Indicators:

Net ODA, total and to least developed countries, as a percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income

Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)

Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied ODA received in landlocked countries as proportion of their gross national incomes

ODA received in small island developing States as proportion of their gross national incomes

Market access

Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and from the least developed countries, admitted free of duties

Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries

Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product .

Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

Debt sustainability

Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)

Debt relief committed under HIPC Debt Initiative 14

Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services 18

- *Target 16. In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.*

Indicators: Unemployment rate of 15- to 24-year-olds, male and female and total

- *Target 17. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.*

Indicators: Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

- *Target 18. In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.*

Indicators: Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 people

Personal computers in use per 100 people

Internet users per 100 people

Trade and aid are not gender neutral!

In the last few years, more and more evidence has been emerging to contest the assumption that trade policies and development aid inflows are gender neutral and always have the same impacts and implications for men and women.

In fact, both trade liberalisation and aid policies have serious implications for gender equality.

- Trade liberalisation involves **reduction or elimination of tariffs** and licensing fees resulting in significant decreases in revenue. Governments usually seek to make up the gap by **increasing taxes, cutting social sector spending** and introducing or increasing **user fees for public services** such as health and transport. The burden for adjustment to these measures is shifted onto women, who have to put more time and energy into unpaid and care work at the expense of their economic productivity, health and well-being.
- International trade agreements may **challenge national legislation** that works to protect the **rights and interests of the domestic labour force**. Many countries have dismantled or diluted protective legislation, or set up **export processing zones** where national legislation does not apply. Women constitute the bulk of the labour force in export processing zones, and are generally **overworked, underpaid** and **vulnerable** to violations of their rights.
- Trade liberalisation and the pressure to keep costs low has fuelled a process of **‘informalisation’**, with production processes moving out of factories and into homes through subcontracting, part-time work and home-based work. Women are ready to accept **low quality employment**, with little or no labour protection and social security, because these give them the flexibility they need to fulfil their domestic responsibilities. Often, this is accompanied by an increase in **child labour**, with girls being pulled out of school to take on domestic chores and both girls and boys joining the production process.
- Trade liberalisation in **agriculture** has had enormous impacts on women in many developing countries. The shift to **export-oriented high-input crops** has depleted water resources and increased the load of chemicals and pollutants in the environment, increasing **women’s time poverty** and affecting their health. At the same time, the pressure on land has curtailed women’s involvement in traditional low-input **‘survival agriculture’** which contributes to meeting a major share of the family’s food needs, particularly in lean seasons.
- **Development aid**, whether in the form of grants or technical assistance, does not always take into account **gender biases** within development institutions and are not necessarily targeted to addressing women’s needs and priorities. Benefits and **opportunities for capacity-building and income enhancement** are therefore not equally accessible to women and men. In some cases, development programmes have actually **exacerbated gender inequality**.
- Analyses of **global aid flows** reveals that they are skewed in favour of large projects in ‘hard’ sectors such as infrastructure and industry, with social sector projects at low priority.

OECD-DAC analysis of aid in support of gender equality

Key findings

- *Two thirds of aid focused on support for gender equality and empowerment of women was in the social sectors, especially basic education and basic health (including population and reproductive health).*
- *About one half of aid to basic education and basic health targeted gender-specific concerns. A tenth of aid in these sectors was for the main purpose of promoting gender equality. Improvements in basic education and basic health are critical to achieving the MDGs.*
- *While several DAC members are implementing a mainstreaming strategy, several others promote gender equality through a relatively small number of activities targeted to women and girls.*
- *While aid for transport, communications and energy infrastructure accounted for a third of bilateral aid, little was reported as focused on gender equality. Nevertheless, well-designed infrastructure projects can bring significant positive benefits for women and girls by improving access to markets, schools and health services or by increasing women's safety.*
- *Aid to agriculture is currently down to a tenth of all aid. Gender equality focused aid to this sector may indicate donors' recognition of the high level of women's participation in food production and agriculture in many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.*

(from OECD-DAC Creditor Reporting System on Aid Activities: "Aid Activities in Support of Gender Equality 1999-2003" Volume 2005 Issue 6)

- Despite the evidence that debt relief is a far more effective strategy for poverty alleviation than development grants or loans, **debt cancellation initiatives** are moving very slowly. Most highly indebted countries have been forced to make drastic **cuts in social sector spending**, with the inevitable impacts on women's and girls' health, education and well-being.

How gendered is reporting on Goal 8?

It is ironic that Goal 8, which has the most wide-ranging targets and has serious implications for the ability of aid-dependent countries to achieve any of the MDGs, should receive the least attention in terms of gender. Only eight of the reviewed reports (10 per cent) make any mention of gender issues or concerns in reporting under Goal 8.

Gender concerns reported under Goal 8

- ***Land and housing rights for women (Brazil)***
- ***Partnerships with women's groups for gender equality (Gambia)***
- ***Unemployment and its consequences for young women (Panama, Paraguay, Honduras, Syria, Slovakia)***
- ***Male domination in international agencies (Bosnia)***
- ***Stereotypical perceptions of women's roles in peace process (Bosnia)***

Interestingly, MDG reports produced by some of the donor countries underline their commitment and support to gender equality in their own countries as well as in development aid.

DONOR COUNTRIES AND THE MDGs

Finland

- ***Highlights the role of gender equality and equal participation of men and women in all spheres as factors contributing to high levels of human development in Finland.***
- ***Gender equality identified as cross-cutting theme in Finnish development aid. Acknowledges that despite this, the number of projects with gender equality as a primary objective is low.***
- ***Focus of aid focus is on sexual and reproductive health and rights for young people and women.***
- ***Points out that there are data and classification problems related to projects for gender equality.***
- ***Prioritises the development of mechanisms to monitor aid for gender equality.***

Denmark

- ***Underlines obligation of donor countries to report on progress.***
- ***Aid is closely aligned to MDGs with a high priority for HIV/AIDS and women's reproductive health.***
- ***Notes that apart from being a human rights objective, gender equality can lead to development benefits in all sectors.***
- ***New aid strategy focuses on women's rights, political participation and gender equality in access to and control of resources.***
- ***Notes that Denmark attempts to ensure that all its financial allocations to different bodies are supportive of goal 3 and inclusion of gender into all MDGs.***

A gender perspective would add value to reporting on Goal 8

Some countries have taken the view that reporting on Goal 8 should be the responsibility of donor countries rather than of aid recipients. While it is true that developing countries have limited say in allocation of resources by donors, they can nevertheless use the opportunity provided by reporting on Goal 8 to put some non-negotiable principles on the table.

Gendered reporting on the implications of trade and aid measures for gender equality, and information on measures being taken to protect human rights and women's rights will make a strong statement about the political commitment of the national government to human development.

How can reporting on Goal 8 be strengthened?

- Providing **sex-disaggregated data** on unemployment, internet use and access to medicines.
- Reporting on the **impacts of trade liberalisation** on key indicators of gender equality women's access to economic and technical resources, labour force participation rates and patterns of labour market discrimination, and access to education, health and other public services.
- Making the **“money trail”** visible by reporting on the quantum of development aid that is allocated to gender equality and empowerment of women.

Women at the centre of Goal 8 in the Afghanistan MDGR

“Focusing too narrowly on meeting the MDG targets can defeat the purpose of the exercise. The point is to make a serious and concerted effort towards meeting the Goals. What, however, constitutes ‘serious effort’? In the Afghan context, it is plausible to argue that public spending priorities around the needs of poor women would be an excellent indicator. This implies monitoring health and education spending patterns.”

From the National MDG Report, Afghanistan

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has proposed four key interventions to maximise the potential of the MDGs as vehicles for gender equality. These interventions have direct implications for MDG reporting at the national level.

This review has identified three domains where focused action is needed.

Task Force recommendations

- *Address the gaps and weaknesses in the current Goal 3 target and indicators by identification of new targets and indicators to augment the existing ones.*
- *Campaigns for policy intervention to strengthen women’s “capabilities” through existing initiatives in health, education, and other sectors; expand “opportunities” through fundamental changes in the economic order; and enhance “agency” through measures such as electoral quotas and legislation on violence against women.*
- *Building on existing frameworks such as CEDAW and the ILO Decent Work Agenda for achieving gender equality. These should be complemented by a new international campaign for zero tolerance for violence against women.*
- *Improving the availability and quality of sex-disaggregated data, increasing financial and technical resources for agencies dedicated to promoting the status of women, and enhancing political commitment to gender equality.*

Range and scope of reporting

- Sex disaggregated data is the exception rather than the rule.
- Reporting tends to be “by the book” and remains limited to the minimum set of indicators.
- Qualitative data is not used to the extent possible.
- Data is rarely disaggregated along other axes of inequality such as class and ethnicity.
- Data is not appropriately backed up with gendered analysis.

Linkages across Goals

- The way in which Goals are defined tends to force reporting into a mode where cross-linkages between Goals become invisible.
- Targets and indicators overlap across Goals but cross-referencing between Goals is infrequent.
- Localisation of Goals, targets and indicators is limited

Ownership and buy-in

- There is a wide variation between countries in the extent to which actors outside governments and the UN System are involved in producing national MDG reports.

- Reports produced exclusively or largely by government bodies do not always reflect the realities on the ground, or address the priorities and concerns of significant non-State actors in development.

Action is needed on several fronts to address these issues if national MDGRs are to become effective instruments for gender equality.

1. Range and scope of reporting

Considerations of data availability, reliability, national capacity and the need to keep MDG reports as simple as possible have so far been cited as reasons for not expanding the list of MDG indicators.

However, the findings of this review indicate that several countries have in fact expanded the scope and potential of MDG reporting by including data on a variety of local and contextual indicators against each goal.

There is thus a strong case for **mandatory reporting on the additional indicators for Goal 3** proposed by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality.

Proposed indicators for Goal 3

Education

- *The ratio of female to male gross enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.*
- *The ratio of female to male completion rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.*

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

- *Proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied.*
- *Adolescent fertility rate.*

Infrastructure

- *Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel.*

Property rights

- *Land ownership by male, female, or jointly held.*
- *Housing title, disaggregated by male, female, or jointly held.*

Employment

- *Share of women in employment, both wage and self-employment, by type.*
- *Gender gaps in earnings in wage and self-employment.*

Participation in national parliaments and local government bodies

- *Percentage of seats held by women in national parliament.*
- *Percentage of seats held by women in local government bodies.*

Violence against women

- *Prevalence of domestic violence.*

(From "Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women". Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005.

Over the last five years, several agencies and expert groups have undertaken exercises in identifying **gendered indicators and data sources** across Goals. Countries should be encouraged to choose from this menu and report on at least one gendered indicator under each Goal, depending on data availability and local relevance.

Flagging data gaps for future research

“Some preliminary evidence appears to indicate a relationship between domestic violence and the changing role of women in the transition to a market economy. A national scale survey is required to gain deeper understanding of domestic violence in Viet Nam so as to improve the national policy framework.”

From the Vietnam MDGR “Overview and Summary”

GENDERED INDICATORS

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

1. Prevalence of underweight children (weight for age), by sex. [Sources: Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and other special surveys]
2. Prevalence of stunted children (height for age), by sex. [Sources: Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and other special surveys]
3. Percentage of one-adult households below poverty line, by sex of the adult and presence of children. (Sources: Household surveys, censuses.)

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education

1. Net enrolment ratio in primary education, by sex. [Source: UNESCO]
2. Gross intake rate in grade1, by sex. [Source: UNESCO]
3. Progression/retention to grade 5, by sex. [Source: UNESCO]
4. Primary completion rates, by sex. [Source: UNESCO]
5. Adult and youth literacy rates, by sex. [Source: UNESCO]
6. Incidence of child labour, by sex. [Source: ILO]

Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women

1. Ratification of CEDAW, whether ratification is with/without reservations, current status of CEDAW reporting. (Source: UN Division for the Advancement of Women)
2. Ratification of ILO conventions nos. 100, 111, 156 and 183. (Source: ILO records.)
3. Primary, secondary and tertiary net enrolment rates, by sex (Source:UNESCO)
4. Labour force participation, by sex (Source: ILO)
5. Unemployment rates, by sex (Source: Labour Force surveys, household surveys)
6. Occupational segregation, by sex (Source: ILO)
7. Wage differentials, by sex (Source: Labour Force surveys, household surveys)
8. Percentage of workforce in the informal economy, by sex (Source: ILO)
9. Proportion of workers who are employers, employees, own account workers and contributing family members, by sex (Source: Labour Force surveys, household surveys)
10. Proportion of women judges, ministers, police officers and trade union leaders (Source: national records)
11. Proportion of ever-married women who were married before 18 years (Source: Demographic and Health Surveys)
12. Percentage of women who have experienced violence by an intimate partner (Source: Demographic and Health Survey)
13. Violent crimes against women)Source: national crime statistics)

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

1. Child mortality rate, by sex. (Sources: WHO, Demographic and Health Surveys, vital registration)
2. Ratio of female to male live births (Source: Demographic and Health Surveys, vital registration)
3. Proportion of children fully immunised, by sex. (Sources: UNICEF, Demographic and Health Surveys)
4. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunised against measles, by sex. (Sources: UNICEF, Demographic and Health Surveys)
5. Proportion of children covered under DPT immunisation, by sex. (Sources: UNICEF, Demographic and Health Surveys)

GENDERED INDICATORS

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

1. Total fertility rate (Sources: DHS, other surveys, vital registration systems and censuses)
2. Contraceptive prevalence rate. (Sources: DHS, other surveys)

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

1. Prevalence of HIV/AIDS, adult and 15-24 year olds, by sex. (Sources: UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF and Demographic and Health Surveys)
2. Malaria prevalence rate, by sex and age. (Source: WHO)
3. Prevalence of tuberculosis, by sex. (Source: WHO)
4. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and treated under DOTS, by sex. (Source: WHO)

Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

1. Proportion of households that have indoor sanitary facilities, by urban vs rural, and urban slums. (Sources: Household surveys, population censuses)
2. Land tenure, by sex of owner (Sources: Household surveys, population censuses)
3. Hours per day spent in collecting water and fuel by sex and age (Source: Time Use Surveys)

Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

1. Number of internet users, by sex. (Source: ITU)
2. Number of personal computer users, by sex. (Source: ITU)
3. Proportion of women at decision-making levels in macro-economic policy-making, national trade bodies, industry associations and financial institutions. (Source: national records)

Improving the **availability and quality of sex-disaggregated data** should be given a high priority. In most countries, UN organisations are involved in building the capacities of National Statistical Systems, which provide the data for inclusion in MDGRs. UN support could be specifically focused towards **gender sensitization for statisticians** involved in collating and processing data for the MDGRs to enable them to identify and use additional data that can supplement and bring a gender dimension to the mandatory indicators under each goal.

Promoting and supporting the **collection of sex-disaggregated data** on key indicators is an urgent necessity for successful gender mainstreaming in the MDGRs. UN Country Teams in UNDAF countries are already committed to the development of a common country database with disaggregated data on key national indicators. This process requires coordination between ongoing data-related interventions by various organisations to ensure that data needed for MDG reporting is included.

National MDG reports can draw on the growing pool of **qualitative data on gender issues** available with civil society groups and women's rights advocates to supplement quantitative data, highlight data gaps, or focus on the situation of specially disadvantaged groups. The CEDAW reporting process in particular is a rich source of data.

The last section of reporting under each goal in the MDGRs is an assessment of monitoring and evaluation capacities. A query on **“national capacity to collect and use sex disaggregated data”** could be included in this section and would have a significant

impact in terms of attention to and accountability for providing disaggregated data in the MDGR.

2. Linkages across Goals

“The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women must be our touchstones for realizing the potential held out by the MDGs. The wealth of understanding and experience of the nature of gender-based discrimination and the steps needed to achieve gender equality that has been generated through the CEDAW and Beijing processes stands waiting to be tapped.

By using CEDAW and Beijing as the lens through which the gender equality dimensions of the MDGs are understood and addressed, principled conviction and development effectiveness can be brought together in powerful way.”

(From “Pathway to Gender Equality: CEDAW, Beijing and the MDGs” UNIFEM 2005)

Women’s rights advocates in several countries have expressed apprehensions that the MDGs are “lowering the bar” on gender equality commitments made earlier. Existing instruments such as the **Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the ILO Convention on Decent Work** provide overarching frameworks for gender equality with as much, if not more, relevance for women’s rights and gender equality than the MDGs.

The **strategic priorities** suggested by the Millennium

Project Task Force on Gender Equality are aligned with commitments under the Beijing Platform of Action and CEDAW, to which most countries are signatories.

As this review demonstrates, a key element of success in achieving Goal 3 is the extent to which actions across different domains of gender equality can feed into each other to fuel the change process. **“Going outside the MDG box”** and incorporating elements of other right-based frameworks is a way to make these connections and synergies visible. Aligning MDG reporting with other gender equality instruments adds value to MDGRs by enhancing their usefulness as policy instruments.

The **overlap between gender equality targets and indicators** – for instance between Goals 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 need not be a barrier to making connections between Goals. Instead, it can be turned into an opportunity to **reiterate and highlight key messages** and commitments under one or more of the international instruments endorsed by the country.

Localisation and redefinition of Goals and targets can create opportunities for highlighting linkages between Goals and the need for action on multiple fronts to make progress on gender equality.

Cross-linkages between Goals can be captured through bringing **women's voices** into reporting. The lives and experiences of people are not neatly organised around conceptual frameworks. Women's narratives of their own experiences reflect the complexity of issues and introduce a new perspective for understanding key dimensions of gender equality.

Women's voices connect low investments in rural infrastructure with high rates of maternal mortality.

"For us in Lwitamakooli we are supposed to get sick only during the day but not at night. This is because there will be no one to attend to you. Because of this many of our women have given birth by the roadside at night when we are trying to take them to Buwenge 10km away. In fact one woman gave birth in that swamp 3km from here and they used a sugar cane peeling to cut the umbilical cord."

*Woman in community meeting,
Lwitamakooli, Jinja District, Uganda.
(Quoted in Uganda MDGR)*

Highlighting cross-cutting linkages

Vietnam

- ***A section on 'Cross-cutting gender issues' including violence, traditional attitudes, access to resources and lack of data, and how they affect achievement of all MDGs.***
- ***A section on 'Provincial and social disparities' included under each Goal.***

Bosnia Herzegovina

- ***Section on 'Civil society, democracy and human rights' foregrounds gender inequality as a violation of women's human rights.***

Ethiopia

- ***Section on 'Costing the MDGs' addresses the challenge of costing cross-cutting issues like gender equality and environmental sustainability.***

4. Ownership and buy-in

The MDGs cannot be achieved through atomised actions by any one group of society, no matter how committed. The fact that these development challenges – articulated in different ways over the last several decades – cannot be addressed through technical or managerial interventions alone. More than all the other Goals, gender equality demands the political will for social transformation.

Collective and concerted actions by a range of actors outside the government and development agencies – people's organisations, formal and informal community organisations, women's groups, citizens groups, local authorities, the media, the intellectual community and all others concerned with building a fair and just society – can catalyse change on the ground. Equally, it can create a demand for accountability and put social change onto the political agenda.

The MDGs are intended to catalyse a collective commitment to social transformation. The national MDG report and the process of its preparation should ideally be congruent with this larger objective of mobilising and energising action by diverse constituencies towards these common objectives. Since gender equality is the thread that connects all

the Goals, it can be an effective entry- point for such a collective process.

**UNDP-UNIFEM PROJECT
ENGENDERING MDGRs**

This “Gender and the Millennium Development Goals” focuses on piloting innovative approaches that highlight gender equality and women’s empowerment in MDG processes in Peru, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya and Morocco.

Cambodia

- *Focus on feminisation of poverty and HIV/AIDS in the context of globalisation*
- *Capacity-building of a range of stakeholders*
- *Involving women’s groups in policy dialogues*
- *Establishment of a national women’s network*

Kenya

- *Bringing women into the policy process*
- *Building a coalition for action on gender equality*
- *Capacity-building for stakeholder groups*
- *District-level poverty dialogues with women*
- *Women’s voices reflected in MDG Media pack*

Kyrgyzstan

- *Focus on issues of violence and access to land*
- *Capacity-building for stakeholders*
- *Expanding and harmonising the indicators for CEDAW, PRSPs and MDGs*
- *Studies underway and advocacy materials being developed*

Morocco

- *Focus on education*
- *Mobilising multiple constituencies into a mass campaign for equality in education*

Peru

- *Focus on poverty, discrimination and sexual/reproductive rights*
- *Capacity-building for key stakeholders*

The **involvement of women’s groups, gender equality advocates and gender experts** in consultations should go beyond Goal 3 – ideally, they should be represented in working groups and drafting committees across Goals.

An **open process** has multiple benefits. The involvement of groups who are already working on gender equality would sharpen the focus of reporting on Goal 3 and make the MDGR a more **accurate reflection of ground realities**.

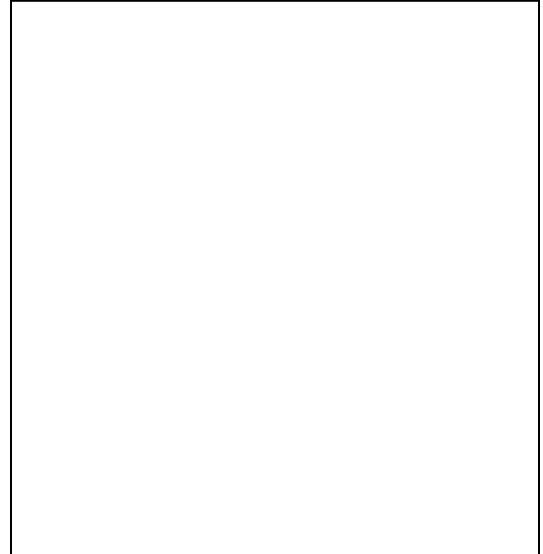
Gender advocates and women’s groups would not only bring a gendered perspective to discussions on other Goals, but would be able to contribute **qualitative data** and **first-hand information** on women’s situation, particularly key indicators of women’s status such as their vulnerability to violence.

Participation in the process of MDG reporting and ownership of the MDG report will increase the chances of women’s groups and gender equality advocates using the report and its key messages in their own **grassroots campaigns and mobilisation** for gender equality at the community level.

The involvement of women's groups and gender equality advocates will facilitate **public debate and dialogue** on the MDG Goals and messages by citizens and various groups in society and will .

***Building national ownership of the MDGR
- the Albanian strategy***

- *Intensive grassroot consultations before preparation of first draft.*
- *Discussions and feedback on draft through regional consultations.*
- *Validation by stakeholders – more than 650 people directly involved through website, TV hotline, local meetings and advocacy campaign.*



“Sixty years have passed since the founders of the United Nations inscribed, on the first page of our Charter, the equal rights of women and men.

Since then, study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.

No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, or to reduce infant and maternal mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health -- including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation.

And I would venture that no policy is more important in preventing conflict, or in achieving reconciliation after a conflict has ended.”

*KOFI ANNAN, UN SECRETARY GENERAL
WOMEN'S DAY, 2005*