



## Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In 2000, world leaders adopted the [United Nations Millennium Declaration](#), committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the [Millennium Development Goals \(MDGs\)](#). Achievement of the goals requires the [involvement and partnership of most UN agencies](#). Action plans, monitoring and reporting mechanisms are driving and tracking progress towards the targets for each of the goals - [End Poverty and Hunger](#), [Universal Education](#), [Gender Equality](#), [Child Health](#), [Maternal Health](#), [Combat HIV/AIDS](#), [Environmental Sustainability](#), [Global Partnership](#).

Whilst some goals have been achieved, there is still a way to go as a result of action having been thrown off course by the global economic crisis. The [2012 Report on the Millennium Development Goals](#) notes that three important targets on poverty, shelter and water have been met three years ahead of 2015, whilst the 2012 MDG Progress Chart identifies that achievements are unequally distributed across and within regions and countries. Although challenging, the remaining targets can be met provided there is renewed commitment by Governments.

## RIO+20 and Sustainable Development Goals

The [United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development \(UNCSD\) RIO +20](#), which took place in Rio de Janeiro on 20-22 June 2012, addressed the need to improve performance on sustainable development and achieve the MDGs, particularly on poverty eradication. With Governments focusing on economic stability, business representatives were seen as one of the most dynamic groups to commit to voluntary action. One of the main outcomes of the conference was a pledge to establish action-oriented, concise and aspirational, global sustainable development goals, to be elaborated by an intergovernmental working group.

## Post 2015

The global development agenda beyond 2015 will reflect new development challenges, be linked to the outcome of "Rio+20", draw on the experience from implementing the MDGs and have shared responsibilities for all countries with the fight against poverty and sustainable development at its core. To support this effort, the UN Secretary-General has taken several initiatives. He has established the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, launched a High-level Panel of Eminent Persons and appointed his own Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning. These processes are complemented by a set of eleven global thematic consultations and national consultations in over 60 countries facilitated by the United Nations Development Group. There are [many avenues](#) that need to show a coordinated approach and that business will need to monitor and influence. The Open Working Group process has developed 17 goals and 170 targets and this will influence the intergovernmental negotiations in the run up to adoption of the post 2015 development agenda in September 2015.

## Involvement of Business

Neither sustainable development nor the MDGs can be achieved by governments alone. They require the active participation of all sectors of society and all types of people. The UN must be reminded that business and industry play a crucial role in the social, economic and environmental development of countries, in increasing prosperity and providing the solutions and innovation to address the challenges. The post-2015 framework must be globally relevant and reflect the equilibrium between the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic). In order to influence this, business will have to coordinate its voice at all levels and provide strong effective messages and examples of successful outcomes.

## Why is this Work relevant for Business?

Considerable sums may well be committed to sustainable development and MDGs. Governments may make commitments at international level requiring decisions and measures at national level that will have a direct effect on enterprises of all sizes and sectors. They may provide challenges to some businesses and opportunities for others; inadvertently erect potential barriers to trade; open new markets and new sources of funding; place new

reporting obligations on businesses; and require trade-offs and optimizing competing objectives. It is therefore important for Employers' Organizations to engage in these discussions, not only at international level, but to appreciate the implications both for themselves and their members, at national and local level. The discussions and outcomes need to be closely monitored and influenced to ensure the signals support growing economies and sustainable enterprises.

## What Businesses should encourage

The agenda must be relevant for all countries and be about working better together, and helping countries to coordinate policies with each other, given growing interdependence and the impacts of policy outcomes. The private sector is convinced that substantial private investment, resources, skills, technology, innovation and know-how will flow to projects and countries that can establish a level playing field, and a business-friendly environment. For this to happen, governments should

- Show commitment to growth and opportunity reflecting their culture and circumstances, and recognizing the three dimensions of sustainable development
- Support entrepreneurship and private enterprise
- Establish a conducive operating environment
- Promote domestic markets and capital formation
- Invest in infrastructure, communications and workforce development
- Encourage foreign investment
- Increase international trade
- Build on the power of partnerships
- Recognise the role of the international community in promoting effective development

## What the IOE does to influence Developments

The IOE promotes and defends the interests of business and employers in international forums, and works to ensure enterprise development and job creation. IOE work on the global development agenda focuses on the employment and social issues where involvement, as a social partner, with UN bodies is paramount. This can provide access to other arenas. In particular, the IOE is engaging its members in providing information and opportunities for consultation on landmark developments. IOE members are encouraged to engage with their Governments and keep the IOE informed of significant influences. The IOE is working with UNDP, ILO and WHO to influence developments and to ensure that the linkages between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability are consistent. In order to leverage its expertise and maximize its ability to influence, the IOE is a member of the Global Business Alliance based in New York which represents other business groups such as BIAC and ICC to coordinate and influence the debate on behalf of all enterprises. In this way the business voice will be heard loud and clear above those of the many other interest groups that will wish to influence the developments.

## For more Information and Answers to your Questions

Members will be kept informed of, and consulted on, developments as they arise from the appropriate forums. Please visit the Policy Areas/Sustainability section of our website [www.ioe-emp.org](http://www.ioe-emp.org). If you do not find what you are looking for, please contact Fredrick Muia ([muia@ioe-emp.org](mailto:muia@ioe-emp.org)) or Janet Asherson ([asherson@ioe-emp.org](mailto:asherson@ioe-emp.org)) or call +41 22 929 00 00.