

The world we want

Special Supplement on First Decade of MDGs in Bangladesh Achievements, Challenges & Demands

The largest gathering of the new millennium, world leaders of the 192 member states adopted the UN 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.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions—income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion—while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. Bangladesh also one of the signatories of the MDGs, is yet to come a long way before it can achieve the goals fully.

People's Forum on MDGs (PFM) Bangladesh a civil society platform was formed in attempt to reflect on the progress of the state initiatives towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Bangladesh. PFM was floated in a National Consultation held on November 2004, largely attended by representatives from civil society organizations, sectoral networks, development partners, media and relevant government agencies. CAMPE as the biggest and most vibrant network of NGOs has been acting as the secretariat of PFM since that time. Recently PFM has moved its secretariat in Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP), a multidimensional research organization, who is now assisting PFMs with secretarial service.

Over the last seven years PFM has developed into a broad based coalition of 184 organizations including networks, umbrella bodies, professional groups, women's groups, journalists, human rights organizations and NGOs. PFM Bangladesh has expressed its solidarity with the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) particularly focusing on aid, trade and debt, as these issues are known to be making an impact on the lives of millions of poor people in the world. The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) is a growing alliance that brings together trade unions, INGOs, women and youth

movements, community and faith groups and others to call for action from world leaders in the global North and South to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality.

As the world has reached at the two third mark of the MDGs this year a major high level plenary MDG Review Meeting has been scheduled by the UN Secretary-General as part of the 65th General Assembly on the 20-22 September at the UN in New York to assess and evaluate the progress and achievements of MDG targets of the first decade.

(PFM Bangladesh is participating with the issues and agendas regarding the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the meeting). PFM Bangladesh looks at this gathering as an opportunity to flag its national and regional agenda.

Bangladesh has covered significant grounds and can safely be said to be on track in relation to most of the targets. A midterm review of progress at the aggregate level shows that Bangladesh is making progressive strides in reducing poverty, already bringing down the poverty gap ratio to 9 against 2015 target of 8 with the rate of poverty reduction being 1.34 percent in relation to the required rate of 1.23 percent. With regard to targets such as expansion of primary and secondary education, infant and child mortality rate, containing the spread and fatality of malaria and tuberculosis, reforestation, access to safe drinking water and sanitation latrines especially in urban areas, Bangladesh has done remarkably and may well reach several of these targets before the stipulated time. The country has already achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education and in the wage employment in the non-agriculture sector.

Experience of the last few decades indicate that on average, economic growth in Bangladesh has been associated with reduction in income poverty and faster reduction of non-income poverty. Poverty reduction, however, has not proceeded at the same rate with growth of income in different sub-periods. The need for pro-poor growth strategy emerges out of the fact that poverty is not only disgraceful to the poor but also a barrier to development since it limits economic demand, squeezes human capability and hampers social cohesion and political stability of the society. Pro-poor growth strategy is thus a precondition for more sustainable and stable development of the society specially where there is enormous magnitude of poverty as in Bangladesh.

However, among the challenges that Bangladesh faces, improving maternal health is a major concern. Maternal mortality, although currently on track, should be focused on more, particularly in the backdrop

of recent flood and cyclones. The country is also struggling in terms of maintaining protected areas, specially the wet lands, for bio-diversity. Access to safe drinking water and sanitary latrines particularly in the rural areas is also an aspect where focus is required. Yet another challenge that Bangladesh faces is in addressing certain pockets of poverty that are lagging far behind with respect to the national averages and where the benefits of MDGs attainment need to be specifically reached. These areas include the urban slums, the hill tracts, coastal belts and other ecologically vulnerable areas.



MDG-1 Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger



- Challenges**
- Maximize production in order to improve food availability from domestic sources
 - Breakthrough in yield frontier technology, i.e., hybrids/crossbreds, biotechnology, genetic engineering in crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry
 - Improve water use efficiency in rice production and shift to water efficient food crops
 - Strike a balance between ensuring adequate incentives for the small producers
 - Keep food prices low for the poor consumers
 - Bolster capacity in agriculture production to ensure food security
 - Escalate income generating programmes and accelerate poverty reduction in rural areas
 - Create employment for the youth labour
 - Coping with the climate changes, maintaining ecological balance and conserving biodiversity
- Demands**
- Mobilize resources for agricultural sector including adequate financial support
 - Strengthen regional cooperation for science, technology and knowledge sharing
 - Develop youth forces as skilled manpower
 - Search and implement sustainable development method
 - Prioritize the geographically isolated populations (hill tracts, coastal, haor and bill areas) in development process
 - Prepare a list of agricultural labour and distribute Govt. aid accordingly
 - Ensure right wages of agricultural labour
 - Improve poor people's access to essential health service
 - Land should be reformed so that marginalized farmers can have access in them.



MDG-2 Achieve Universal Primary Education



- Challenges**
- Lack of indicators to qualify the quality of education
 - Low budgetary allocation compared to internationally agreed target
 - Lack of supply of child-friendly and supplementary reading materials
 - Lack of access to basic education for children from hardcore poor and disadvantaged families including the ethnic minorities, disabled, and geographically disadvantaged areas.
 - Lack of access to basic education for disabled and children from hardcore poor and children living in geographically disadvantaged areas.
 - Lack of coordination among different ministries and departments who provide basic education
 - Enrollment of children in the right age.
- Demands**
- Establish education as a constitutional right
 - Reduce dropout rate of girls
 - Extend of pre-primary education in all government and non-government schools
 - Reduce teacher student ration to 40
 - Provide one library facility in all schools
 - Ensure Minimum four class rooms per primary school
 - School routine adjust should be introduced
 - Ethnic language should be prioritized
 - One village one school ensure
 - Increase education Budget to 6% of GDP
 - Increase focus on review curriculum to make education joyful and child centred
 - Ensure adult Education along with budget allocation
 - An effective implementation of the National Education Policy
 - Encourage corporate participation in education
 - Minimize regional variation within the country

MDG-3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women



- Challenges**
- Ensuring labour rights and creating gender-friendly environment
 - Women's employment need proper recognition in agricultural sector
 - High rate of maternal mortality.
 - Gender parity in school enrollment
 - Gender discrimination in workplaces.
- Demands**
- Proper measure to improve maternal health through re-launching the community clinic programme
 - Ensure adequate physicians and health workers
 - Prevent of early marriage and early child bearing
 - Improve family planning services
 - Presence of skilled birth attendant during home delivery
 - Eliminate disparity of health services between rich and poor and between urban & rural areas
 - Assure of access to health services in hard to reach areas
 - Take proper measures to reduce drop out rate of girls students from school
 - Secured and gender-friendly environment in educational institutions and workplaces
 - Recognition of women labourer with abolishing wage discrimination
 - Increase of minimum wage in RMG sector
 - Reform of discriminatory laws against women, particularly the inheritance law

MDG- 4, 5 & 6 Reduce Child Mortality, Improve Maternal Health and Combat HIV/AIDS and Other Diseases



- Challenges**
- Lack of perceived need of health services for mothers and family members
 - Scarcity of Skilled Health attendant in Union and Upazilla level Health complex
 - Scarcity of 3rd and 4th layer staffs
 - Scarcity of medicine at the Union Level Health complexes
 - Lack of knowledge of 5 Danger Signs of pregnancy by mothers, family members and by community health workers
 - Delayed Referral by community health workers
 - Delayed initiation of treatment at the facility
 - Lack of awareness of community people about proper information of health services
 - Lack of awareness of Service providers about the Millennium Development goals and Bangladesh Government's commitment regarding health service
- Demands**
- Opportunities of health service should be established as a constitutional right
 - Sufficient number of community health clinics should develop
 - Birth asphyxia, birth injury, low birth weight, neonatal infection need to address to reduce neonatal mortality
 - Proper awareness of 5 Danger Signs of pregnancy by mothers, family members and by community health workers
 - Quality care at primary referral facilities should be ensured
 - Geographically isolated areas should be considered more (Haor, Char, Baor and Hilly areas)
 - Medicine of UHFWC need to be distributed on regular basis.
 - Sufficient medicine should be allocated
 - The services of UHFWC need to be ensured 24 hours
 - Should recruit a MBBS Doctor and nurses for UHFWC
 - Paramedic doctors should be appointed in the rural areas
 - Satellite clinic should fully reopens for all areas
 - Prevention of early marriage and early child bearing
 - Improve family planning services
 - Presence of skilled attendant during home delivery
 - Reduce disparity of health services between rich and poor
 - Reduce disparity of health services between urban & rural areas
 - More doctors and Para medicine officers should be appointed in the village community health centers
 - Safe blood transfusion and proper disposal system of medicinal wastes.
 - The supply of ARV drug should be made available for treatment of AIDS
 - Peoples concern should be increase for safe sex through adequate campaign

MDG-7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability



- Challenges**
- Check the land degradation in the form of soil erosion in Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)
 - Control the deforestation and destruction of natural reserves
 - Expand tree cover, inclusion of comprehensive mechanisms for the production & distribution of quality planting materials
 - Lack of facilitating technology, institutional support and dedicated financing for diversification of crops and cropping patterns, afforestation and reforestation
 - Control pollution in the wetlands that cause degradation of fish stocks
 - Control the ecosystem degradation
 - Inadequate attention to arsenic and climate change/disaster related issues
 - Regulate the unplanned urbanization
- Demands**
- A joint collaboration of Govt. and other development partners to ensure environment sustainability
 - Stop Industrialization in the ecological zones
 - Sustainable and integrated management of land and water resources
 - Build Upstream water reservoir
 - Expansion of social forestry programmes and reforestation/afforestation of private lands.
 - Implementation of sustainable energy programmes
 - Allocation of adequate resources
 - Build waste water treatment plant
 - Co-ordinate action plan on arsenic
 - Mitigation of the increased salinity of soil in coastal areas
 - Develop waste management system
 - Land reclamation (includes conservation of natural forest, low lands, bills, haors etc).
 - Climate change modeling should be introduced for climate forecasting.
 - Knowledge sharing and knowledge management
 - Capacity building to protect biodiversity.
 - Special emphasis should be given in conservation of the biodiversity of "Sundarban". For that regional cooperation is highly needed.



MDG- 8 Develop a Global Partnership for Development



- Challenges**
- Reduce unemployment
 - Declining share of the poorer populace in national income
 - Increase per capita expenditure
 - Reduce the allocation for debt service in the national budget of Bangladesh
 - Fair access to international trade
 - Achieve a reversal of indiscriminate trade liberalization
 - More expansive macroeconomic management along with a tougher taxation policy
 - In terms of aid from developed countries, disbursement is lower than commitment
 - Share of grant is declining and therefore dependency on domestic debt is increasing
- Our Demands**
- Reorientation of trade policies
 - Abolition of all forms of trade distorting subsidies by rich
 - Stop dumping of industrial waste by rich countries
 - Rich countries must stop imposing unfair conditions through bilateral and regional trading agreements
 - Donors must fulfill their commitment to provide 0.7% of their national income
 - Aid conditionalities should be ended;
 - Aid must not be tied with economic
 - The international community including the G-8 must take necessary steps immediately to ensure full Debt cancellation for Bangladesh
 - Debts must be cancelled as a matter of justice
 - A "MDG-consistent" frame-work of Debt Sustainability should be applied