

# Reflections on:

The reasons behind an overall but **uneven success**, with **failure in many countries** and the **way forward**

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# The experience so far

- **Large literature (and many criticisms) on:**
  - How well have **MDGs goals performed**
  - How far have **individual countries/regions/continents** moved
  - On whether **setting goals motivates achieving them**
- **The debate for post-2015 along two (three) lines:**
  1. Should effort be put in **correcting flaws in composition and implementation?**
    - Should MDGs be **renewed** with an extended deadline?
  2. Should MDGs be **replaced by a new set of more inclusive goals?**
    - Should we **forget about goals** altogether?
  3. Should the debate focus on the relationship between **goals, policies and socio economic achievements?**

# **(Good) metric is not enough... Policy matters**

It is important to answer several questions:

- To what extent – if any- does **setting goals trigger the appropriate policy (also for donors)?**
- Are **well targeted goals self full-filling?**
- To what extent are **functioning institutions, good governance, appropriate policies in recipients countries key for goals to be achieved? And ownership?**
- Have some goals being achieved independently from policy (e.g. growth due to natural resources)?
- **Are achieved goals sustainable in the long term?**

# A summing up of the experience so far: Pros

- MDGs: **standard reference point.**
- MDGs provided useful **leverage** for arguing for **increased aid volumes** (*i.e. Millennium Project's estimated resource requirement = target for G8 in Gleneagles in 2005*).
- MDGs contributed to **focusing aid on the social sectors** (e.g. primary education and child health) **and coordinating aid policies.**
- MDGs **encouraged the collection of better data** to assess their progress.
- **Real progress reached in many areas:** extreme poverty fallen substantially, primary education ok, etc.

*(Fukuda-Parr, 2012)*

# A summing up of the experience so far: Pros

- MDGs are
  - **Simple, easy to understand**
  - **ambitious,**
  - **integrated, so that trade off (i.e. health or education?) are reduced** (different viewpoints on this, Klasen)
  - **Easily quantified, so to help stimulating public investment**
  - **long term: therefore helping governments and institutions to look ahead and plan long term policies**
  - **deadline driven: political leaders can be assessed against metric for success**
  - **focused on partnership** (Aryeteey et al, 2012)

# Global MDGs Progress is real:

all “best available” indicators for seven key MDGs have improved

	Improvement since 1990	Distance progressed to goals (100% = attained)	On Track?	Faster progress 2003-2008 compared to 1999-2001	Faster than historical patterns?
<b>MDG</b>	Kenny&Sumner	World Bank	K&S	Fukuda-Parr	K&S
<b>Poverty</b>	Y	80	Y	Y	
<b>Undernourish.</b>	Y	77	N	N	
<b>Primary education</b>	Y	90	N	Y	N
<b>Gender eq in primary ed</b>	Y	96	Y	N	N
<b>Child mortality</b>	Y	69	N	Y	Y
<b>Maternal mortality</b>	Y	57	N	Y	Y
<b>Drinking water</b>	Y	88	Y	N	

# Country level MDG Progress

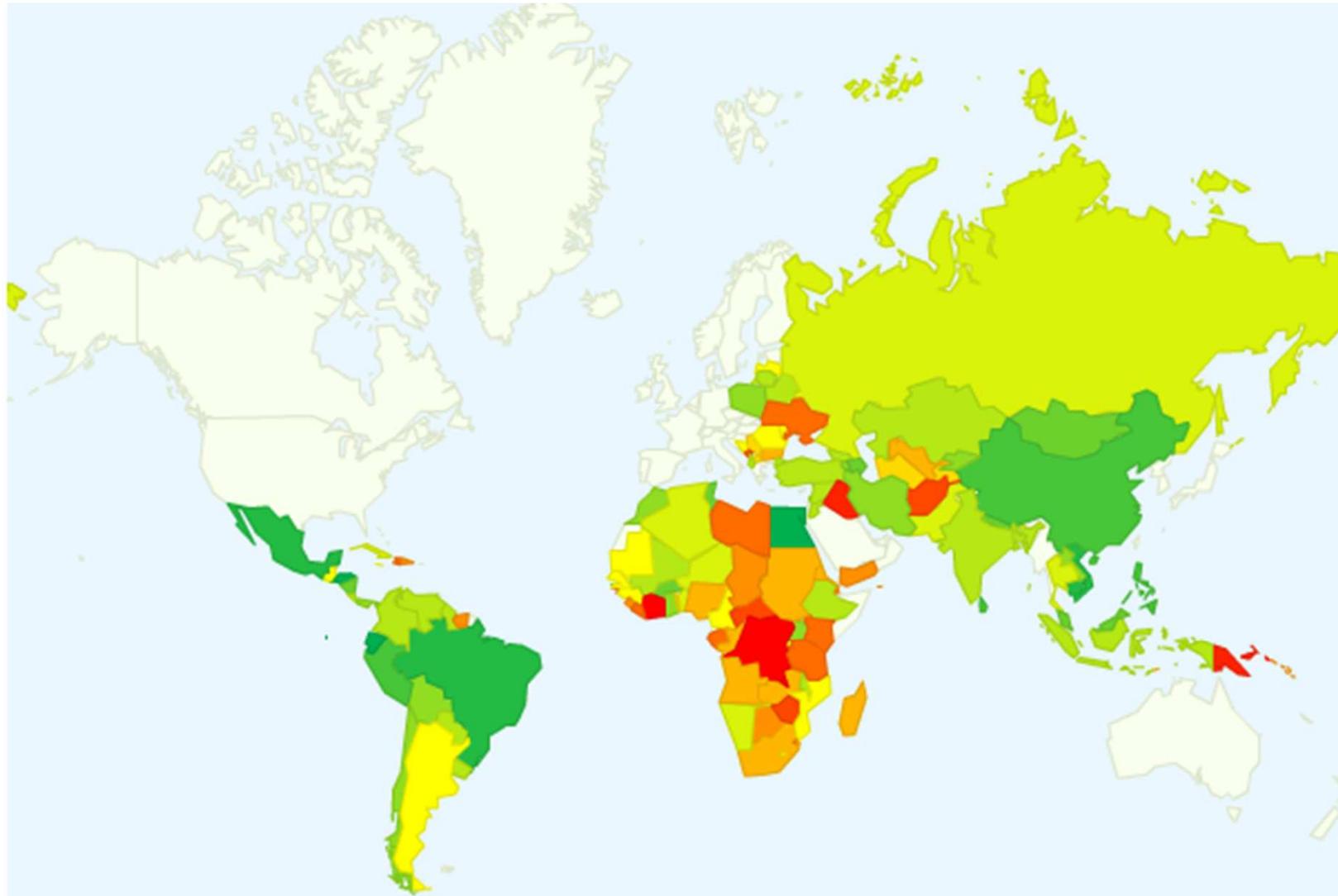
% of developing countries making progress on each target

The majority (at least half) of developing countries are making progress on most goals

	Making Progress	Making Progress	On Track	On Track	Faster Progress	Outperforming historical patterns
<b>MDG</b>	L&B	ODI	L&B	World Bank	Fukuda-Parr	K&S
<b>Poverty</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>51</b>	
<b>Undernourish.</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25</b>		
<b>Primary education</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Gender eq in primary ed</b>	<b>61</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>89 (82 in sec. Ed.)</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Child mortality</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Maternal mortality</b>	<b>83</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>33</b>
<b>Drinking water</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>34</b>	

# How well have MDGs performed:

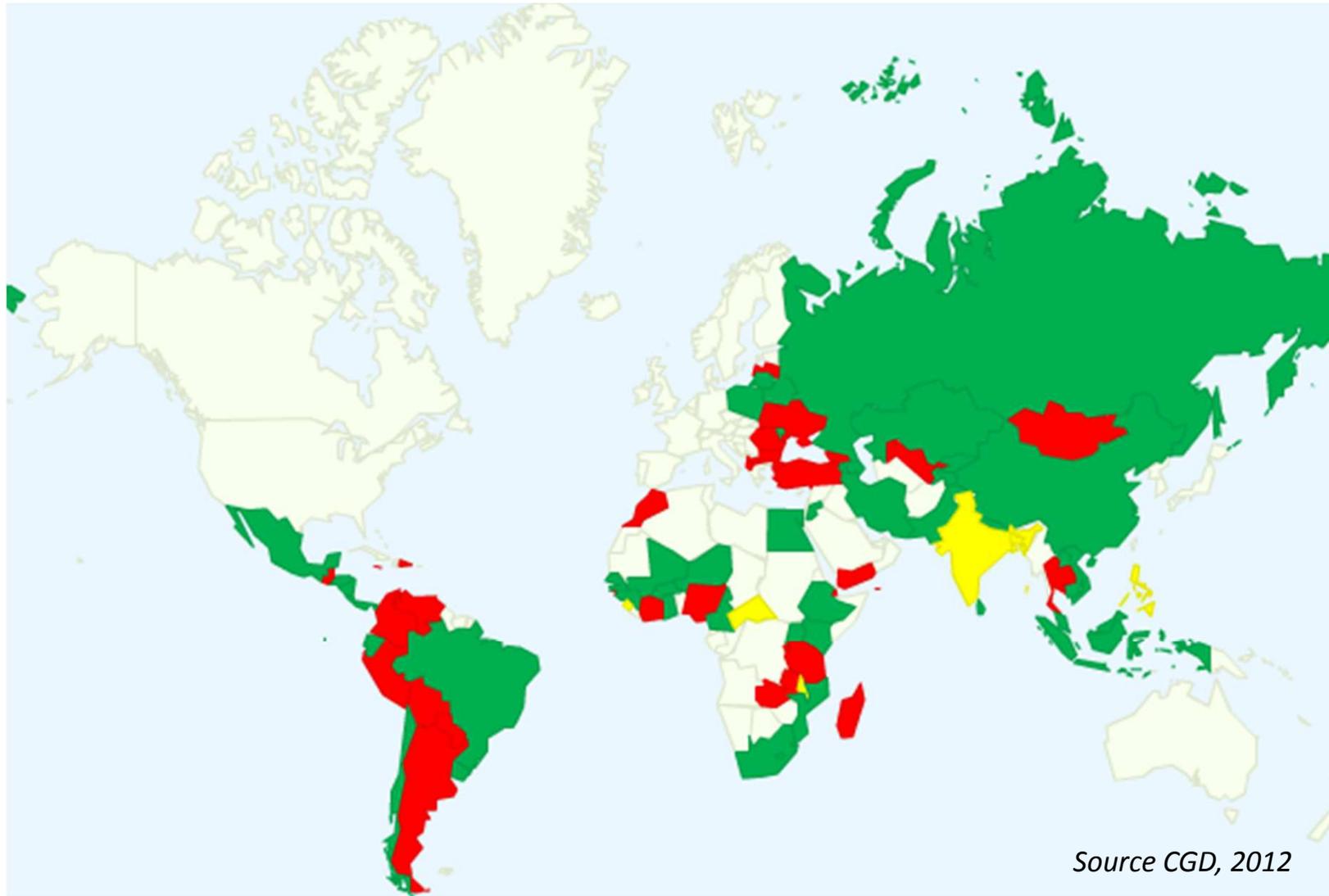
Overall score in 2011 shows that **progress** has been made



Progress Scores 0  8 Source CGD, 2012 Countries colored white have no data for this view

# How well have MDGs performed:

## 2011, MDG 1, poverty reduction, satisfactory performance

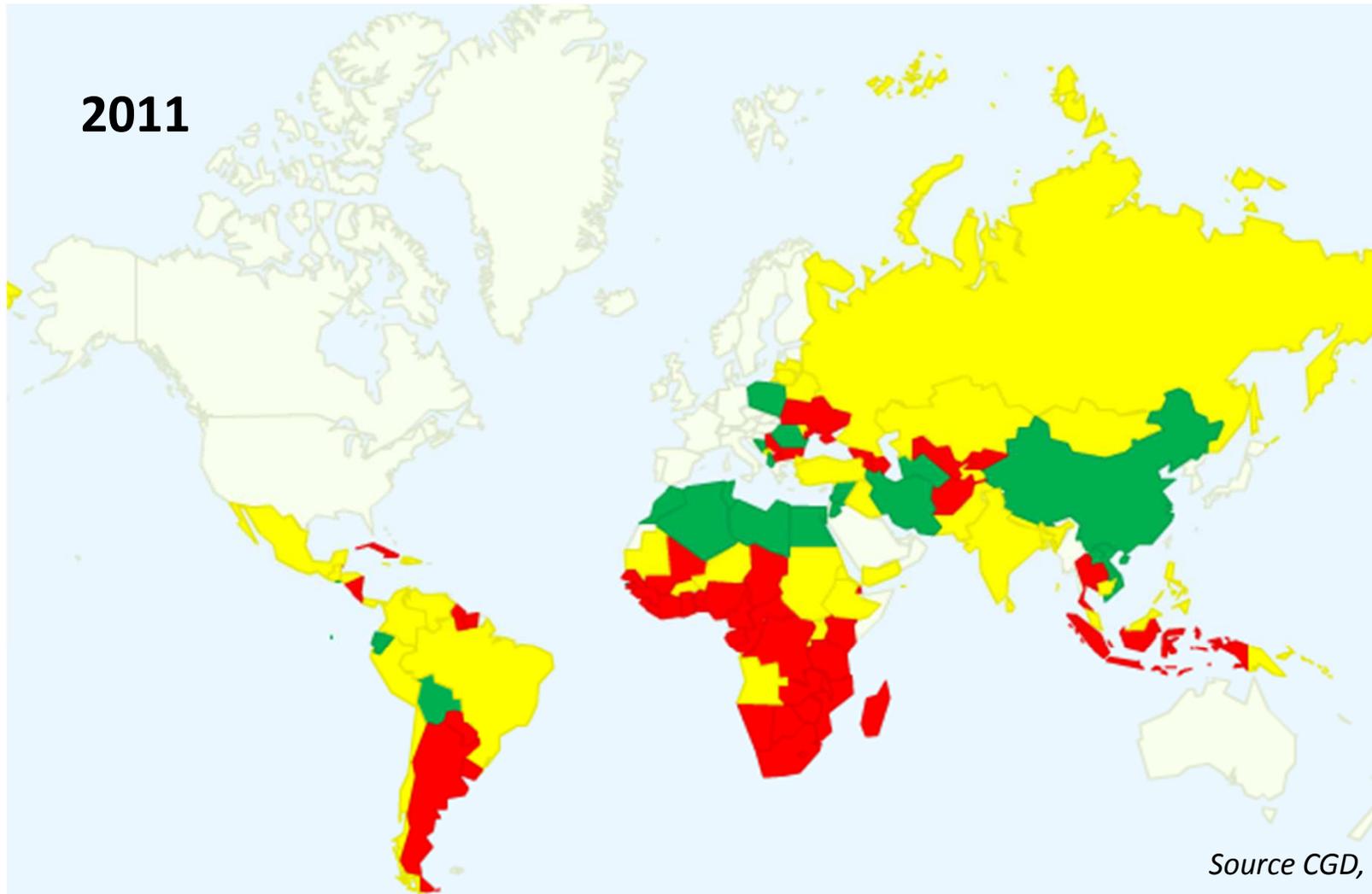


Progress **Off Target** **Some Progress** **On Target**

*Countries colored white have no data for this view*

# How well have MDGs performed:

## MDG 4 Maternal Mortality: a lot of room for improvement



Progress Off Target Some Progress On Target Countries colored white have no data for this view

# Sometimes even the “good scenario” (meeting a goal) is misleading (and might not be enough):

## An example

- the universal primary education **MDG2 met** in nearly all countries. But....millions of students finish schooling without mastering basic literacy and numeracy. **Schooling doesn't necessarily produce learning or education.**
- **Learning targets are important.** Enrollment and completion goals are not enough: quality matters. **Any education goal needs to focus on learning**, not just outputs
- Several other examples like this one

# MDG : some of the criticisms raised

- **Some goals are too ambitious....**
- ...but at the same time, **MDGs left out some key issues for development** (e.g. **equity, climate change, conflict, security, disability...**)
- **Not all goals have clear numerical targets:** the structure of indicators, targets and goals is messy
- **No consensus on how progress towards the targets should be measured** (Klasen, 2012)
- **Lack of accountability:** no one is responsible if any of the Goals is not achieved
- **Lack of participation in the formulation process, MDGs often perceived as a “top-down” initiative**

# MDGs: cons, 2

- **MDGs masked inequalities** by focusing on the global and national averages.
  - Little or no consideration given to **MDGs implications or feasibility at the regional or country level**
- **“One-size fits all” cannot be the rule** (but basic principles applicable to most). Translation of global goals into national targets and policy making considered **inappropriate for countries with completely different development trends**.
- Focusing on social sectors, MDGs **reduced the importance of funding infrastructures**, agriculture and industrial development (key for SSA) .
- **Data** (availability, detail, uncertainty, imprecision etc), especially on poverty **remain a major challenge**

# MDGs: neglected issues

- **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) and climate change
- **Inequality, vulnerability and exclusion**
- **Jobless growth and growth with low quality employment**
- **Migration and urbanization** -increasing global population
- Poverty in **middle-income countries**
- Financial and economic crises making **donor countries more inward-looking**
- **New multilateralism in emerging economies**

**All of these are policy issues**

# What did we learn so far from MDGs?

- **Powerful mobilising tool, but resulted often in distorted policy**
- **The most interesting goals are the one where effective policy plays a key role in them being achieved** (vs those which can be achieved simply with growth)
- **Strong focus on the social sectors, but inclusive growth, sustainability, good governance, etc. neglected**
- **Strong focus on aid, but lack of progress on donors' policy coherence**
- **Not yet a true global partnership, but often uneven 'power' relationship** (donor-recipient, despite adding MDG 8)
- **Data quality is important, accountability is key**

# Where do we stand now:

## The world has changed since 2000

### The world in 2000:

unprecedented commitment  
to a consensus to end poverty

- Consensus: 147 governments, 189 countries on development efforts (overcome the lost decades)
- Multidimensional aspects of poverty emphasized
- High growth context
- .....

### The world in 2012: risk of slow down of MDGs gains

- Aftermath of the economic and financial crisis
  - Gaps in development aid
  - Declining aid flows (Spain and Greece)
  - Focus on efficiency of sum spent and performances
- Protectionism on the rise
- Rising role of China and other Brics in international cooperation

## Reasons behind an overall but uneven success:

- Unprecedented consensus on goals, and commitment to increase aid (especially for social sectors)
- Goals simple, ambitious, interconnected, long term focussed, deadline driven etc (but indicators complicated)
- Problems of measurement, inadequacy of the “one size fits all”, key issues (particularly important for laggards, e.g. fragility) neglected

## The way forward

- Key roles for transparency and accountability;
- Not only fighting poverty, but enhancing resilience of vulnerable groups and countries (fragile)
- More difficult environment than at the start of XXI century.
- New goals should trigger a policy strategy not be confined to a (successful) narrative

# Possible scenarios for 2015 and beyond

## 1. The “easy” option:

- **Simply extending the time scale of the existing MDGs** since many key Goals are likely to be missed.

## 2. A “conservative” option:

- Formulating a **new agenda** which retains the simplicity and the affirmative action nature of the MDGs, **supplemented with other goals and targets reflecting the changed global context (environment, social goals, employment etc)**

## 3. The “getting to zero” option:

- finishing the job MDGs started, but with more ambitious goals and **SMART** (specific, measurable, attainable, relative and time bound criteria) **targets**

## 4. “Policy drives results”:

- the original question does having goals trigger the “right” policy should be answered. This involves institution building/strengthening, governance issues (both at country-North and South- and international level)

# Some key messages emerge...

- The Post 2015 framework is an **opportunity to incorporate inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, equity issues, food security, peace, security, human rights ....**
- **Focus on specific needs of countries (and growing population)**
- Both developed and developing countries need to be **accountable**
- Increasing role for both private and public partnership (again an accountability issue arises)

# Concluding.....

- It is not much a question of deciding specific (different) goals but of **understanding how policy making affects the results.**
- A goal attained without an underlying policy (e.g. because of external, possibly unintended, circumstances) can be easily reversed if circumstances change.
- If the aim is a LT development, it is key to think about the **best policies, their interaction and trade offs.** This entails a focus on **developing partner ownership** and **accountability for all the actors involved** (including international organizations)
- Goals should be set **in the national context**, not to be biased against countries with low starting points

**Thanks!**

# Elements for a post-2015 consensus

- **Goals less driven by (traditional) donor countries: ownership is key to plan successful policies**
- Goals have to be chosen by developing countries' **government and civil society**
- **Lesson learning from South-South cooperation can change the perspective**
- **No “one size fits all” policy**
  - Specificity of LDCs in Africa, issue of poverty in middle income countries
  - The case of countries in situation of Fragility and conflict
- Goals should be **broader: inclusive sustainable development, equity, employment, food security**
- **Need for policy coherence** (aid versus trade policy etc) **and intergovernmental coordination**

# Top 10 MDG Achievers

Top Absolute Progress on Indicators	Top Relative Progress against MDG Targets
Benin	Ecuador
Mali	China
Ethiopia	Thailand
Gambia	Brazil
Malawi	Egypt
Viet Nam	Viet Nam
Uganda	Honduras
Nepal	Belize
India	Nicaragua
Cambodia	Armenia

Source: ODI/UNMC (2010). Note: This table and rankings are based on a simple aggregation of rankings of the annual rate of progress on selected MDG indicators. Absolute progress measures which countries have reduced the largest share of the population living in extreme poverty, for instance, or increased primary school enrolment rates by the largest number of percentage points. Relative progress measures proportionate progress against the MDG target.

## Current Trajectories of key poverty indicators through 2030

Indicator	Developing countries		Sub-Saharan Africa		South Asia	
	2010	2030	2010	2030	2010	2030
Secondary Completion (% of those aged 25 and older)	15.1	23.1	5.6	11.2	6.8	13.7
Child Mortality Rate (per 1,000)	49.5	27.6	122.2	66.3	65.6	33.7
Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000 live births)	192	129	718	308	279	174
Undernourishment (%)	15.3	12.6	25.7	17.6	22.1	16.6
Life Expectancy at Birth (years)	67.3	71.2	52.7	59.4	64.8	69.8

Source: Karver et al., (2012, forthcoming). Note: Figures are population-weighted and represent mid-range projections..

# Data issues

Problems with data for MDG Indicators are related to:

- **Lack of international standards**
- Failure in adopting international standards at the national level
- **Measurement problems**
- National programmes not fully developed in specific statistical areas
- New statistical areas, with recent methodological development

# What did we learnt?, 2

- **Not all the indicators are appropriate.**
- Vandemoortele's view: *“The misinterpretation of the MDGs as one-size-fits-all targets has set the bar for sub-Saharan African countries unrealistically high.”*
- Different targets should be set at the national level (**no one size fits all**)
- Challenge to find the right number of indicators: not too many indicators nor too few.....
- Monitoring requirements are a big burden to countries. Hence **ownership** is key