

Keeping the Promise: Working towards the Millennium Development Goals



At the core of UNDP's work is promoting the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were set at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit by world leaders as a commitment to addressing the human condition by 2015.

In South Sudan, as part of advancing an inclusive growth agenda, UNDP advocated for key development priorities towards the attainment of the MDGs and human development to be incorporated in the first ever South Sudan Development Plan. The Plan will form the basis of Government budgeting and donor programming over the next three years.

The Development Plan refers to the Interim Constitution, which directs the Government to achieve the Millennium

Development Goals by building the necessary institutional, human, social and economic capacity, developing infrastructure and social services, and raising the standard of public services.

Recent surveys have shed light on the massive level of poverty and deplorable human development situation in South Sudan. The country endured years of armed conflict which only ended in 2005, five years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. Realistically, most of the goals will not be met by 2015. National capacities and institutions need to be strengthened to manage initiatives oriented to achieving the MDGs.

Even in 2005, after years of war, South Sudan was not ready to

take all the measures needed to make progress towards the MDGs. Weak capacity of national institutions, weak sector coordination, political uncertainty and insecurity in large parts of the country, poor basic infrastructure, and limited resources for development are all major challenges for the government in its efforts to achieve the MDGs in South Sudan.

UNDP is providing technical advice to planning processes, building institutional capacity, and helping to support the development of inclusive economic growth strategies that promote employment, livelihoods and effective delivery of services and reduce inequalities and marginalization of the poor and vulnerable groups.

The Millennium Development Goals



Goal 1: Eradicate poverty and hunger

In South Sudan, chronic hunger was reduced from 48 to 33 percent between 1995 and 2004. However 50.6 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line.

The South Sudan Development Plan aims to reduce this to 46 percent by 2013. One key initiative is social cash transfers, which the Government is examining as a mechanism to provide cash to every household in the country.



Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Net enrolment in primary school was 46 percent in 2010, but far fewer children complete all eight years of primary education. The qualified teacher to children ratio stands at 1:117.

The South Sudan Development Plan sets a target of 65 percent enrolment in the next three years.



Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

In South Sudan, girls make up only 36.9 percent of primary school enrolment (2009) and about 20 percent more males than females were reported to be literate amongst both adults and youth. Getting girls into school not only improves their chances of securing livelihoods, but impacts on the health, nutrition and education of their children and can reduce early marriages and unsustainable population growth.

One positive development is that 34 percent of all seats in the South Sudan Legislative Assembly are held by women, which should help ensure the promotion of gender equality.



Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

The under-five mortality rate in South Sudan decreased from 250 (per 1000 live births) in 2001 to 135 in 2006. Under the South Sudan Development Plan, the target is to reduce this rate by as much as 20 percent in rural areas.

This priority will build on South Sudan's success to date in cutting the transmission of deadly diseases and expanding vaccination coverage. UNDP is providing support to health systems, including improvement of facilities, staff capacity and monitoring and evaluation systems.



Goal 5: Improve maternal health

South Sudan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world – 2,054 per 100,000 live births. This is an astronomical figure representing a 1 in 7 chance of a woman dying during her lifetime from pregnancy related causes. Currently, there is only one qualified midwife per 30,000 people.

UNDP and UNFPA are supporting capacity building initiatives which include the deployment of international medical professionals to mentor and train midwives.



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

Although there is limited information on HIV and AIDS in South Sudan, reports show yearly increases in the prevalence rate and limited knowledge among the population about prevention. HIV prevalence among people aged 15-24 years was 3.1 percent in 2006. In South Sudan, malaria is considered hyper-endemic.

UNDP is managing the Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria in South Sudan which is providing organizational and technical support including surveillance studies and prevention and treatment programmes such as the provision of anti-retroviral medicines.



Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Access to safe water rose from 47 percent of the population in 2006 to 67.7 percent in 2010. Access to sanitation rose from 6.4 percent in 2006 to 14.6 percent in 2010.

UNDP's new project, Protected Area Network Management, will be helping to establish a network of protected areas to safeguard South Sudan's significant biodiversity.



Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development (access to foreign markets, debt relief and increased grant)

Progress on this goal will be crucial to reduce dependence on oil for foreign exchange and on imports for many basic necessities. Progress will also help the country to achieve debt relief and to improve access to foreign markets.