

# Making the MDGs Work for All

Gender-Responsive Rights-Based Approaches to the MDGs



UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. UNIFEM works in partnership with UN organisations, governments and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and networks to promote gender equality. It links women's issues and concerns to national, regional and global agendas by fostering collaboration and providing technical expertise on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment strategies.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of UNIFEM, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.

Making the MDGs Work for All  
Gender-Responsive Rights-Based Approaches to the MDGs

Date of Publication: November 2008

Copyright: UNIFEM

UNIFEM  
East and Southeast Asia  
Regional Office  
UN Building 5th Floor,  
Rajdamnern Nok Ave.  
Bangkok 10200 Thailand  
[www.unifem-eseasia.org](http://www.unifem-eseasia.org)

Written by Lorraine Corner  
Edited by Kelly Corner  
Photos by Dan Tshin for UNIFEM  
Graphic Design by farmgroup. co.,ltd  
([www.farmgroup.co.th](http://www.farmgroup.co.th))



# Making the MDGs Work for All

Gender-Responsive Rights-Based Approaches to the MDGs





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

I would especially like to acknowledge the support and insights of colleagues in UNIFEM, including Chandni Joshi, Evelyn Sundaravej, Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Jean D'Cunha, Kunzang Chungyalpa, Laufitu Malani, Linda Miranda, Noeleen Heyzer, S.K. Guha, Zina Mounla and Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun.

Although they may not realize it or agree with everything, Elaine McKay (Australia), Andrina Lever, Janet Burn, and Nancy Spence (Canada), Mia Hyun, Mu Sochua (Cambodia), Sofi Ospina (Colombia), Farsida Lubis, Kim Do and Yulfita Raharjo (Indonesia), Sarantuya Mend (Mongolia), Remie Rikken, Sylvia Ordonez and Teena Cabbab (Philippines), Milena Pires (Timor Leste) and Gillie Brown (World Bank) have also contributed significantly to the content of these pages.

Special thanks to Jean and Elaine for reading the initial draft and deciding it was worth pursuing, and especially to Jean for choosing such a thorough but patient and helpful editor. Kelly Corner took an untidy manuscript full of inconsistencies, gaps and messy construction and turned it into something far more useful and user-friendly. Thanks also to Geoff Corner for useful comments on early drafts.

Lorraine Corner, July 2008

## NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

---

Lorraine Corner holds degrees in Commerce and Education from Melbourne University, a Masters in Economics from Sydney University and a PhD in Economics from Macquarie University. She taught economics at University Sains Malaysia 1972-1975, and spent five years 1983-1988 as Demographic Adviser to the Centre for Population and Manpower Studies in the Indonesian Institute of Sciences before returning to the Australian National University to teach in the Graduate Program in Demography.

Lorraine joined UNIFEM in 1994 and retired in 2004, having been the Regional Programme Adviser for East and Southeast Asia and the Pacific from 1994 to 1996, Regional Programme Director for East and Southeast Asia from 1996 to 2002, and Regional Economic Adviser for Asia-Pacific from 2002 to 2004. Since retirement, Lorraine has undertaken consultancies on gender budgeting in Mongolia for UNDP; pro-poor gender-sensitive governance indicators for the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre; statistics for the CEDAW report for Timor-Leste and the feminization of poverty for UNIFEM-UNDP in Timor-Leste; and gender in economic governance in ASEAN and China for AusAID. She has also acted as Asia-Pacific Regional Technical Adviser on gender and aid effectiveness for UNIFEM.

Her publications include *Women, Men and Economics; Overview Paper: Women and Economic Development and Cooperation in APEC*, several papers on the UNIFEM experience of gender mainstreaming; and the 'Overview' and one chapter of *The World's Women 2005* for the United Nations Statistics Division.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
List of Abbreviations	vi
Preface	vii

### PART ONE

<b>UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Gender in the Millennium Development Goals	3
B. Human Rights in the Millennium Development Goals	4
C. A rights-based approach to development	5
D. Lack of gender-responsive rights-based approach contributes to slow progress	6
E. An opportunity to improve global gender-responsive rights-based data	8
F. A gender-responsive rights-based approach to MDG reporting	9

### PART TWO

<b>ADAPTING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS TO THE NATIONAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>11</b>
A. Gender-responsive rights-based analysis	11
B. National long-term targets and indicators	12
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	12
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	12
E. Types of indicators	13
F. Data collection	14
G. A note on numbering	14
<b>GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER</b>	<b>15</b>
A. Issues for a gender-responsive rights-based analysis	16
B. National long-term targets and indicators	27
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	30
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	37
<b>GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION</b>	<b>45</b>
A. Issues for a gender-responsive rights-based analysis	46
B. National long-term targets and indicators	52
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	53
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	60
<b>GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN</b>	<b>63</b>
A. Issues for a gender-responsive rights-based analysis	64
B. National long-term targets and indicators	65
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	68
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	81

<b>GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY</b>	<b>87</b>
A. Issues for a gender-responsive rights-based analysis	87
B. National long-term targets and indicators	91
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	92
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	95
<b>GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH</b>	<b>99</b>
A. Issues for a gender-responsive rights-based analysis	100
B. National long-term targets and indicators	104
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	105
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	107
<b>GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES</b>	<b>109</b>
A. Issues for a gender-responsive rights-based analysis	111
B. National long-term targets and indicators	116
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	119
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	126
<b>GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>129</b>
A. Issues for a gender-responsive rights-based analysis	130
B. National long-term targets and indicators	137
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	140
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	145
<b>GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>151</b>
A. Issues for a gender-responsive rights-based analysis	153
B. National long-term targets and indicators	159
C. Gender-responsive rights-based strategies	163
D. National intermediate targets and indicators	168
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>171</b>
A. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	171
B. Beijing Platform for Action	174
C. Common Concerns of the MDGs, CEDAW and the Beijing Platform	175
<b>LIST OF REFERENCES CITED</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>ENDNOTES</b>	<b>187</b>

## LIST OF BOXES

---

Development and poverty eradication in the Millennium Declaration	15
Legal basis for a human rights perspective on poverty and hunger	16
United Nations definition of gender mainstreaming	63
Extracts on gender from selected donor country reports	158
Proposed actions from the <i>Gender Action Guide to IFI Policy-Based Lending</i>	167
States Parties' Commitments under CEDAW	171
CEDAW Substantive Articles	172
Selected CEDAW General Recommendations	173
The Beijing Platform 12 Critical Areas of Concern	174
Common Concerns of the MDGs, CEDAW and Beijing Platform	175

## LIST OF MATRIXES

Matrix 1: The Millennium Development Goals and Targets	1
Matrix 2: Global targets and indicators for poverty and hunger	15
Matrix 3: National long-term targets and indicators for poverty and hunger	28
Matrix 4: National intermediate targets and indicators for poverty and hunger	37
Matrix 5: Global target and indicators for education	45
Matrix 6: National long-term targets and indicators for education	52
Matrix 7: National intermediate targets and indicators for education	60
Matrix 8: Global target and indicators for gender equality and empowerment	64
Matrix 9: National long-term targets and indicators for gender equality and empowerment	66
Matrix 10: National intermediate targets and indicators for gender equality and empowerment	82
Matrix 11: Global target and indicators for reducing child mortality	87
Matrix 12: National long-term targets and indicators for reducing child mortality	91
Matrix 13: National intermediate targets and indicators for reducing child mortality	95
Matrix 14: Global targets and indicators for improving maternal health	99
Matrix 15: National long-term targets and indicators for improving maternal health	105
Matrix 16: National intermediate targets and indicators for improving maternal health	107
Matrix 17: Global target and indicators for combating diseases	110
Matrix 18: National long-term targets and indicators for combating diseases	117
Matrix 19: National intermediate targets and indicators for combating diseases	126
Matrix 20: Global targets and indicators for environmental sustainability	130
Matrix 21: National long-term targets and indicators for environmental sustainability	137
Matrix 22: National intermediate targets and indicators for environmental sustainability	146
Matrix 23: Global targets and indicators for global partnership	151
Matrix 24: National long-term targets and indicators for global partnership	160
Matrix 25: National intermediate targets and indicators for global partnership	168

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

---

BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
HIPC	Highly indebted poor countries
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IFI	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
LDCs	Least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development— Development Assistance Committee
PPP	Purchasing power parity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WHO	World Health Organization

## PREFACE

---

**M**aking the MDGs Work for All: Gender-Responsive Rights-Based Approaches to the MDGs is a resource on how to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from a gender equality and women's empowerment perspective. It is especially designed to assist development policy makers, planners and practitioners from government and civil society to develop, implement and monitor strategies to achieve each goal for all – women and men, girls and boys – in ways that adapt global goals and indicators to national and local contexts and draw links between the different MDGs.

Promoting gender equality and empowering women is clearly embedded in the Millennium Declaration, and is one of the eight MDGs. Set at the heart of the development agenda, the MDGs are a fresh promise for progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. Conversely gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to achieving the MDGs – most obviously Goal 2 on universal primary education, Goal 4 on reducing child mortality, Goal 5 on improving maternal health, and Goal 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Gender equality and women's empowerment also contribute to Goal 1 on poverty reduction and to economic growth directly through women's increased labour force participation, productivity and earnings, as well as indirectly through beneficial effects on children's well-being and the quality of the next generation's human resources. Women are also key players in the achievement of Goal 7, ensuring environmental sustainability.

However gender equality perspectives are poorly reflected across all the MDGs in their current formulation. Most either have inadequate or no gender sensitive targets and indicators, making them difficult to achieve. Second, the target for Goal 3 on gender equality and its indicators are limited. They represent a possible means to equality and do not necessarily reveal the quality of rights women enjoy or women's real empowerment. Third, the MDGs appear as stand alone goals, blurring the multi-sectoral links between all goals, targets and indicators, including the cross-cutting gender link. For instance, preoccupation with maternal health and gender disparities in education, without addressing their relationship to feminized poverty, gender biases in the economy, gendered violence and ideologies, could thwart gender equality, women's empowerment and thus the achievement of all the goals.

UNDP reviews of 13 and 78 MDG reports for 2003 and 2005 respectively establish that gender equality is not adequately mainstreamed into national reports; traditional gender role and trait stereotyping persists; an instrumentalist rather than a right-based focus frames approaches to gender equality; sex-disaggregated quantitative data is not supplemented by qualitative data or adequate gender analysis; the nature of reporting makes invisible the cross-linkages between targets and indicators across goals; and involvement of gender equality advocates in the preparation of MDG reports across all the goals is lacking.

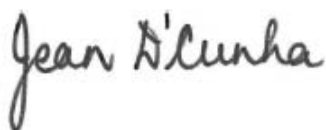
Global statistical data for 2005 reveals that girls constituted 57 per cent of the 72 million children of primary school age not enrolled in school. Globally, women were 48 per cent of those living with HIV/AIDS. More than half a million women died each year of treatable and preventable complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Preventing unplanned pregnancies alone could avert one quarter of these deaths, yet 137 million women have an unmet need for family planning and an additional 64 million were using traditional methods with high failure rates. Women formed only 39 per cent of non-agricultural wage labour, but more than 60 per cent of unpaid family workers. Thus the majority of women lacked access to cash incomes, job security and social protection. Quite obviously a poor gender equality and women's empowerment score card spells poor performance in MDG achievement.

Against this background, this UNIFEM publication that presents a gender-responsive rights-based approach to MDG implementation, is a useful and relevant resource with strong East, Southeast, South Asian, and national resonance. It is gender-responsive and rights-based in that it takes account of (a) the different and unequal situation of women and men, girls and boys in most contexts and (b) the different and discriminatory impact of policies and institutions that mirror these socio-economic and political inequities between women and men, girls and boys. It calls attention to ensuring that policy, institutional and social environments – structure, process and content – guarantee that men and women, boys and girls have equal access to opportunities and benefits; that the State as duty bearer is obligated to protect, respect and fulfill the rights of all and to ensure that others do so too; that the capacities and capabilities especially of the most vulnerable are built to claim their rights and entitlements. The publication argues for the comprehensive and indispensable use of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) frameworks - endorsed, owned and committed to by all 10 ASEAN Member States – to ensure MDG implementation.

Part One of the publication sets the framework for a gender-sensitive rights-based framework to achieving the MDGs. It begins by mapping out the elements of a gender-sensitive rights-based approach to development. It provides an overview of the MDGs, specifically highlighting (a) the inadequate integration of gender into MDG implementation and reporting; (b) the need to adapt the MDGs, including its gender dimensions to regional and national contexts; (c) the need to forge links between all the MDGs, including the gender links. This section then maps out the causes for slow MDG implementation in several countries, especially in the South and Southeast Asian region, in part due to inadequate attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. It then suggests measures to achieve gender-sensitive rights-based MDG implementation and reporting for the future, emphasizing the use of CEDAW, BPFA and MDG principles and processes as mutually reinforcing mechanisms. This involves the following: that institutional mechanisms engage CEDAW and BPFA advocates at all stages of MDG implementation; that we draw on the rich data and analysis generated in the CEDAW and BPFA review processes to inform gender equality and women's priorities in relation to all MDGs; draw on CEDAW and BPFA to frame MDG targets and indicators across all goals; upscale tried and tested strategies under CEDAW and BPFA to inform National Development Policies, Plans and Programmes to achieve the MDGs; draw on the CEDAW and BPFA monitoring and review processes to draw attention to MDG-related progress and challenges in delivering on gender equality and women's empowerment; ensure that MDG resources are adequately allocated and spent on gender equality and women's empowerment concerns.

Part Two of the publication emphasizes application – how to engender MDG implementation. It analyzes each goal with its current targets and indicators from a gender equality and women’s empowerment perspective; provides specific information and analysis on gender equality and women’s empowerment concerns across each of the MDGs; suggests gender-sensitive targets and indicators for each goal that are relevant at national and subnational levels; shows how to mainstream a gender-sensitive rights-based perspective into MDG implementation, highlighting the principles, processes and strategies involved in the same from the good practice of countries in the region and beyond. In doing so, this publication complements the 2005 UNIFEM publication *Pathway to Gender Equality*<sup>1</sup>, which draws the conceptual link between CEDAW, BPFA and the MDGs as mutually reinforcing processes and provides an overview of the specific actions recommended by CEDAW and BPFA to achieve each goal.

UNIFEM invites development practitioners within government and civil society to draw on the rich data, analysis, targets and indicators in the publication to engender the implementation of all MDGs.



Dr. Jean D’Cunha  
Regional Program Director  
UNIFEM East and Southeast Asia Regional Office, Bangkok