

Millennium Development Goals in the Philippines

Introduction

Along with all other countries, the Philippines committed in late 2000 to pursue all efforts to attain certain benchmarks in improving human life: in halving extreme poverty, cutting malnutrition and hunger and the incidence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (HIV-AIDS) and other serious diseases, and increasing access to education, health services, water and sanitation and promoting gender empowerment and environmental sustainability.

These commitments are embodied in eight key goals in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since 2000, the Philippines has sought to attain these goals through its medium-term development plans.

Expert studies projected the resources required for attaining the goals, and what are expected to be available, in order to guide development planners, both in government and the private sector on what reforms to pursue in order to cover the resource gaps within the goal period. An accompanying study on financing human development in the country provides the key basic information for determining the resource gaps and how they can be reached.

Like other countries that signed the MDG commitments in 2000, the Philippines recently tracked its progress in attaining the goals, with a view to understanding better the issues and problems that stand in the way of attaining them, and how the remaining time between now and 2015 can be used to speed up such progress.

Targets

Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

1. Halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty between 1990-2015

From 1991-2000, the proportion of population as well as families below the subsistence poverty line has decreased by only around six percentage points.

A 2000 survey shows that 20.9 percent of the country's population is considered extremely poor.

2. Halve the proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption and halve the proportion of underweight children.

Trends in food consumption indicate a general decrease in the intake of various foods. The mean one-day per capita food consumption decreased from 869 grams in 1987 to 803 grams in 1993.

Malnutrition is still a major threat to the Filipino child's survival. The prevalence of moderately and severely underweight 0-5 years old decreased from 34.5 percent in 1989-90 to 30.8 percent in 1996, and declined to 30.6 percent in 2001.

3. Halve the proportion of people with no access to safe drinking water or those who cannot afford it by 2015

In 2000, 78.5 percent of Filipino households had access to safe drinking water. This was an improvement from 73.7 percent in 1991.

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

4. Achieve universal access to primary education by 2015

The participation rate in elementary improved from 85.5 percent in 1991 to 96.9 percent in 2000.

Elementary completion rate increased from 65.5 percent in 1991 to 66.1 percent in 2000.

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality

5. Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education not later than 2015.

For SY 2000-2001, elementary enrollment ratio of girls to boys is 96:100 and secondary enrollment ratio at 105:100. Simple literacy rates have increased for both females and males. The latest available estimates (1994) indicate rates of 94 percent for women and 93.7 percent for men.

Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality

6. Reduce under-five mortality rate by two-thirds by 2015

Under-five mortality rate was significantly reduced from 80 per 1,000 live births to 48 in 1998.

Infant mortality rate was reduced from 57 in 1990 to 35 in 1998.

Goal 5: Improve Women's Reproductive Health

7. Reduce maternal mortality rate by three-quarters by 2015 (half by 2000, half by 2015)

Maternal mortality rate declined from 209 per 100,000 live births in 1993 to 172 in 1997.

8. Increase access to basic reproductive health services to 100 percent by 2015

The percentage of currently married women aged 15-44 using contraceptives declined from 50.7 percent in 1995 to 49.5 percent in 2001 (FPS). The 1998 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) placed the total fertility rate (TFR) at 3.7 per woman. This is higher compared to the TFRs of other Asian countries. In 1998, the unmet need for FP was 19.8 percent.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

9. Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015

As of December 2001, there are more than 1,000 HIV Ab seropositive cases recorded, 486 of whom had AIDS. Between 1984 and 1992, the annual number of confirmed cases reported remained below 100. From 1993 to 1999, the number of cases per year had exceeded 100, but remained below 200. While confirmed cases of HIV/AIDS remain low and rate of increase is slow, the potentials for a full-blown epidemic continue to exist.

10. Have halted by 2015, and began to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Malaria is still one of the ten leading causes of morbidity in the country. A reduction in the morbidity rate for malaria has been observed, declining from 123 cases per 100,000 population in 1990 to 73 in 1998.

TB is the fifth leading cause of death and sixth leading cause of morbidity. TB morbidity rate has decreased from 314 cases per 100,000 population in 1975 to 173 in 1995.

Based on the 1998 population, it is estimated that around 100,000 new TB cases develop yearly. The Philippines is however, on track in meeting the target for malaria and TB control.

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

11. Implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005, to reverse loss of environmental resources by 2015

The country's total forest cover has decreased from 6.2 million hectares in 1990 to 5.4 million hectares in 1997. The Philippines has been identified by the Conservation International as one of the "8 hottest spots in the world" where exceptional concentrations of endemic species are undergoing a continuous loss of habitat. Efforts will need to intensify if the country is to meet the environment target.

12. By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

In October 2000, about 1.3 million informal settler families were identified in key urban centers, with 5.7 percent in Metro Manila. They live in heavily populated urban areas which are deteriorated, hazardous, unsanitary or lacking in standard conveniences.

Goal 8: Develop A Global Partnership for Development

13. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. Include a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction—both nationally and internationally

The growing integration of the Philippines into the arena of world trade poses benefits and perils to the country. Globalization poses a challenge for local producers to compete with foreign counterparts in a regime of low tariffs. It also creates greater volatility in the foreign exchange market.

Since substantial unilateral trade reforms were undertaken since 1981, the Philippines made limited offers in terms of market opening under the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. The country bound

itself not to raise tariffs on imports of some 3,544 items beyond a level that is 10 percentage points higher than the 1995 rate. In terms of tariff reduction, only 66 tariff lines were committed.

14. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debts sustainable in the long-term.

The outstanding debt of the National Government has increased from 768.5 billion pesos in 1990 to 2,648.8 billion pesos in 2000. While debt service has taken up a significant portion of the national budget (20.6 percent of total budget in 2000), it remains manageable.