WITHIN REACH | GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

2013 HUNGER REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

breadforthe**world**
INSTITUTE

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Within Reach: Global Development Goals

The 2000s were a decade of extraordinary progress against global poverty. More people escaped poverty during the 2000s than any other decade in history. More importantly, progress occurred in every major region of the world.

It may not be possible to establish a direct causal link, but it is no coincidence that this progress coincided with global efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). When the MDGs were launched in the year 2000, leaders from every country in the world pledged their support. Few could have known at the time how influential these goals would become.

Since 2000, the MDGs have been the dominant global development framework, and they have galvanized public support around the world for ending hunger and extreme poverty. Scarcely a summit passes where heads of state don't renew their support for the MDGs. Civil society groups, particularly faith-based ones, have been loyal advocates of the MDGs, dedicated to holding government leaders accountable for following through on their pledges.

A Sprint to the Finish

MDG 1 calls for eradicating hunger and extreme poverty with a target of halving the proportion of people who live in hunger and poverty by 2015. Other goals include achieving universal primary school enrollment, reducing child and maternal mortality, promoting gender equality, reversing the spread of infectious diseases, and improving environmental sustainability.

"The MDGs are the global community's most holistic approach yet to human development."

The MDGs are the global community's most holistic approach yet to human development. Before the MDGs, the conventional "development" yardstick was a nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Clearly, growth in GDP is important for development. But progress against hunger and extreme poverty does not automatically accompany economic growth. Today, most people living below the international poverty line ($1.25 per day) reside in middle-income countries, illustrating how economic growth does not always reach people at the bottom.

In 2012, the World Bank announced that the percentage of people living below the international poverty line had already fallen by more than half, thus achieving the 2015 target. The hunger target has not been achieved yet—but it is within reach if all countries are willing to step up and do their part.

In the current environment of an anemic global economy and rising food prices, it may seem difficult to imagine that much progress can be made towards the MDGs, but recent experience would suggest otherwise. Indeed, many countries in Africa and Asia have bounced back from the financial crisis in 2008 more quickly than anticipated. The experience of countries as different as Ghana, Brazil, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Bangladesh show that with good leadership and a comprehensive, country-owned and -driven strategy, progress is possible in a very short period of time.

What does this mean for the United States? The U.S. government should renew and reinvigorate its commitment to the following:

- Achieving the MDGs by 2015.
- Maintaining and increasing funding for poverty-focused development programs.
- Improving the effectiveness of U.S. development assistance to get better results.

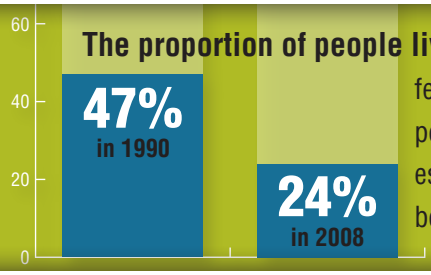

Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Geta Rana plays with her daughter and other children at the in-patient Nutrition Rehabilitation Hospital for malnourished children in Dhanghadi, Nepal.

Achieving the goals mostly depends on the commitment of political leaders to scale up proven approaches and target the groups most difficult to reach. Leaders will have to address the structural inequalities that deny certain groups of people access to social and economic opportunities. These are predominantly racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups.

Accelerating progress against hunger and poverty requires special focus on women and girls. Women's status in society is possibly the most reliable marker of how a country is doing with respect to achieving the MDGs. Similarly, the proportion of children who are stunted may be the most reliable marker of how much progress a country can expect to make within a generation.

Stunting means that a child is too short for her age, but it also carries consequences that can't be seen, including damage to brain development and overall health. A child who is stunted has suffered chronic malnutrition. Presently, one in four of the world's children are stunted. The hunger goal in the MDGs does not include an indicator for stunting, which was a serious oversight. Any new set of global development goals must include a target to eliminate stunting.



The proportion of people living on less than $1.25 a day fell from 47 percent in 1990 to 24 percent in 2008—and preliminary estimates indicate in 2010 it fell below half the 1990 rate.

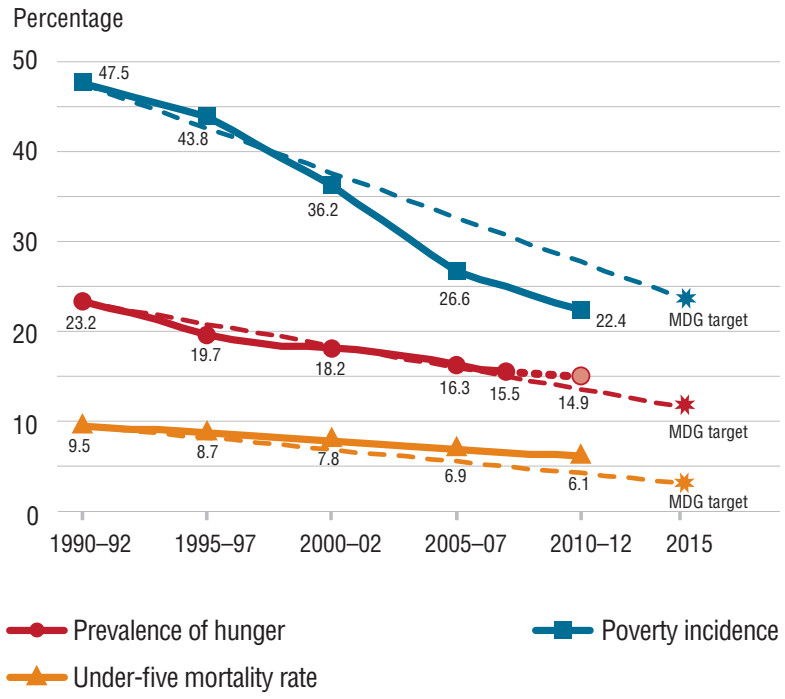
From 2000 to 2011, poverty in the United States increased overall from **11.3 percent** to **15.0 percent** and from **16.2 percent** to **21.9 percent** among children.

With just three years left before the December 2015 deadline of the MDGs, it is critical to build on the achievements of the last 12 years and redouble efforts to speed up progress, especially in countries where progress has been slow. The final push and a strong finish by 2015 will be critical to building momentum and creating an appetite for what comes next.

Beyond 2015

The international community has begun to debate a post-2015 framework for development, which is expected to include a new set of global development goals. Both outcome and process targets, including indicators that measure progress on strengthening development partnerships, must accompany the goals. Whatever agreement emerges should have a bull's-eye target of ending hunger and extreme poverty by 2040—roughly within a generation. Twenty-five years, from 2015 to 2040, is a reasonable stretch of time to accomplish this, given the rates of progress some countries have proven capable of achieving.

Poverty, Hunger and Child Mortality in the Developing World



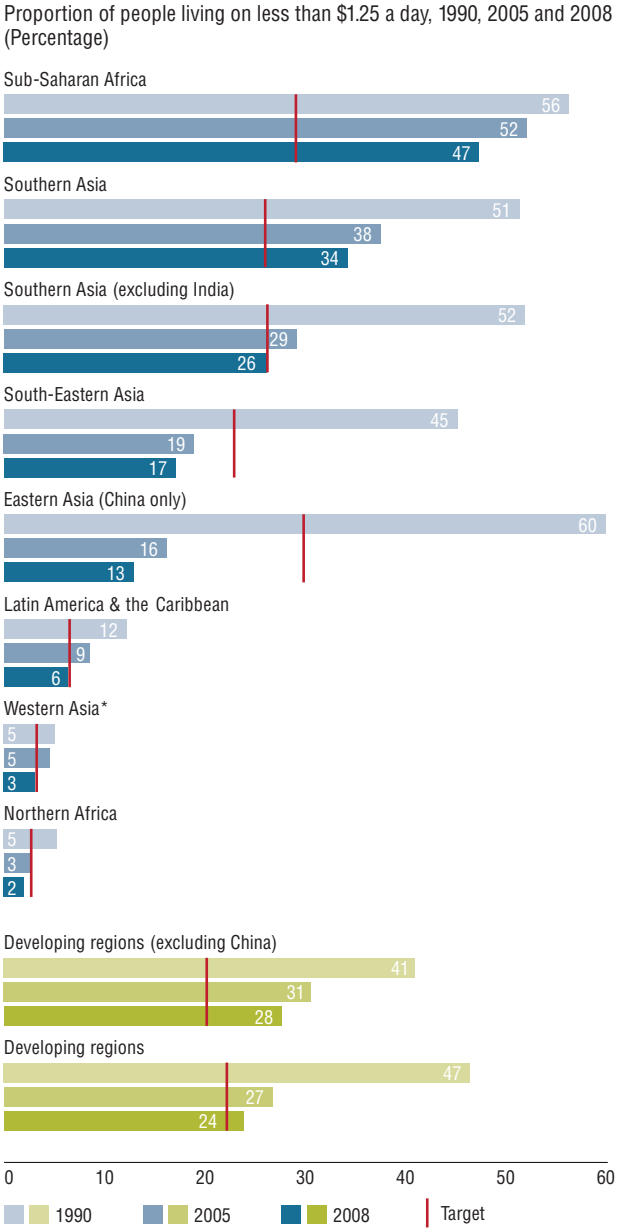
Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012

The best results will come from strengthening partnerships among all concerned. MDG 8 focuses on improving partnerships between developed and developing nations, and this should remain a priority in a post-MDG framework.

Since the MDGs were established in 2000, the concept of partnership has been evolving rapidly. Low-income countries are making their own plans for development and poverty reduction and are taking greater responsibility for the development assistance they receive. Traditional donors have made this shift because they've learned from experience how crucial local ownership is to success.

Globally, an estimated **165 million** children under-five years of age, or 26 percent, were stunted (i.e., height-for-age) in 2011—a **35 percent** decrease from an estimated 253 million in 1990.

Extreme Poverty Falls in Every Region of the Developing World



* The aggregate value is based on 5 of 13 countries in the region.

Note: No sufficient country data are available to calculate the aggregate values for Oceania.

Source: United Nations Development Program, 2012

Several external factors that affect sustainable progress against hunger and poverty are themselves in flux. Food prices are one example. There are many actions beyond providing aid that developed countries could take to prevent and mitigate the effects of food-price volatility—and a true partnership for development means that donor countries need to be prepared to work on all fronts against problems that impede development. The next set of goals should include meaningful indicators of what it means to partner for development.

In addition, every country should set goals to eliminate hunger and poverty, including middle- and high-income countries. Hunger and poverty are intolerable everywhere. Each nation needs to engage in its own goal-setting process, which will foster broader civil society participation and result in national goals that focus on country-specific causes of hunger and poverty. In the United States, that means ending hunger and poverty at home.

Once a framework agreement is reached, national governments and their civil society partners should embark on a public education campaign to build widespread support for the new global goals. This will ensure long-term commitment and spur citizens to hold government leaders accountable. Despite new and old challenges, it is possible to eliminate global hunger and poverty by 2040. However, it is not possible to do so without committed leadership.

The Value of U.S. Leadership

It is fair to say that so far, the United States has not been actively engaged in setting the post-2015 development agenda. To ensure a strong U.S. commitment, U.S. civil society, particularly faith-based groups, should encourage the president and other government leaders to become more engaged in the process of developing a post-2015 framework and to take the lead in rallying all countries to support a goal of ending hunger and poverty. The final push for the MDGs and development of new goals will need the full support and backing of the U.S. government.

Civil society in the United States, especially the faith community, must work quickly to make this a priority for the president and Congress.

The United States should support an inclusive process for developing a post-2015 framework, one in which all voices are heard. The next set of development goals needs to reflect the hopes and aspirations of people who live in hunger and poverty and needs to be owned and embraced by developing countries. An open and transparent process of goal-setting will ensure that civil society is not shut out and that hungry people are heard. These principles have defined U.S. development programs in recent years and should continue to shape U.S. support for building a post-MDG development framework. It is important that the international community get the goals and the process right.

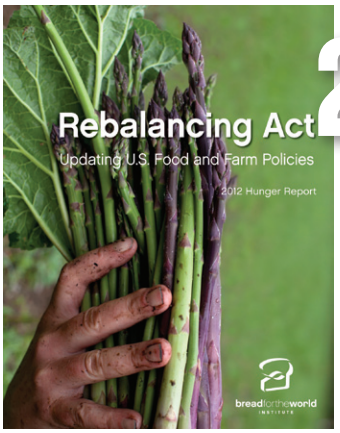
"Despite new and old challenges, it is possible to eliminate global hunger and poverty by 2040."

The reason the United States still has hungry people is simply that national, state, and local government leaders have not made hunger a top priority. With effective leadership and the right strategies, hunger and poverty could be ended in the United States much earlier than 2040. The public needs to demand stronger leadership on hunger and support those leaders' efforts. In our system of government, a problem becomes a national priority only when a critical mass of citizens is willing to commit to solving it and to holding policymakers accountable for making progress. Ending hunger and poverty in the United States will require strong nutrition and anti-poverty programs, investments in the nation's human capital, and improved job opportunities. Success demands ownership of the goal by everyone and close partnerships among actors at the national, state, and local levels. But it begins with the president setting a time-bound goal to end hunger in the United States.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE 2013 HUNGER REPORT

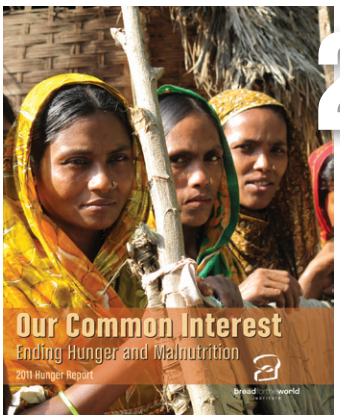
- A post-MDG global development framework should include a bull's-eye goal to end hunger and poverty in every country in the world by 2040.
- The post-MDG framework should be developed through a process that is inclusive and transparent.
- The United States should meet the commitments it made to work with other donor countries to improve aid effectiveness and how donors partner with one another to reduce hunger and poverty.
- All donors should support country-led strategies, meaning strategies worked out by governments in developing countries in consultation with civil society and other domestic partners. Donors should also focus on strengthening local capacity to achieve lasting results.
- Donors should focus on building resilience in developing countries so that poor people can weather food-price volatility and other shocks. Agricultural development assistance and support for social protection systems will help mitigate the impact of shocks on poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.
- The United States should support efforts in developing countries to provide productive employment to large and growing youth populations.
- U.S. partnerships with major immigrant-sending countries in Latin America should respond to poverty and hunger as primary causes of unauthorized immigration.
- A post-2015 global development framework should address climate change within the context of a clear overall focus on poverty.
- A global development framework should explicitly support good governance, effective leadership, and the institutions that make them possible.
- The president should propose a time-bound goal to end hunger and poverty in the United States and develop a plan to achieve it, and he should also establish an office within the administration to coordinate national, state, and local efforts.

Earlier Hunger Reports by Bread for the World Institute



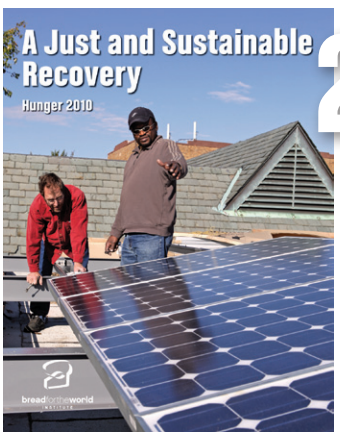
2012

2012 Hunger Report: Rebalancing Act: Updating U.S. Food and Farm Policies calls changes in U.S. food and farm policies to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The national nutrition programs should do more to ensure that people in poverty have access to the foods they need for good health and to succeed in school and on the job. Farm policies should encourage production and distribution of healthy foods and help farmers manage risk more efficiently. U.S. food aid should make sure that mothers and children in the critical 1,000-day window between pregnancy and age 2 get the nutrients they need. Agricultural development assistance should target smallholder farmers.



2011

2011 Hunger Report: Our Common Interest: Ending Hunger and Malnutrition covers the role of the United States in mobilizing global commitments to increase investments in agriculture, food security, and nutrition in developing countries. A dramatic rise in hunger and poverty in the wake of volatile food prices in 2007 and 2008 led to "Feed the Future," a bold initiative from the U.S. government. The report examines events that led to Feed the Future's establishment and how the initiative can deliver on its promise to benefit smallholder farmers and improve the nutritional status of women and children.



2010

Hunger 2010: A Just and Sustainable Recovery focuses on recovery from the worst economic crisis in 75 years and the looming crisis of climate change. The recovery has the potential to create green jobs that offer people a path out of poverty and build a more sustainable economy. It offers an opportunity to put in place policies that reduce inequality, help low-income families to save and build assets for the future, and revitalize neglected communities throughout the country. The report also makes the case for U.S. leadership in reducing hunger and poverty around the world and in addressing climate change.

Since 1990, Bread for the World Institute has produced an annual report on the state of world hunger.

Visit www.bread.org and download a copy of an earlier report.

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