

“AFGHANISING” THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS & USE OF STATISTICAL DATA - - INFORMATION BRIEF FOR TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the eighteen numerical targets – as derived from the Millennium Declaration – are part of the political consensus reached by the international community in the 1990s. The 48 indicators were selected by the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development from a much larger set prepared through the inter-governmental process. Their selection fosters a common assessment and understanding of the status of MDGs at global and national levels. Nevertheless, some targets and indicators may need to be tailored and customised to the specific conditions of each country.

Goals The goals reflect the vision of development laid out in the Millennium Declaration. Adjustments can be made to reflect the particular conditions in the reporting country.

In Afghanistan, we want to add a new goal on security.

Targets The targets need to be adapted to the country-specific situation to take into account national development priorities. Adaptation can only be carried out through a consultative process with all national stakeholders. In many countries, circumstances will warrant to set different targets that balance ambition with realism. Some countries also may set targets that are more ambitious than the global ones. Numerical targets can be set for intermediate years that correspond better with the national planning framework. Targets can also be set for areas that are instrumental for reaching the MDGs – such as access to reproductive health. Timing is also part of the exercise of adapting targets to national realities. Globally the targets are defined in reference to 1990 and ought to be achieved by the year 2015 (i.e. 25 years covering a generation). However, some countries did not exist in 1990, and in others there are no comparable or reliable data to benchmark indicators.

We want to agree on “afghanisation” of the targets through the Technical Working Groups. Our base year will not be 1990, but 2003. Besides the fact that more data is available for 2003, we want that the years of conflict be taken into consideration when looking at the MDGs in Afghanistan. Because we have thirteen years less to achieve the MDGs than other countries, we will lower some of the benchmarks. We also want to set intermediate targets for 2010 to better link up the MDGs with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (A-NDS).

Indicators Indicators should come from official data sources and be chosen to best reflect the agreed targets. Proxy indicators can be selected to monitor targets for which good quality data do not exist. Different dimensions of inequality need to be highlighted, if possible, such as regional and gender disparities. Where data are not available or considered as unreliable or where differences exist among data sources, the MDG Report could note the data limitations. This can lead to operational interventions to improve statistical capacity mainly addressed to National Statistical Offices.

In Afghanistan, there are a number of instances where solid proxy indicators must be used in the MDG Report. Consensus on which statistics to use will be sought in the Technical Working Groups.