

12th EADI General Conference
**Global Governance for
Sustainable Development**

The Need for Policy Coherence
and New Partnerships



**In Search of Policies for Those Likely to Be Left behind by
the MDGs**

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Abstract

There has been uneven progress globally in all of the MDGs. As 2015 approaches, stocktake of the MDGs are speculated in search for policy frameworks and governance regimes that have worked and those that did not. With predictions of gloomy outcomes of climate change, sustainable development discourses have moved up the development agenda. MDG 7 could be the new contender for the overarching role the MDGs themselves offered in the development debates. This paper attempts to study how might policy and governance within the MDG 7 framework affect the well-being and livelihoods of the populations likely to be left behind by the MDGs. The focus will be on communities that currently form the MDGs target cohorts but are projected to become the statistics for the not achieved MDGs in 2015. The paper explores why the policies failed these communities and what hope there might be within the post 2015 discourse for these households.

1. Introduction

There has been uneven progress globally in all of the MDGs. As 2015 approaches, stocktake of the MDGs are speculated in search for policy frameworks and governance regimes that have worked and those that did not. With predictions of gloomy outcomes of climate change, sustainable development discourses have moved up the development agenda. MDG 7 could be the new contender for the overarching role the MDGs themselves offered in the development debates. This paper attempts to study how might policy and governance within the MDG 7 framework affect the well-being and livelihoods of the populations likely to be left behind by the MDGs. The focus will be on communities that currently form the MDGs target cohorts but are projected to become the statistics for the not achieved MDGs in 2015. The paper explores why the policies failed these communities and what hope there might be within the post 2015 discourse for these households.

The paper builds on the assumptions/evidence that climate change has negative consequences at the global level. The scientific community continues to investigate evidence and debate on the extent of damage. The paper is organised in five sections. The first section on Introduction to the paper is followed by a brief stocktake of the Millennium Development Goals in section two. Section three discusses the challenges posed by Climate Change in the 21st century. Themes that hold potential for the way forward in dealing with the challenges identified in section three, are discussed in section four. Section five presents the conclusions of the paper.

2. Brief stocktake of the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) present a framework theoretically grounded in an inclusive multidimensional approach to poverty. The evolution of the 8 distinct goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators, (UNDP, 2003;27,28) can be traced to the various summits at - Copenhagen, 1995: poverty (MDG 1), Beijing; 1995, Copenhagen; 1995: universal primary education (MDG 2), Cairo; 1994, Beijing; 1995, Copenhagen; 1995: gender equality in education (MDG 3), Cairo; 1994: reduce by two-third infant mortality and under five year old mortality (MDG 4), Cairo; 1994, Beijing; 1995: reduce by three-quarters maternal mortality (MDG 5), Rio;1992: all countries to have a national strategy for sustainable development by 2005 (MDG 7). Two additional goals - MDG 6: combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and

MDG 8: global partnership for development, were added at the Millennium Summit in Sep 2000 (UNDP, 2001). Through inclusion of education, health and gender equality alongside income poverty in combating global deprivation, the MDGs give recognition to the multidimensional context of development. An area intensely debated since the 1970s with the work of Dudley Seers (1969) and later through the contribution of Amartya Sen (1985, 1988, 1992, 1999) in particular¹.

There is some consensus amidst the development community on the MDG conceptual context especially with regards to raising awareness of global deprivation and well-being (Gaiha, 2003;1). Though the discourse and contentions regarding its inclusive format², focus and feasibility together with reliability of data for its numerical targets/indicators in particular are gaining momentum. Additionally, there is a growing view that questions the applicability of the MDGs at the regional and country levels (Vandemoortele, 2007). It is argued that the MDGs were agreed on the basis of the global trends and not on the basis of regional or country specific trends. Measuring progress at the regional and country level with the same yardstick therefore may not be the most appropriate way forward.

Is the overall view of the global progression to achieving the MDGs by 2015 really an encouraging one then? The picture is clearly a mixed one on multiple accounts. First, the claim that consumption poverty has fallen at the global level between 1990 and 2002 (Bhalla, 2002, Chen and Ravallion, 2004) has come under increasing scrutiny with conflicting conclusions (Deaton, 2002, Wolf and Wade, 2002). It has been shown that exclusion of data from China and India indicates an unsatisfactory trend in poverty reduction elsewhere (Reddy and Minoiu, 2005;2-4). Further more, poverty estimates in China and India itself are being disputed.

Second, while a comprehensive set of indicators is used to measure the individual goals, there exists a gap in the impact assessment of the progression or not of a particular MDG on the other MDGs. Two areas of discourse emerge from this. First, a particular MDG - say the poverty goal is showing overall poverty reduction but the health goal is far from being achieved. Should a reduction in consumption poverty be reflected in the overall well-being? If not, then what are the causes and

¹ For other contributions to the debate see UNRISD (1970), ILO (1976; 1977), Hicks and Streeten (1979), Morris (1979), UNDP (1981), Streeten (1984), McGranahan, Pizarro and Richard (1985)

² Critical aspects such as governance, employment and institutional reform

why not? Second, can a fall in one dimension of poverty accompanied by either an increase or static levels in other dimensions³ (Kanbur, 2004;5-8) be considered a positive trend towards the attainment of the MDGs? Exploring the linkages and inter-dependence of the MDGs may answer some of these questions.

Third, given the inconsistencies, discrepancies and gaps in data across indicators for most MDGs noted by UNDP (2003;35) itself, the global view of MDG progression cannot be representative of all countries. For example, between 1990 and 2001, 55 countries lacked any data on the dollar-a-day measure while the absence of data trend⁴ for the same measure was found in 100 countries. This casts serious doubts on the claim that global poverty has fallen between 1990 and 2002. The estimate does not include the 55 countries that have no data record for the dollar-a-day indicator. A close scrutiny of the overall positive trends in education, health, gender inequality, employment and the environment MDGs indicates a similar picture. Many countries have no data or lack data trends (UNDP, 2003). For example 91 countries have no data on HIV prevalence among pregnant women in major urban areas, 46 countries have no data on children reaching grade five in schools, 41 countries have no data on female share of non-agricultural wage employment while 18 countries have no data on population with access to drinking water. The global trends appear to be unrepresentative of situations in a number of countries.

Fourth, as with any aggregates, global trends mask variations at both regional and country levels. While, as noted earlier, there is a growing view that the MDGs be judged on the global trends only, this is highly contentious. A global trend, after all is arrived at by aggregating changes at the regional and country levels. All three should be in the same direction – of course the magnitudes will vary. A tangible divergence in the trend indicates global imbalance in the particular target such that higher levels of achievements in one region make up for the poor progress in other regions. The resulting global trend here represents neither the picture of the success story nor that of the poor achievement.

Fifth, insufficient attention is paid to the worsening of poverty through armed conflicts and natural disasters. While a comprehensive account of the plight of the refugee population is given in the subsections of MDG 1 in the UNDP Millennium

³ Such as health, education and sanitation

⁴ At least two data points are available: one in 1990-95 and one in 1996-2001 such that the two points are at least three years apart (UNDP, 2003;35).

Report (2005), there are no mechanisms to capture the impact on poverty. Similarly the adverse consequences of natural disasters on poverty are not captured in the MDGs. While the environmental and the Climate Change concerns are on the development agenda through MDG 7, the adverse impacts on poverty and livelihoods is not emphasised. Given that the recognition of the gravity of the concerns is recent and continues to be debated, perhaps the link between climate change and poverty could not be better articulated earlier. MDG 7 can claim to have at the least put these concerns on the global agenda some eight years back.

Briefly, the MDGs can certainly be attributed with drawing global attention to multidimensional poverty under a single framework. Comprehensive efforts to track the progress of the MDGs at regional and country level reveal large sections of communities in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia likely to remain untouched by the MDG policy framework. Who are these communities? Why are they likely to not join the MDG ‘met’ target statistics by 2015? And what are the policy prospects for those likely to be left behind? The next section identifies the ‘the likely to be left behind’ cohort and discusses the challenges.

3. Those likely to be left behind and the challenges ahead

At a time of just crossing the mid point between the acceptance of the MDGs to achieving of the MDGs in 2015 by the global community, the progress remains contested. The concerns for the millions of people who may not benefit from the promises of the MDG framework are expressed by the United Nations itself (UNDP, 2007). This section first identifies those not likely to reach MDG 1 and then explores how this cohort might be expected to fare in terms of the other MDGs, in particular

Table 1: Goal 1 Proportion of people living on less than \$ 1 a day

Region	1990	1999	2004
Sub Saharan Africa	46.8	45.9	41.1
Southern Asia	41.1	33.4	29.5
Eastern Asia	33.0	17.8	9.9
Latin America & Caribbean	10.3	9.6	8.7
South-Eastern Asia	20.8	8.9	6.8
Western Asia	1.6	2.5	3.8
North Africa	2.6	2.0	1.4
Developing Regions	31.6	23.4	19.2

Source:

MDG 7. Table 1 shows the proportion of poor – those living under the World Bank’s \$ 1 a day (PPP, 1993 prices) in the seven UNDP regional categories. MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and its three targets⁵ are projected to have mixed progress towards meeting the Goal.

While the aggregate trend for the developing regions is set to halve those living under \$ 1 a day by 2015, poverty rates in Western Asia have deteriorated to double its level in 1990 and despite some progress in Sub Saharan Africa the target will not be met. Further, Southern Asia has been put on track to halve those living under \$ 1 a day through accelerated growth in India. However because of the large population base, 20 percent living below \$ 1 a day in Southern Asia in 2015 translates to over 250 million people in same region. Those likely to continue living under \$1 a day beyond 2015 would therefore comprise 30-35 percent of the Sub-Saharan population, 18-20 percent South Asian population and 3-5 percent of the population in Western Asia. The population cohort identified here can be termed as the poorest global cohort that could not be helped to avail the opportunities offered by the highest per capita programmable assistance⁶ in Sub Saharan Africa in recent years (WDI, 2008) or be engaged in the sustained high growth rates in South Asia, in particular in India.

The poorest global cohort further expands with far grimmer prospects when trends on the share of the poorest in the national income⁷ are examined. Table 2 shows that between 1990 and 2004, the share of the poorest quintile in national income in

Table 2: Share of poorest quintile in national income

Region	1990	2004
Latin America & Caribbean	2.8	2.7
Sub Saharan Africa	3.4	3.4
Eastern Asia	7.1	4.5
South-Eastern Asia	6.2	6.1
Western Asia	5.9	5.4
North Africa	6.2	6.3
CIS	7.9	6.2
Southern Asia	7.2	6.7
Developing Regions	4.6	3.9

Source:

⁵ Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day; halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

⁶ Net ODA excluding debt relief, humanitarian assistance and technical cooperation.

⁷ The MDG Report (2007) has used consumption or income data which ever was available for the region.

developing countries fell from 4.6 percent to 3.9 percent. The unequal sharing of the benefits of growth is even more pronounced at the intraregional level raising two further concerns. First, the poorest cohorts have been worse off even in regions attributed with sustained rapid growth and lifting millions out of poverty as in East Asia. Widening income equality was most distinct in this region between 1990 and 2004. Southern Asia, also a region with high economic growth rates in the last decade experienced deterioration in the share of the poorest quintile in the national income. Second, while Latin America has just 8.7 percent of its population living under \$1 a day (2004), its poorest fifth account for under 3 percent of the national income. The income inequality remains the highest in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa staying unchanged at around 3 percent between 1990 and 2004. Overall the poorest global fifth have been significantly worse off in the period 1990 – 2004. What are the prospects for this group?

The linkages between the share in the national income and the benefits of growth are explored in White and Anderson, (2001) and Dagdeviren et al., (2001). The authors contest the proponents of ‘growth is good for poor’ assumption that economic growth is shared as seen in the work of Dollar and Kraay (2002). It is argued that the share of the growth the poor draw depends on their initial share in the national income. The subject is further examined by Ravallion (2005a, 2005b) suggesting caution in interpreting the evidence regarding falling absolute poverty with economic growth found in World Bank (1990, 2000); Ravallion (1995, 2001); Ravallion and Chen (1997); Fields (2001) and Kraay (2005). Ravallion argues that while the ‘initial inequality and growth’ axiom is compelling, the poor can gain from growth provided it is pro-poor growth and there are adequate pro-poor redistributive mechanisms. However, even in the two countries: China and India, most noted for lifting millions out of poverty in the period 1990 -2004, the distributive mechanisms of growth are contested. Using the distributional shifts pro-poor growth definition (Baulch and McCulloch, 2000; Kakwani and Pernia, 2000), growth in neither country has been pro-poor as noted in Ravallion (2005a). Though China’s growth has been more pro-poor than India’s using Ravallion and Chen’s (2003) definition, which focuses on the extent of poverty reduction through growth. Higher levels of overall human development in China are attributed to engaging higher proportion of the population in the growth process resulting in higher rates of poverty reduction than India. India remains the home to the largest number of people living under World Bank’s dollar a

day poverty line while rising inequality of the poorest cohort in China is a growing concern.

In summary, while millions have been lifted out of poverty in all developing countries since the 1990s, millions continue to live in extreme poverty with increasing inequalities in 2008. These millions comprise nineteen percent of the developing country population (Table 1). Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for the majority and needs the continuing attention. However, those living in extreme poverty in regions that have experienced sustained high growth rates in the last two decades, face higher risk and vulnerability to sustained deprivation⁸. The latter cohort is made up of income and capability poor individuals who were unable to engage with the growth process and avail the opportunities it offered. The same growth process lifted many of their community members who were able to engage with the growth process out of poverty. Unless the capability profile of those living in extreme poverty is made compatible with the requirements of the current growth process, the group is in danger of furthering the inequality gap and stagnating in the deprivation trap. Collier's (2007) optimism and complacency for this group are based on the assumption that because these countries have been able to robustly break into the global markets, the opportunities provided by globalization would be eventually availed by all. A crucial reason why these countries have been able to enter the global arena is the skill base required for the manufacturing sector in East Asia and the service sector in India. Those belonging to the capability poor groups, did not contribute to their national economies competing in the global market, did not directly benefit from the opportunities and are unlikely to engage in productive growth. It is this population cohort – mostly indicated by those living in extreme poverty, widening inequalities (MDG 1) and poor capabilities that is likely to be left behind in the 'unmet' MDG statistics.

In recent times the globalizing world appears to be rapidly experiencing blurring of social and economic boundaries – albeit by varying degrees. Concerns with climate change and unprecedented food insecurity in addition have emerged as the most significant overarching discourses in the scientific, development and the political communities. The opportunities and threats of globalisation to both the developing and the developed countries continue to attract copious debates in the research and the

⁸ Increasing poverty in Conflict and War affected regions such as West Asia is not explained by the Capability poor arguments.

activist communities (Beynon and Dunkerley, 2000; Bircham and Charlton, 2001; DFID, 2000; Oxfam, 2002; Dollar and Kraay 2002, 2003). Poverty reduction within MDG 1 in Asia in particular is attributed largely as an outcome of globalisation (). In more recent years the globalisation debate has broadened into the understanding of the increasingly common issues and concerns faced in North and South (Friedman, 2005).

Concerns arising out of climate change can be traced to the publication of the Limits to Growth (Meadows et al) in 1972 commissioned by the Club of Rome. The authors analysed different scenarios that showed different environmental outcomes of world development over two centuries – 1900-2100. The authors argued that population growth and natural resource depletion interact to impose limits to industrial growth. The idea generated much controversy at the time largely because the world's population and economy were well within the planet's capacity. It was after fifteen years in 1987 that the issue gained wider attention through the Brundtland Commission Report. The Report articulated sustainable development as '*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*'. Attention was drawn to the urgency in focusing on economic development that could be sustained without harming the environment. The Report was successful in taking the 'concerns' to the global political agenda resulting in the first ever, international agreement on the worldwide negative impacts of atmospheric pollution. The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the setting up of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1990 maintained the seriousness of the dialogue. The Kyoto Protocol further emphasised in 1998 the necessary commitments to specific targets for emission reduction. However the commitment and the action led engagement at country level remained contentious, widening the North-South divide yet again. Led by the US, the industrialised countries can achieve the set target of reducing collective emissions of green house gasses by action abroad rather than at home through various mechanisms. The emerging economies of the BRIC countries have been under pressure to reduce their emissions to no avail. China's green house emissions match those of the largest emitter – the US (). Amidst tensions and disagreements, stark warning posted by the Stern Report (2007) together with the global recognition of Al Gore and the IPCC's Climate Change agenda through the Nobel Prize (2007), the environmental damage continues to rise at a pace not experienced before. The unprecedented rises in the oil prices coupled with the global pressure for green technologies has encouraged the

Western governments to promote the use of biofuels and spurred its production. This has caused two types of shifts in global agriculture. The first is an acreage shift where land used for food crops is diverted to cultivation of crops for biofuels. The second shift is in the usage pattern of crops themselves such that more and more edible crops are diverted for biofuel production. Both shifts are increasingly being seen as the major cause for the acute food shortages and soaring global prices of food grain⁹ (Gosh, 2008; FAO, 2008). In addition, deforestation in country's like Brazil to expand sugarcane production for ethanol could even offset the environmental gains through biofuels. The issues are contentious with the US claiming that the ethanol accounts for not more than 3 percent of the increases in the world food prices while an IFPRI study puts this figure at 30 percent (The Economist, 2008).

What are the implications of the real and the perceived threats of Climate Change for the poorest global cohort identified earlier in the section? These can be categorised into two sets. First, short term and immediate consequences of measures to curb carbon emissions – the main sources identified as adversely impacting the environment. Second, the physical impacts of climate change. In the first category three main issues appear to be driving the short-term and immediate consequences. First is the biofuel factor, second is the carbon-footprint factor and third are the carbon-trading mechanisms together with green growth pathways as discussed in Prowse and Peskett (2008). Expenditure on food is shown to account for between 60-80 percent of the household expenditure in the poorest cohorts (Lipton, 1983). Hence even small increases in the price of staple foods can severely aggravate poverty and push households at the margins into poverty and hunger¹⁰. The current global food crisis threatens to push an additional billion people into poverty as warned by the World Bank (2008) itself. The poorest global cohort is in danger of being pushed further into poverty and higher levels of malnutrition as the staple foods become beyond their reach. Whatever the contribution of biofuels to the current food crises, the adversities inflicted on the consumption patterns of the poorest are significant. The carbon-footprint factor too can endanger the fragile livelihoods of the rural poor

⁹ The global Food Price Index (1998-2000=100) increased from 92.7 in 2000 to 218.2 in April 2008 – an increase of 135 percent. The sharpest increase of 54 percent has been in the year April 2007-April 2008, while in the year 2006-07 an increase of 24 percent was experienced over a moderate increase of under 9 percent in the previous year 2005-06 (FAO, 2008).

¹⁰ Evidence from a number of countries including India (Ahluwalia, 1978; Mellor and Desai, 1985; Bhalla, 1989, 1990, 1993) supports this.

dependent on fruit and vegetable exports from Africa by encouraging the Western consumer to boycott the produce flown in from African countries. Ellis and Warner (2007) point to the marginal reductions in the carbon emissions while Mitchell et al (2007) highlight the loss in earnings of the poor in developing countries through decline in the tourist trade to reduce carbon emissions. Green growth strategies have the potential to be pro-poor through adopting employment expanding and low-polluting mechanisms as also noted in Prowse and Peskett (2008) but the supporting evidence is weak. Benefits from carbon-trading to the poor remain contentious.

The physical impacts of climate change are increasingly being attributed to rising global flood risks, hurricanes as well as acute water shortages. The extent and the most likely areas to be affected are debated, but Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (2005), floods in South Asia (2006) and the recent devastation caused by Hurricane Nargis (2008) have all inflicted severe human suffering. There is another strong commonality – majority of the lives lost in all the three events were from the most vulnerable and poor communities. Hardships were experienced by all in the affected regions. This illustrates the fragile human security structures of the poorest cohorts and its interface with climate change as examined by O'Brien et al (2005). Given that the majority of the poorest communities live in the developing world, the impact of Climate Change is likely to be far more severe in the developing countries. While it is expected to bring about life style changes and hardships in the developed countries, it threatens the livelihoods and the lives of the poorest cohorts in the developing countries. Food insecurities are predicted to worsen through extremes of droughts and flooding. In recent years prolonged droughts have led to declining wheat exports while floods have reduced dairy output (The Times, 2008; Gosh, 2008). In addition poor access to water, pollution led health concerns and declining usability of land and environmental resources are other major risks.

Consequences of economic globalisation in particular appear to be compounding the above noted concerns of climate change. Economic poverty has been significantly reduced in the southern engines of growth – in particular China and to some extent in India. Isn't this what the development community is seeking? However, the rising disposable income of a third of the world population though has global consequences. In addition the resources needed to sustain economies of a billion plus populations at growth rates of over 9 percent place demands on the global systems unparalleled in history. It is the population base of China and India that has created a different

impacts' trajectory of growth as compared with that for Japan or other East Asian economies. The Malthusian arguments of discord between population growth and the earth's finite resources may be revisited within the 21st century framework. The vast population base in China and India has provided the cheap labour pool driving the globalising economies and contributing to the much talked poverty reduction. It has also expedited the scale and rate of demand on the global systems.

The challenges of climate change fuelled by the rising intensity of globalisation have been further aggravated by the neglect of the agricultural sector in the developing countries as highlighted in Gosh (2008). Agricultural policies in many developing countries over the last two decades led to poor investment in agricultural infrastructure and research. Falling land productivity and crop yields together with moves towards cash crop cultivation from traditional food crops are all associated with inappropriate policies. In addition declining state provision for agriculture has exposed the vulnerabilities of the subsistence farmers and raised the overall cultivation costs. Government subsidies for biofuels are further reducing crop-land for food production and encouraging converting crop into ethanol¹¹. The global demand for food at the same time is rapidly expanding, further disequilibrating an already fragile market. The race towards biofuels in order to curb carbon emissions itself is posing multiple environmental threats. The wider scientific evidence is unproven and at its infancy, though some direct impacts of biofuels on food production are convincing.

The noted global consequences of Climate Change – floods, droughts and food insecurity impact all populations adversely though with different categories of concerns. Broadly, for the poorest cohorts in the developing countries livelihoods', health and survival insecurities are primary. Lifestyle changes, higher costs of living and shrinking disposable incomes appear to be the main fallouts of the Climate Change and Globalisation threat for the average developed country citizen.

With two thirds of the global population in the developing countries, the Climate Change threat has far reaching impacts on vulnerable populations with poor social infrastructures. While the world's demand for food is expected to double within the next 50 years (World Bank, 2008), the natural resources that sustain agriculture will become increasingly scarce, degraded, and vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

¹¹ In 2007, 85 m tonnes of maize crop in the US was converted to ethanol from a mere 15 m tonne in 2000 (The Times, 2008).

In many poor countries, agriculture accounts for at least 40 percent of GDP and 80 percent of employment and a dominant rural population. About 70 percent of the world's poor live in rural areas and most depend on agriculture for their livelihoods (ibid). If agriculture itself is being threatened by Climate Change and the quest for alternative energy, how can it be an effective instrument for pro-poor economic development? A threat to agriculture is livelihood insecurity and survival uncertainty for the world's poorest population. In India for example, the falling opportunities in the agriculture sector is already a cause for concern for over 60 percent of its labour employed in agriculture. What can be done to facilitate the transition of large populations out of agriculture, without simply transferring the burden of rural poverty to urban areas? Further, changes in the agricultural practices to meet the growing demand are shown to have negative environmental effects. How can these be contained while maintaining productivity boosting practices?

In summary, the main challenges of Climate Change much compounded by the fallouts of the rapid economic globalisation are: food insecurity at a global level and livelihoods and survival insecurity for the poorest populations in the developing countries. In addition, the developed countries face economic hardships through rising costs of living and serious lifestyle changes. While globalisation is attributed with lifting millions out of poverty in East and South Asia in its first phase, the next stage appears far less effective. The second phase of globalisation in the 21st century when its impacts on Climate Change are being intensely debated, offers far less optimistic prospects for those that remain in poverty. Those that escaped from the poverty trap within the MDGs mostly did so through engaging in the productive activities. Communities left behind lack the capability set to participate in the productive employment. Can the second phase of globalisation and the post MDG framework engage those left behind?

4. The emerging themes

Three main themes that may be the way forward post 2015, emerge from the challenges that Climate Change poses at the global level. First, revisiting the sustainable development discourse and the overarching role of MDG 7 post 2015. Second, a framework to identify and develop the capabilities to meet the post 2015

challenges. Third, robust social policy guidelines to help those unable to break away from the poverty trap.

4.1 The overarching role of MDG 7

In recent times, the debate on environmental sustainability – MDG 7: ensure environmental sustainability, has been pushed high on the global agenda acquiring an urgency not experienced before. The progress of MDG 7 is monitored through its three targets – Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources. The target has five indicators focusing on area under forests and global warming issues. Target 10 draws attention to accessibility to safe drinking water and sanitation issues through its indicators 30-31. Target 11 tracks the lives of the growing slum dwellers in different regions.

The focus on environmental issues and resources, more than any other MDG target draws in the rich countries into the development agenda. The indicators for Target 9 are not focused on developing countries alone, but incorporate actions taken or required by rich countries as well to ensure environmental sustainability (UNDP, 2005). Progress in five areas related to sustainable development and sustainable use of environmental resources is measured. The sustainable management of forestry resources (Indicator 25) shows that overall rapid deforestation is continuing but the net loss of forests is slowing. Deforestation is carried out primarily to convert forests into agricultural land. While landscape restoration and natural expansion of forests in recent times have reduced the net loss of forest area, the livelihood benefits for the local communities are disputed. The preservation of biodiversity and genetic resources, thought to be a wider source of benefits to the local communities, are tracked by Indicator 26. Indicators 27 and 28 look into the efficient use of energy; the “greenhouse effect”, which is linked to global warming; and damage to the ozone layer – tracked by the consumption of ozone-depleting substances. The consumption of ozone-depleting substances has been brought under control through reduction and near elimination of chemicals damaging the ozone layer in the developed countries. There is encouraging trend in all developing countries. The carbon dioxide emissions though continue to rise globally. While there have been significant gains in efficient use of energy in the transition economies and Eastern and Southern Asia, population pressures and economic growth counteract any gains. Rapid growth in the developing

world – especially in China and India, home to over a third of the global population requires better energy –efficient technologies to control carbon emissions.

Indicators 30 and 31(target 10) track sustainable access to improved water and sanitation in urban and rural sectors. While global targets for safe drinking water are on track, coverage in rural areas remains uneven and sparse in some regions. Sub-Saharan Africa in particular shows high levels of urban-rural disparity. Progress on improved sanitation has been slow and not likely to meet the target. Almost half of developing country populations lack basic sanitation despite progress in all regions. Rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia have the lowest figures with just over a quarter of the population able to access basic sanitation facilities.

For the first time in the modern history, a higher proportion of the global population will reside in urban areas in the next year or so. Throughout the developing world this is expected to result in larger slum populations. Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's most rapidly urbanising regions. Almost all of this growth is centred in the slums, giving rise to inadequate housing, sanitation and water problems (UNDP, 2006). The slums of Southern and Eastern Asia continue to expand, as are the problems of poor environment to the residents. North Africa is the only developing region reported to have improved the quality of urban living with a decline in the slum population.

The environmental sustainability led development agenda encompasses largely all the current concerns – the impact of globalisation on the environment as well as how the globalisation-poverty reduction interface impacts on the environment. The development debates are increasingly being grounded within the environmental sustainability and the Climate Change framework. While each discipline has attracted global attention for some time, debates on the interconnectivity between the two: development and environment – through Climate Change have acquired an urgent priority on the global agenda for the first time. Further, the impact of measures to mitigate Climate Change on the wider development concerns of livelihoods, food security and human insecurities are under rigorous scrutiny by different actors – researchers, civil society and the policy makers. The vibrancy and the strength of engagement of the multiple communities in the development-environment debate have the potential to ensure safe guarding the interests of all the stakeholders. The next section examines what maybe required to achieve poverty reduction, strengthen

food securities and address the human insecurities of the most vulnerable within the Climate Change framework.

4.2 The way forward into the 21st century?

While the extent and severity of the impacts of Climate Change, biofuels and expansion of global demand continue to be debated and disputed, there are emerging grounds of agreement. First, the three F's of the current global crisis – fuel, food and funds (economic) pose threats to lifestyles in the developing as well as the developed countries. Second, the challenges are lifestyle *changes* for the developed countries and the well to do classes of the developing countries. For the poor, these are livelihoods and life *threatening*. Populations expected to comprise the 'unmet' MDG1 statistics in 2015 – the poorest global cohort identified in section 3 are likely to be most vulnerable to the food and human insecurities posed by the global crisis. But where do we go from here?

An insight into why the threats posed by the fuel, food and funds crisis are life and livelihoods threatening for the poor would be the starting point to exploring the way forward. The literature and the extensive research into poverty and vulnerability point to the overall fragile structures within which the poor live. These entail weak capability sets in terms of skills/literacy, health, material and non-material entitlements; fragile livelihoods together with unstable social, economic and institutional structures. Each of the noted aspect exposes the poor communities to external shocks - man made and natural, often leading to collapsing of livelihoods as in the case of droughts, floods and economic downturns. With non-existent social security networks, insufficient public provisions and feeble coping mechanisms, the poor are pushed to starvation, debilitating illness and loss of life.

Three main areas can be identified to help the poorest global cohort mitigate the impacts of external shocks and emerging global trends while improving their own poverty situations post 2015. First, the capabilities of the poor; second, robust institutional support for the poor and third attention to the emerging global trends on Climate Change. It can be argued that there is nothing new here – the MDG framework (2000-2015) is grounded in the Capability Approach through focusing on the income (MDG1) and the non-income (MDG2-MDG6) dimensions of poverty. Those who were lifted out of poverty in regions that have made the most progress in MDG 1 did so by enabling the productive engagement of the skilled and semi-skilled

labour with the opportunities provided through the economic expansion. The arguments in this paper draw attention to the need for helping those likely to be left behind the MDGs – the poorest global cohort to build the skills required to participate and contribute to the growth process. This will require a rigorous scrutiny to ascertain the typology of specific skills needed to stimulate the local economy – rural and urban. The East Asian miracle economies and more recently the manufacturing sector led growth in China have all focused on literacy and skills necessary to propel the manufacturing sector. A direct targeting of the poorest cohort to enhance literacy and skills could be a way forward to strengthening their capabilities.

A strong institutional support can help in strengthening the fragile nature of the life structures of the poor. Social security provision, accessibility to all public and health services and assistance with market opportunities targeted towards the poorest cohort would help the poor develop stronger coping strategies to external shocks. In addition, robust agricultural support through seeds, fertilizers, technical know how and access to credit for the poorest subsistence farmers can further make the rural poor self-reliant. The distinction between the debates on policies for poverty reduction in the literature and the current arguments perhaps lies in the emphasis here on strictly targeting the poorest cohort specifically with the above noted measures. This could prevent the leakages in the development programmes experienced in most countries where the poorest communities often do not benefit from such schemes.

Global trends on Climate Change warrant measures to mitigate the impacts on environment. Emerging literature and recent global events indicate that some of these measures result in negative externalities. The social and economic consequences of these, as discussed in the earlier sections are felt most by the poorest global cohorts. The outcomes of the policies to mitigate Climate Change can be pro-poor, providing the livelihoods and capabilities of the poor become integral to Climate Change policy formulation. Within such a context, the poor can benefit¹² through ensuring: labour-intensive mechanisms to achieving energy efficiencies, use of local resources – labour and raw materials and participation of the poorest agricultural communities in expanding production for food and biofuel markets. Such a policy framework requires a focused pro-poor governance agenda, a pro-poor growth platform and a pro-poor

¹² Prowse and Peskett (2008) provide a useful exploratory discussion on poverty impact of policy responses to climate change.

institutional infrastructure. These have been difficult to achieve in the past but may have to become a necessity in the post MDG policies for those likely to be left behind.

5. Conclusion

Challenges of Climate Change much compounded by the fallouts of the rapid economic globalisation are: food insecurity at a global level and livelihoods and survival insecurity for the poorest populations in the developing countries. In addition, the developed countries face economic hardships through rising costs of living and serious lifestyle changes. While globalisation is attributed with lifting millions out of poverty in East and South Asia in its first phase, the next stage appears far less effective. The second phase of globalisation in the 21st century when its impacts on Climate Change are being intensely debated, offers far less optimistic prospects for those that remain in poverty. Those that escaped from the poverty trap within the MDGs mostly did so through engaging in the productive activities. Communities left behind lack the capability set to participate in the productive employment. The post MDG policy framework may need to be grounded in an overall pro-poor agenda to enable the second phase of globalisation and the post MDG policies to engage those left behind.

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