

Re: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals [*Provided by Maryana Curcij*]

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) were created by the United Nations to guide the world away from poverty. While tremendous progress has been made towards reaching these goals on a national average, insufficient progress has been made on the local level of these countries. Taking this into account, the United Kingdom has made it a priority to assist in accelerating the progress of the MDGs through: (1) substantially increasing the overseas development assistance budget and calling for an immediate increase in resources, (2) engaging in activity at the country level, (3) positively influencing multilateral agencies, and (4) forging new partnerships with other bilateral donors.¹ In addition, the United Kingdom recognizes that more effective aid needs to be provided to the poorest countries. The United Kingdom strongly believes that in order to achieve MDGs locally, the local governments must provide infrastructure to facilitate these goals. Such infrastructure should include but not be limited to: roads, educational facilities, clinics, irrigation, and access to clean water and sanitation.² Moreover, the United Kingdom emphasizes that the policies implemented at the local level to combat poverty reflect the priorities in order to provide incentives. Furthermore, the United Kingdom believes that such infrastructure should be created in terms of the resources available to the local communities; through skilled workers, local builders, available resources, and local construction firms. In order to protect the created infrastructure, local community authorities should be given the opportunity to protect the structures. More often than not, these local communities have no hope of being influenced by the MDG goals because they recognize it to be something that is carried out solely on the national level. By giving authority to these communities, they are given an incentive to contribute to achieving the MDG goals.

In regards to what the United Nations (UN) has done to achieve the MDGs locally, the UN created the Millennium Cities Initiative (MCI) and the Millennium Villages Program (MVI).³ Through the MVI, local communities have been given loans; this allows these small villages to provide some source of food and income to sustain them-selves when job opportunities are scarce or non-existent. Poverty is more common in mountainous areas and minority areas which poses an even greater issue considering that it is much more difficult to create jobs in such areas. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) recently created the Local Development Programme (LDP) to assist in attaining sustainable urban development. Additionally, the United Nations Development Programme is working with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), UNWomen, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO) to create feasible strategies to achieve the MDG goals at the local level.

That being said, the United Kingdom is focusing on creating permanent jobs rather than implementing temporary jobs. It is crucial that the jobs implemented are feasible employment opportunities that the citizens are able to maintain. While these jobs are permanent, the UK believes education is key to creating an environment to facilitate economic growth on the local level. Gender equality is also a major priority for the United Kingdom; by creating equal job opportunities we will be able to encourage women empowerment at the local level. For example, for single mothers who don't have the opportunity to work because of their children, they will be given the opportunity to apply for jobs requesting flexible hours.⁴ Similar policies need to be implemented in regards to indigenous people, and people with disabilities. The United Kingdom was able to implement this policy domestically and was successful, with over 90% of the mothers who applied able to get a job.⁵ By implementing similar policies in local communities, we can accelerate the progress of the MDG goals. We note that more aid needs to be taken to these communities through international organizations, financially stable nations, non-governmental organizations, and partnerships with the national government. The faster we are able to aid these communities, the more efficient we will be in reaching the MDGs within the 1.84 years we have left before 2015.

¹Her Majesty's Government, *The UK's Contribution to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (London, UK: GWS Group, 2005), <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/uk-cont-mdg-report.pdf>.

² Geoff Edmonds and Bjorn Johannessen, *Building Local Government Capacity for Rural Infrastructure Works* (Bangkok, International Labour Office: International Labour Organization, 2003), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/group/s/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/genericdocument/wcms_104894.pdf.

³"Millennium Cities Initiative," Earth Institute | Columbia University, 2014, <http://mci.ei.columbia.edu/>.

⁴"Flexible Working," Government Website, GOV.UK, accessed July 2, 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working>.

⁵Anna Danziger and Shelley Waters Boots, "Memo on the Impact of the United Kingdom's Flexible Working Act," *Georgetown University Law Center*, April 2008, 7.