

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

01. The Post-2015 Development Agenda

In 2001, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were created as a set of common development goals for the international community. The MDGs were established with the aim of achieving eight specific goals centered on poverty reduction by 2015. Japan too has actively contributed to the achievement of the goals through the use of ODA and other aid.

Thanks to the efforts of the international community towards their achievement, decent success has already been seen in certain fields. For instance, the proportion of those living in extreme poverty on less than \$1.25 a day, was halved between 1990 and 2010. Yet, on the other hand, behind this growth has been an increase in internal disparity in each country, with some being left behind by their country's growth.

With the deadline for the achievement of the MDGs fast approaching, many are now questioning what should be done about international development goals after 2015 (an issue known as the post-2015 development agenda). In drawing up the post-2015 development agenda, there is a need to enable all people

to enjoy growth, including women, children, youth, people with disabilities, and those suffering in conflict regions. There is also a need to facilitate inclusive growth that will spread the benefits of development far and wide. Key to all of this is the concept of "human security" (See page 5), which focuses on the different situations of each individual, offers freedom from fear and want, and enables people to develop their full potential.

A variety of issues must be addressed in order to realize inclusive growth under the concept of human security. For instance, there is a need to mainstream disaster risk reduction such that the results of development are not lost or washed away by natural disasters directly affecting the poor. In addition, the realization of universal health coverage (UHC), which aims to offer fundamental health and medical services to all people, including the vulnerable, can make a major contribution not only to improved health among the populace, but also to economic growth. Moreover, the employment opportunities that accompany growth are indispensable for enabling people to earn the money they need to make a living and thereby escape poverty.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)



Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Halve the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day.
- Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.



Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.



Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education.



Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate.



Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.



Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

- Have halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.



Ensure environmental sustainability

- Halve the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.



Develop a global partnership for development

- In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

The MDGs are shared goals in the international community, which should be achieved by 2015. The eight aforementioned goals break down into 21 more concrete targets that are measured by 60 indicators. The deadline for achievement of the MDGs is 2015, with 1990 set as the benchmark year.

Improved items

- The halving of extreme poverty has been achieved in the world as a whole.
- It is expected that the halving of the proportion of people who suffer from hunger will be achieved.
- Total number of out-of-school children has been reduced.
- The number of deaths from malaria and tuberculosis has been greatly reduced.
- The halving of the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water has been achieved.

Remaining issues

- Domestic disparities remain in terms of gender, income, and regions.
- Achievement of the goal of reducing the under-five mortality rate remains far off.
- There has been a delay in the reduction of the maternal mortality rate.
- Access to improved sanitary facilities is still insufficient. etc.

Further efforts by the international community are needed.

* The eight MDG logos were designed by NPO Global Call to Action against Poverty.

Much debate on the post-2015 development agenda has already taken place at a number of venues, including at the High-Level Panel set up by United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in July 2012 and at the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* established in March 2013 towards 2015. Intensive debate shall continue mainly in the UN to formulate a new development framework. As a part of that debate, the General Assembly of the UN that began in September 2013 took on the theme of “the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage” and discussed the MDGs and a framework for their succession. That Assembly was attended by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida, who both made remarks on taking up human security as the guiding principle for the post-2015 development agenda, aiming towards an eradication of extreme poverty through growth and job creation, and prioritizing the mainstreaming of UHC and disaster risk reduction in particular. Furthermore, Japan hosted a side event with the aim to disseminate the usefulness of human security and UHC. Japan will accelerate ongoing initiatives towards the achievement of the MGDs while continuing to actively contribute to the discussion on the setting of the post-2015 development agenda.

02. The Importance of Employment for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Employment is one of the fields prioritized by Japan in its thinking about the post-2015 development agenda. Up until now, the field of development has focused on the transfer of wealth from developed to developing countries. However, in order to eradicate poverty, there is a need to sufficiently shine a spotlight on growth and employment, the sources from which such wealth springs.

Based on this understanding of the issue at hand, in May 2012 Japan hosted the UN-led consultation in Tokyo on the post-2015 development agenda under the theme of growth and employment. In addition, the importance of the jobs created along with economic growth was pointed out within a report issued by the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (May 2013) as well as a report issued by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the issue (August 2013).

Meanwhile, Japan too is in the process of advancing employment regulation reform in order to further energize its own young people and turn employment into a driving force for growth. As such, in the midst of growing global interest in employment, Japan has much to contribute to the world. The utilization of Japan’s experiences up to this point and the enhancement of collaborations with the many actors working on resolving employment issues – including international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and non-profit organizations (NPOs) – are expected to strengthen the



Roads are being revitalized thanks to work by locals trained in *Do-nou* technology (Photo: Community Road Empowerment (CORE))

foundations for employment in each country and further enhance the effectiveness of employment promotion measures.

03. An Example of Japan’s International Contributions: A Youth Employment Project in Kenya

One specific example of a project in which Japan has collaborated with an international organization for sustainable youth employment in a developing country is the “Youth Employment for Sustainable Development” project started in Kenya in 2012 by Japan and the International Labour Organization (ILO). This project has provided training to 2,500 young people on labor-intensive farm road maintenance techniques using Cobblestone and *Do-nou* (sandbags) technology. In addition to creating infrastructure such as roads and bus stops, the project aimed to create jobs by having the trained youth set up small-scale enterprises upon completion of the training. The Japanese NPO Community Road Empowerment (CORE) participated as a partner in this project.

Construction of the roads can be performed by farmers by hand, and so maintenance and repair are easy. Among the young people who received this ILO/NPO-sponsored training are those who have continued to actively work to improve their professional skills by participating in the projects of other construction firms after the establishment of their companies and learning about road construction methods other than the *Do-nou* method.

By refining their construction skills, the young people are resolving the problems faced by their own regions and escaping from poverty. They are proving themselves useful for efforts to ensure regional peace and stability, and promote sustainable development. Japan will continue to work for effective international cooperation through collaboration with international organizations and NGOs.

(* See Glossary on page 78)