



# Report on the Progress and Prospects for the Attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Southern Africa

by The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Summary by Abdallah Katunzi

This report assesses the progress and prospects for the attainment of MDGs in Southern Africa eleven countries. It tracks progress since 2002, and provides an overview of the progress made from the 1990.

Under MDG 1, generally, the report indicates that for most of the Southern African countries, the targets of halving the proportion of the population below the US\$1 per day and reducing hunger seem unachievable. This is caused by increased level of poverty in the sub region, food insecurity, child malnutrition and HIV and AIDS pandemic. The report excludes Mauritius as the only country with the possibility of halving the proportion of the population below the US\$1 per day as it has no poverty problem. The poverty situations in other countries like Zambia and Zimbabwe are worsening, while poverty levels in Malawi, Mozambique and Namibia are relatively high.

Under MDG 2, the report notes that "the sub region is making great strides in primary education and the 2015 MDG target is likely to be achieved in most countries." Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mauritius have made the most progress and have almost achieved universal primary education with net enrolment ratios (NERs) of 97, 95 and 95 percent respectively. Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa, have very high primary school enrolment ratios of above 80 per cent. Literacy rates for the 15-24 year olds are very high in the sub region, with Zimbabwe topping the list at 99 per cent in 2004. Data show that the literacy progress in all countries is achievable by 2015, except for Zambia.

On MDG 3, report notes that gender parity in primary and secondary education has been reached or is likely to be achieved in most Southern African countries. However, there is a lot of gender imbalance in tertiary education in the sub region with five countries having a bias against girls, three countries a bias against boys and one country having achieved the target. Generally, overall gender parity in tertiary education may not be achievable in the sub region by 2015. The share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector remains very low in the sub region, and it's unlikely that the overall target of 50 percent will be achieved in most countries. The report also indicates that there are more women in parliaments in the sub region than ever before. However, in most countries women remain vastly under-represented in politics.

On MDG 4, the report shows that the under-five and infant mortality rates remain high in Southern Africa with most countries experiencing increases. Therefore, most countries in the sub region will not be able to achieve the set targets by 2015.



Under MDG 5, the report shows that the number of maternal mortality remains high and is falling at a painfully slow rate in most countries. Therefore, the target of reducing by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio will not be met by most countries in the sub-region. The most recent increasing trend is attributed to the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the sub region.

On MDG 6, the report states that the "sub region remains the epicentre of HIV and AIDS with HIV prevalence still in the double digit and on the increase in most countries in the sub region." With this in mind, the report concludes that the target of halting and reversing the spread of HIV and AIDS by 2015 is unlikely to be met by most countries in the sub region. Likewise, the trend is not impressive with tuberculosis. Data show that deaths associated with tuberculosis have drastically increased in most countries in the sub region in the past decade since 1990 and the trend continued in the recent past since 2002. Given the current context of high HIV prevalence as indicated in this goal above, the report concludes that 2015 target of halting and reversing the incidence of tuberculosis will not be met in the sub region.

Under MDG 7, deforestation is on the increase in the sub region, with most countries experiencing a diminution in land area covered by forest. The proportion of land area maintained to protect biological diversity is slightly on the increase in the sub region, with most countries maintaining stable proportions and the rest slightly increasing. However, given the high rate of deforestation in the sub region, the 2015 targets of reversing the loss of environmental resources are unlikely to be achieved. On access to improved water source, most countries have achieved or are likely to achieve the 2015 targets of sustainable access to safe drinking water in urban areas than in rural areas.

On MDG 8, the report notes Official Development Assistance (ODA) to landlocked countries in Southern Africa is declining with most countries experiencing this decline between 1990 and 2004. On one hand, Malawi and Zambia remain favourite destinations for ODA while Botswana and Zimbabwe are the least favoured destination. Generally, ODA to the Southern Africa sub region is declining. On debt issue, the report notes "there is still a high debt burden in the sub region with about half of the countries experiencing high double-digit debt service ratios and these include Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe."

**Source:** [http://www.uneca.org/sa/publications/SRO\\_SA\\_MDG\\_Progress\\_rev.pdf](http://www.uneca.org/sa/publications/SRO_SA_MDG_Progress_rev.pdf)

**About the Author:** ECA was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN) in 1958 as one of the UN's five regional commissions. ECA's mandate is to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development.