

**Social Statistics for Reports on Human
Development and Millennium Development Goals:
Challenges and Constraints**

Dr. K. Seeta Prabhu
Head, Human Development Resource Centre
UNDP, New Delhi

Concluding Workshop
RETA 6007: Enhancing Social and Gender Statistics
24-27 June 2003
Bangkok, Thailand

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K. Seeta Prabhu*

1. Introduction

Social statistics have assumed considerable importance during the last decade as current debates sought to grapple with the multi dimensional phenomenon of development. The disillusionment with per capita Gross National Product as the sole measure of progress and the emergence of newer concepts such as quality of life and human development led to a search for more meaningful indicators to track progress of countries.

The publication of annual Human Development Reports (HDRs) since 1990 has contributed to the spread of the human development paradigm across countries. Following the publication of the first Global HDR in 1990, countries have prepared their respective National HDRs (NHDRs), starting with Bangladesh in 1992. Over 400 NHDRs have been published by about 135 countries across the globe¹. These reports are complemented by regional reports with the Pacific Regional HDR being the first such report produced in 1994. Countries in the Asia-Pacific region have prepared around 50 Human Development Reports, including regional and national reports, addressing not only conventional issues such as poverty, education and health but also emerging issues of governance and environment (Annexure 1). These HDRs have been recognised as effective tools for action by different stakeholders including governments, civil society organizations, media as well as by donors in their joint effort towards furthering human development. In addition to the NHDRs, there has been a series of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) that have been initiated by the World Bank as part of its efforts to advocate for policies to reduce poverty in developing countries. These have focused attention on income poverty related indicators across countries.

Another significant development was the Millennium Summit held in New York in September 2000, in which 189 UN Member States adopted the Millennium Declaration, consisting of various goals and targets widely known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs consist of eight goals that are to be achieved by the year 2015. These goals are divided into 18 targets with 48 indicators that need to be tracked to monitor progress towards these goals (Annexure 2). Many of the MDGs are similar to the goals declared under the International Development Goals (IDGs) derived from agreements and resolutions of the world conferences organised by the United Nations in the 1990s (Annexure 3)². However, the MDGs go far beyond the mandate given by the

* Head, Human Development Resource Centre, UNDP, New Delhi. The opinions expressed in this paper are that of the author and do not reflect the official position of the organisation with which she is associated. The author thanks Kalpana Choudhary and Meenakshi Kathel for research assistance.

¹ Please visit www.undp.org/hdro for further details.

² For example, in the case of child mortality and maternal mortality, the goals are similar as both the IDGs and MDGs refer to a reduction by three –fourths in current levels of maternal mortality and reducing by two-thirds the child mortality rates over the respective time horizons adopted.

International Development Goals³. Three features of the MDGs make them particularly distinct from the IDGs.

- The first is that the coverage of the MDGs is much wider than the IDGs. The MDGs incorporate newer goals in terms of reduction in hunger, ensuring safe drinking water, reversing HIV/AIDS and other major diseases, improving the lives of slum dwellers, environment and governance.
- Secondly, even when the goals seem similar, the MDGs go far beyond what the IDGs have specified. For example, in the case of primary enrolment, the IDGs refer to enrolling of all children in primary school and progress towards gender equality and empowering women by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 as two goals. The MDGs, on the other hand, refer to primary schooling but with a more ambitious goal of ensuring that 'children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education'.
- Thirdly, MDGs enjoy universal political support forging a new spirit of commitment and greater global partnership including enhanced donor coordination towards common development objectives, a feature that is missing from the IDGs.

Since the adoption of the MDGs in 2000, more than 20 countries have published their MDG reports including five from the Asia-Pacific (Bhutan-2002, Cambodia-2001, Nepal-2002, Philippines-2003 and Vietnam-2001). The purpose of Millennium Development Goals Reports (MDGRs) is to help countries raise public awareness, trigger debate around development challenges, emphasise qualitative analysis-from gathering of data to monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, forge stronger alliances, renew political commitment and help poor countries and donors create trusted partnerships that will facilitate human development. Each report attempts to track progress of countries towards the identified goals and targets.

2. National Human Development Reports (NHDRs) and Millennium Development Goals Reports (MDGRs) - *Similar yet Distinct*

NHDRs and MDGRs have similar objectives. Both reports assess the state of human development in a country, create a policy environment for achieving human development goals and contribute to national debates on policy frameworks for human development. Yet the approach that is adopted towards these objectives is rather distinct.

- The first point of difference between the NHDRs and the MDGRs is that while the NHDRs differ in their coverage of issues from country to country and also from year to year within a country, the MDGRs are designed to cover a uniform set of goals and targets over a period of time in each country. The NHDRs focus on broad issues pertinent to the country's human development, ranging from general human development aspects such as health and education to more specific issues such as governance, people's participation, environment, human

³ United Nations Development Group, 2001

security, human rights, information and communication technologies etc which are of special concern to the country. By looking at these broad issues, the NHDRs assess the status and problems related to these and provide policy guidelines to tackle them. The MDGRs, on the other hand, focus more on a common list of targets and goals (as given in Annexure 2) and assess the distance the country has to traverse to achieve the universally acknowledged human development goals and targets within a specific time period.

- The NHDRs address in greater depth, issues that are specific to the country and to its regions. The NHDRs enjoy a high degree of flexibility in format and may handle issues more intensively since they are largely independent reports not subject to specific comparisons with other reports. The structure for the MDG Report has been clearly set by the United Nations Development Group in its guidance note (also mentioned in section 3) on “Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals at the Country Level”. The guidance note goes to the extent of specifically stating, “ The MDGR is primarily an advocacy tool that describes progress towards the MDGs. It is not an in-depth analytical review of policy reform, institutional change and resource allocations.” It further adds, “ The format will be short and sharp, concise and light, and will avoid wordy and complex text”.
- The NHDRs are most often prepared in a participatory manner involving various stakeholders such as national governments and civil society. Through such a process, NHDRs often are used to stimulate debate on the long-term national development strategies, more particularly on exploring alternative approaches to the achievement of national goals. The MDGRs, on the other hand are mainly prepared by the national governments with support from UNDP.
- The NHDRs most often present disaggregated data by region, ethnic groups and gender at a particular point in time. The MDGRs focus more on trends since 1990 and though they are supposed to present data at the disaggregated level, the lack of requisite data has acted as a constraint in such reporting. Though the NHDRs can also discuss trends over time, there is no specific guideline to do so. The MDGRs on the other hand, by design are expected to provide the trend with the year 1990 being the baseline year, which facilitates comparisons not only across time but also across countries and regions.
- The MDGRs are required to identify resource requirements, a feature that the NHDRs may not necessarily address. Each country producing an MDGR, as per the MDGR Guidance Note, is expected to use the Report to estimate the amount of resource requirements for attaining the MDGs. Such an exercise is crucial to assess the resource commitments required from both national and international agencies to achieve the Goals. Most of the MDGRs however are not able to provide such specific estimates. What they do attempt however is a section titled, ‘Priorities for Development Assistance’, where they point out the specific areas which would require future financial and technical assistance. The Philippine MDGR 2003 however has gone a step ahead and pointed out a list of fiscal reforms that will be taken up to generate finances to meet the MDGs by 2015. For example: it says that

- For 2002-2006, revenue effort is targeted to increase from 13.08 per cent of GNP in 2002 to 14.6 per cent in 2006 through certain legislative and administrative measures
- Savings will be generated by budgetary reform initiatives and more cost effective modes of delivering basic services. For example the government recently initiated a competitive procurement system of government supplies, which generated savings.

Apart from these measures being mentioned within the MDGR, Philippines has also prepared a country study, 'Meeting the MDGs' which identifies sector-wise resources available and the resource gap at the national level to meet the MDGs (Box 1).

Box 1: Resource Gaps for Meeting MDGs								
The study 'Philippines Country Study on Meeting the MDGs' has identified the resource requirement and resource gaps in sectors such as basic education and water supply/sanitation based on certain assumptions. Two examples of resource gaps identified are reproduced below:								
Resources available and Resource Gap in Basic Education (in million Pesos)								
Year	Available Resources w/MTPDP	Available Resources -Unchanged Regime	Resources Requirement w/MTPDP	Resource Requirement -Unchanged Regime	Gap w/MTPDP	Gap -Unchanged Regime		
2002-2015	3,310,393	2,444,010	2,633,476	2,696,107	(676,917)	252,097		
Resource requirement for Low-cost Water Supply/Sanitation (in million Pesos)								
Year	with MTPDP				Unchanged regime			
	Water Supply	Sanitary Toilets	Total	% to GNP	Water Supply	Sanitary Toilets	Total	% to GNP
2002-2015	17,635	12,315	29,950	0.02	22,165	14,391	36,557	0.03
MTPDP: Mid Term Philippine Development Plan for 2001-2004 Source: <i>Philippines Country Study on Meeting Millennium Development Goals, March 2002</i>								

In addition to such attempts at the national level, the World Bank in its working paper, 'Goals for Development: History, Prospects and Costs' has estimated the costs of attaining the income poverty goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015 to be in the range of US \$ 54-64 billion. The total costs of achieving the social goals are- education between \$10-30 billion, health between \$20-25 billion and environment in the range \$5-21 billion. This study however has also reiterated the view that that the most relevant and useful costing of additional foreign assistance must be done at the country level.

Both the NHDRs and the MDGRs are neither completely similar to each other nor are they completely distinct from each other. In fact they are mutually supportive.⁴ They are

⁴ Burd-Sharps and Jahan, 2002

qualitatively different reports but address similar issues, draw on similar data and are based on the common principles of national ownership and widespread dissemination

3. Indicators and Indices

The concept of human development is broad in its sweep, emphasising entitlements, choices and freedoms. However, the measurement of human development through the **Human Development Index (HDI)** is confined to the measurable dimensions. The HDI measures average achievements in three basic dimensions of human development- a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. Since the inception of the HDI, a number of indices have been developed at the global level. Some important indices are the **Gender Development Index (GDI)** and the **Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)** in 1995 and the **Human Poverty Index (HPI)** in 1997. While the GDI measures achievements reflecting the *inequalities* between men and women, the GEM focuses on women's *opportunities*. The HPI attempts to capture *deprivations* in the dimensions of education, health and nutrition. The indicators used for the computation of these indices are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Human Development Indices and Indicators

Indices	Indicators			
HDI	Life expectancy at birth	Adult literacy rate	Gross enrolment ratio	GDP per capita (PPP US\$)
HPI-1*	Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40	Adult illiteracy rate	Percentage of population not using improved water sources	Percentage of children under 5 who are underweight
HPI-2*	Probability at birth of not surviving to age 60	Percentage of adults lacking functional literacy skills	Percentage of people living below the poverty line	Long-term unemployment rate
GDI	Female and male life expectancy at birth	Female and male adult literacy rate	Female and male gross enrolment ratio	Female and male estimated earned income
GEM	Female and male shares of parliamentary seats	Female and male shares of positions as legislators, senior officials and managers	Female and male shares of professional and technical positions	Female and male estimated earned income

*HPI-1 is used for Developing countries while HPI-2 is used for OECD, Central & Eastern Europe & CIS
Source: Global HDR, 2002

NHDRs have disaggregated the HDI according to different sub-regions. For example, the Nepal NHDR 2001 disaggregated HDI by rural-urban areas, three ecological belts, four development regions and fifteen eco-development regions. The India NHDR disaggregated data on HDI across 24 States and 7 Union Territories. In addition, several sub-national HDRs in various stages of preparation in India use data disaggregated at

the district level⁵. Such efforts are imperative in the light the of growing importance of decentralisation and local planning.

In addition, to the HDI, NHDRs have tried to introduce some innovations in view of country specific conditions in the calculation of the HDI. For example, the **Philippine HDR** has introduced **HDI-1 and HDI-2** in its NHDR. HDI-1 is used for inter provincial comparisons and HDI-2 for comparing provinces with other countries. While HDI-1 and 2 have the same three dimensions of educational attainment, health attainment and per capita income as indicators, for the purpose of inter-provincial comparisons in HDI-1, the per capita income figures are first deflated to 1997 prices using the National Statistical Office's regional consumer price indices to make them consistent over time, and then adjusted further using the provincial cost of living indices to make them consistent over space. To compute income index-2, the unadjusted per capita income figures are first converted to US currency using the exchange rate for the year. This is then converted to purchasing power parity US\$ using the exchange rate implicit in the 2001 HDR. The Income index-2 is based on a scale defined by the minimum income of PPP US\$ 100 and PPP US\$ 40,000. Thus, the methodology for HDI-2 is the same as the one used in the global HDR whereas HDI-1 is more appropriate for local use.

Some of the indices developed such as the **Health Risk Index** by China in its NHDR 2002 and the **Index of Human Deprivation** by Thailand in its NHDR in 1999 and indicators used therein have been listed out in Annexure 4. The Health Risk Index of China used environment related indicators such as exposure to polluted air and water. Some of the indicators used were total percentage of urban water samples exceeding standard, population living in cities exceeding the WHO air quality guidelines and residential coal consumption per family. Since many of these indicators were being used for the first time in a NHDR, special efforts were required to compile the required data at the disaggregated level.

Similarly, the South Asia HDR composed a new index called the **Humane Governance Index**. This index attempted to measure governance related indicators such as the level of corruption, law and order and freedom of expression. Governance indicators comprised economic, political and civic governance and included indicators such as bureaucracy quality, ethnic tension, (political governance), freedom of expression, non-discrimination, rule of law (civic governance), indicators that are difficult to measure objectively. The data was gathered through a special governance survey that was conducted across the countries. However, given the constraints of time and financial resources, the sample size in each country was only around 500, which cannot be considered adequate for drawing any systematic inferences. However, the survey does provide a glimpse of the perceptions of people regarding various aspects of governance.

Each HDR also supplements the HDI with a comprehensive list of other indicators on human development. These new indices and the need for their disaggregation at sub-regional levels have further added to the ever increasing demands from the national statistical systems.

⁵ There are about 31 sub-national HDRs in various stages of preparation in India. All of them provide data at the district level. For example, the HDRs for Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh have reported data at the district level. An important feature of these Reports is that they are owned by provincial governments and are actively used as tools for planning. See Human Development Resource Centre's website (<http://hdrc.undp.org.in>) for full reports and details.

The indicators in the MDGs are somewhat similar to the ones used in NHDRs (refer Table 1 and Annexure 2 for comparison). However, the requirement of data for the MDGRs is much larger—not only are the dimensions covered in the MDGR more than in any single HDR, for each dimension also the indicators covered are more comprehensive. The NHDRs focus on a few outcome/deprivation indicators concerning education, health and standard of living, empowerment and political participation in their indices whereas the MDGRs cover mainly process indicators on eight dimensions.

For example, while both the NHDRs and the MDGRs use data on prevalence of undernutrition among children, which is an indicator in HPI-I in the NHDR and an indicator in 'Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty' dimension in the MDGR, the MDGR requires additional data on the indicator proportion of population below a minimum level of dietary energy consumption as well. Similarly, in the case of education, the HDRs use the literacy rate and combined primary, secondary enrolment ratio as indicators in the HDI and illiteracy rate in the HPI whereas the MDGRs require more specific process data in terms of net enrolment ratio in primary schooling, and proportion of pupils starting in Grade 1 who reach grade V, and literacy rate of 15-24 year olds. Several of the indicators used in the MDGRs are also reported in many NHDRs as additional indicators, although there is no specific requirement for them to do so.

However, the uniqueness of the MDGR lies in the fact that it traces a particular indicator across different points of time. To assess progress on various targets, it is important that the data, preferably from national sources, be available for years ranging from 1990 to the latest year. In addition, each MDGR should also provide an assessment of the capacity of the country to monitor progress on MDGs, a requirement that is not insisted upon in the HDRs. An example of the way in which the capacity is assessed in the MDGRs is provided in the Table 2.

Table 2: Eradicating Extreme Poverty: Monitoring and Evaluation Environment for Nepal

Elements of Monitoring Environment	Assessment		
Data-gathering capacities	Strong	Fair	<i>Weak</i>
Quality of recent survey information	<i>Strong</i>	Fair	Weak
Statistical tracking capacities	Strong	Fair	<i>Weak</i>
Statistical analysis capacities	Strong	<i>Fair</i>	Weak
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning and resource allocation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	<i>Weak</i>
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	<i>Weak</i>

Note: The italics show the monitoring assessment for Nepal
Source: Nepal MDGR, 2002

4. Data Sources for Social Statistics

The increased emphasis on overall human development rather than only economic well-being has increased the demands for data from the National Statistical Systems. Not only is there a demand for more frequent and more disaggregated data but also for a much wider set of indicators such as energy, environment, and dissemination of technology. The NSOs have a number of sources through which they try to meet these demands. The sources of data are particularly diverse for social statistics as compared to economic and financial statistics.

a) Census

The Census is considered one of the most reliable and comprehensive sources of socio-economic status. However, in many developing countries, it is not carried out on a regular basis due to prevailing social or political conditions. For example, Cambodia missed out on a census or survey for over 30 years. The first Cambodian population census since 1962 was conducted in 1998.⁶

Census data may be of limited use for monitoring the MDGs as they are generally conducted once in ten years, whereas the MDGs need to be monitored annually. Moreover, there is considerable delay in processing of census data once it is collected.

⁶ Hang Lina, 2002

For example, in the case of Vietnam NHDR 2001, only 3 % sample of the data for 1999 Population and Housing Census was used due to non-availability of the complete data when the report was prepared.

b) Surveys

Sample surveys are the most frequently used sources of information, specifically for human development data, since as compared to the Census, they are relatively more cost effective. In many instances where data on a range of new indicators is not available, small surveys have been conducted to arrive at data on some of the indicators. However, the results of the survey depend heavily on the sampling techniques used, size of the sample and the extent of bias on the part of those conducting the survey and the responses of those surveyed⁷. In specific cases such as HIV/AIDS, the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV may lead to poor reporting.

c) Civil Registration System (CRS)

Complete, timely and accurate registration of births and deaths is considered crucial for the understanding of population dynamics at the local level and planning of effective health and development programmes. Civil registration systems that exist in most countries provide vital information necessary for the estimation of mortality rates and life expectancy. If functioning efficiently, civil registration systems can be of immense help in generating human development data at the disaggregated level. It is a pity that civil registration systems in most of the developing countries suffer from inadequate coverage and under reporting. As per the National Statistical Commission's Report, in India, coverage by the civil registration system was only 53 per cent for births and 48 per cent for deaths. The problem of non registration is particularly acute in the rural areas.

d) Administrative Records

Each of the administrative departments in the national governments collects and records data for its own monitoring and reporting purposes. Very often it is this data that is put to use when reporting on human development becomes essential. Programmatic data collected by government functionaries has an in-built bias towards highlighting achievements and is considered unreliable by experts.

What is even more disconcerting is that even as data on a variety of indicators is collected by the programme implementing agencies, they are not accessible to the very people who are the main stakeholders in development planning. In view of the movement on Right to Information in several countries, it is important that the data is disseminated in a user-friendly format to policy makers as well as stakeholders.

e) International Data Sources

It is ironical that often international sources of data are considered more authentic than the concerned national data sources. It is well known that international data is either derived from a national source or estimated on the basis of projection/ extrapolation using data from countries with a similar profile. In recent times, efforts have been made

⁷ For example, female workforce participation rates are considered to be biased downwards in most countries due to the reluctance to report females as 'working' in most patriarchal societies.

to generate international data on a variety of indicators through the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Living Standard Measurement Surveys (LSMS). These surveys have adopted standardised definitions across countries and have helped to generate uniform set of data on key indicators relating to poverty, demography and health.

An issue that arises in the context of international sources is one of ownership of data. International data sources are easily accessible, but since the definitions and methodologies adopted for data collection are geared towards standardisation, they may miss out on the specificities of particular situations in regions and countries. An important issue that arises is their relevance to the people and whether it is accepted by national agencies as depicting people's true conditions and priorities is an aspect that needs to be considered while using them.

f) Data Produced by NGOs and Private Sector

Often data is collected by NGOs and the private sector such as private hospitals and health care systems for their own administrative and monitoring purposes. This data often can be very detailed and disaggregated as per the requirement of the concerned organisation. Despite its utility in specific contexts, its use for general planning and monitoring is limited, as it cannot be used for wider and more diverse sets of population. However, a systematic effort at developing appropriate data formats and insisting on reporting of a minimum set of indicators can contribute to the generation of micro level data on a variety of indicators of interest to human development practitioners.

As observed above, there are a number of sources for human development reporting and each source has its own advantages and limitations. No source is ideal or complete in itself, but complements and supplements the gaps existing in the others. Census exercises are massive and it is not feasible to conduct them at frequent intervals. The time lag between census data can be filled up by scientifically designed and conducted sample surveys. There is a need for integration of data collected by different sources and methods. Moreover, greater efforts need to be made to disseminate the already existing data and to ensure its efficient use.

It is evident that while there exist many sources of data from which the preparation of NHDRs and MDGRs could draw upon, there are several unresolved issues that pose challenges to the ongoing process on human development reporting. Some of the challenges are discussed in the next section.

5. Data Related Challenges and Constraints

The preparation of a large number of reports by national governments and international agencies has brought to the fore a range of issues regarding statistical systems in countries. Some of the features that the new reporting requirements have thrown up are as follows:

- The range of indicators on which data is being sought has widened considerably. Earlier, the National Statistical Systems were to provide data largely on economic and selected social indicators, whereas currently they are increasingly being asked to produce data on a range of people oriented indicators relating not only

to income poverty but also to human poverty, environment, governance and so on. This poses a challenge for the statistical systems.

- There is a rising tendency towards regional and global reporting as compared to the largely national reporting earlier. This is partly due to the realisation of the importance of 'global public goods' as well as efforts to monitor progress on human development related indicators across countries. This calls for harmonisation of definitions and tools for data collection over a wide range of indicators. As has been pointed out, while there has been some attempt at such standardisation with respect to measurement of living standards (through the Living Standards Measurement Survey) and also the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Demographic and Health Surveys), no such attempt has as yet been made with respect to several aspects of human development despite the publication of a large number of such reports since 1990.
- Curiously, the movement towards greater global and regional reporting is going hand in hand with decentralisation of data collection and an increased demand towards the national, and local ownership of data. Global, universal data sets are now not considered enough for monitoring development goals at the national level. Sub-national goals are becoming increasingly important, as are efforts by people to gather information on various aspects that affect their daily lives. Collection of data, ownership of data along with dissemination of data have now acquired a new relevance and importance. The Right to Information movements in several parts of the region have added strength to this trend.
- There is also an increasing tendency towards monitoring of progress on human development related indicators. The reporting time has shrunk from the more common decadal and quinquennial periodicity to 2-3 year timeframe. Since the emphasis is more on monitoring rather than reporting, there has been a corresponding shift to process indicators rather than outcome indicators.
- An important aspect that is often not taken into account is that the profile of data users has changed considerably over the past decade. Whereas traditionally, the users of data were experts in national governments or researchers, the present day users belong to all walks of life-including NGOs, citizen's groups and people's organisations. As the data is now used also for advocacy purposes in addition to analysis and interpretation in research documents, the data is required to be presented in a more user-friendly format that makes it amenable to public debate.
- Ironically, even as the demands from the statistical systems have been multiplying manifold, there has been little prior consultation with the main providers of data, i.e. the national statistical systems. Such consultation is vital even as decisions that are being taken on the type of indicators to be selected or the periodicity on which reporting would be done is determined as it has repercussions on the statistical systems across countries. Suddenly, national statistical systems, neglected over decades, are expected to resurrect themselves without much external assistance, and be transformed into dynamic organisations providing reliable data on a range of not only quantitative indicators but several qualitative indicators, some of which are being subject to some

measurement for the first time. This data is to be provided at more frequent intervals than before and also at more disaggregated levels while ensuring people's participation and ownership. This is indeed a Herculean task that requires a massive capacity building exercise.

In view of these requirements, we now assess the challenges faced by the national statistical systems.

a) Lack of Requisite Data from National Sources

The NHDR and MDGR teams are expected to rely on national data systems. Being faced with an increased demand for social indicators at a time when systematic efforts to build up such data series have not been undertaken in most countries, the NHDRs have relied on existing data from national surveys and administrative records in keeping with the principles of national ownership. However, since the reports, particularly MDGRs, are to be used for comparisons across countries, there is need for uniform definitions. The problem is particularly acute in the case of data related to poverty as the levels of poverty reported on the basis of national poverty lines often vary considerably from that arrived at on the basis of international poverty line of \$ 1 a day. A crucial constraint is that even where data is reported using the national poverty line, due to frequent changes in methodology, data from one survey are not strictly comparable to earlier surveys. As a result of this changing methodology, it becomes difficult to construct a series of data on poverty related indicators that are required for monitoring the trend in the MDGR. Under such circumstances, the reports tend to rely on international data for tracking progress. For example, the Nepal MDGR for 2002 uses World Bank data pertaining to percentage population below \$ 1 per day (PPP values) to track progress of the country on reducing poverty. Similarly, data on share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (indicator 11) is available only for 69 countries. Reliable data on proportion of pupils who start grade 1 and reach grade 5 (indicator 7) is limited to only about 40 per cent of the countries. Even where the data is available, it is not consistently available for the same countries across time.⁸

The problem is also serious with respect to gender-disaggregated data, a fact noted as early as 1990 in the first Global HDR, which stated, 'The low value attached to women's work requires fundamental remedy: if women's work were more fully accounted for, it would become clear how much women count in development. To do that requires much better gender-specific data on development. There is a need to redesign national censuses, particularly agricultural surveys.'(UNDP, 1990, Box 2.3,p.32)

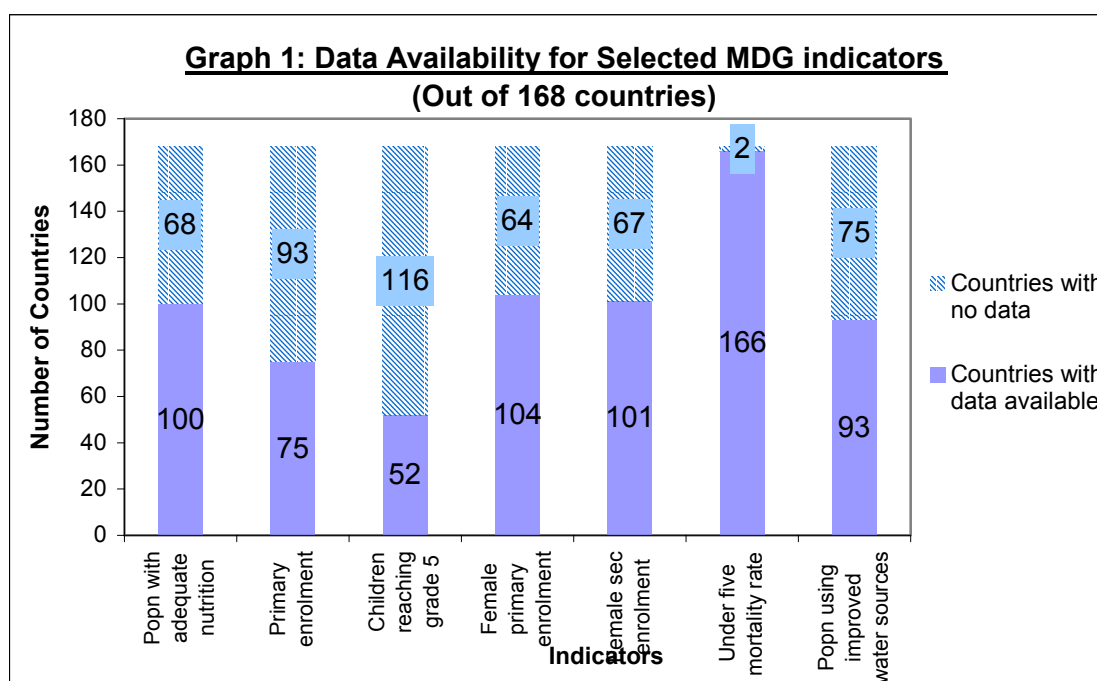
In many instances, the constraint posed by non-availability of data is sought to be resolved by undertaking special surveys for collecting specific information. In the case of Indonesia, special surveys have been undertaken with limited sample size to obtain information of key human development indicators⁹. These being generally sub-national data, there has not been any serious attempt to build up a series of data for the region or to integrate national data into the global series. The absence of a systematic effort to build up a series of data on socio-economic indicators across countries even as several reports on human development are being formulated implies that a unique opportunity to

⁸ UN MDGs Data and Trends, 2002, Report of the Inter-agency Expert Group on MDG Indicators

⁹ In the preparation of the Indonesian NHDR, the data for social welfare indicators were derived from small sample surveys disaggregated for gender and urban-rural locations. The survey conducted by BPS had a sample size of only 10,000 households spread over all the provinces in the country.

forge links across data systems of countries is being missed. Indeed, it is surprising that while there has been a consensus in definitions used and methodologies adopted to collect data on issues such as Living Standards Measurement or Demographic and Health surveys, similar efforts have not been undertaken to address the requirement of other human development indicators.

The country paper presented by Indonesia at the Regional Seminar on Statistics for NHDRs at Chiba, Japan, indicated that the National Statistical System in Indonesia could provide data only on only about 32 out of the 48 indicators on which data was required. The Global HDR 2002 attempted to track achievements of countries on the MDG indicators though the analysis was limited due to the non-availability of data for a large number of countries. (See Graph 1)



Source: Global HDR, 2002

It is quite disconcerting to note that as many as 116 countries had indicated that they did not have data on children reaching grade 5 and 93 countries had no data on children with primary enrolment. As has been commented upon by Loup et al (2000), it is difficult to believe that there exist no data on enrolment in a large number of countries. What is more likely is that there is an ineffective process of data collection and countries may not be aware of the full range of data that is already being collected by various agencies within the country. 'Statisticians carrying an in-depth effort to collect existing data in poor countries are frequently surprised by the 'discovery' of data whose existence is hardly known' (Loup et al, 2000, p. 12) Such a situation does not augur well for continued monitoring of indicators over a period of time.

b) Inaccurate and Unreliable Data

Even where data is available, the accuracy and reliability of the data is questionable. Information on similar indicators collected by different agencies yields different data. The main reason behind this is the use of a variety of methods for collecting data and variations in definitions adopted for similar data elements. Often it is also observed that the data for inter-censal years is obtained by projections, which are always liable to errors as the actual rate of growth of an indicator might vary from the assumed rate used for projection.

One example that brings this out starkly is the case of Fiji. The 1998 Global HDR placed Fiji at rank 44 among 174 countries, with the HDI value of 0.896, it being the only Pacific Island country reporting high human development status. On the other hand the Pacific Regional HDR 1999 recalculated the HDI leading to a value of 0.667 and thereby decreasing the rank to 102. The reason for this discrepancy was the use of different data in the two reports. In the Global HDR, life expectancy, one of the main indicators used for calculating HDI, was calculated using projections based on the 1986 census figure. It was assumed that life expectancy would steadily improve over the years and therefore, these projected life expectancy figures significantly contributed to obtaining a high HDI value. The Pacific HDR however used the 1996 census figures, which revealed that progress in life expectancy was much lower than assumed. Another indicator, per capita GDP was also calculated differently for the two reports. While the global report used an adjusted real GDP per capita (US \$ 6,016), the Pacific HDR used GDP per capita (US \$ 2,684) leading to a sharp fall in Fiji's HDI ranking. Similarly, other Pacific countries also reported a decline in HDI ranking: Samoa going down from 94 to 118, Solomon Islands from 123 to 148, Vanuatu from 124 to 140, and Papua New Guinea from 129 to 164. Box 1 also illustrates how in the case of Vietnam, the procedure of collecting information and the source from which it is collected can make considerable difference to the quality of data obtained.

Box 2: Collecting Poverty Related Data in Vietnam

The poverty data for the Vietnam NHDR (VNNHDR) 2001 was collected from the Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs (MOLISA). This data however has some problems. *First*, MOLISA collects income data by the method that households report their income by themselves and then the income data is adjusted if necessary by local authorities. The income data thus collected would be underreported. In addition, it is possible that households lower their income intentionally in the hope of receiving support from the National Programme for Poverty Alleviation. *Second*, the adjustment of household income made by local authorities could be subjective and qualitative being based on comparison between local communities which makes what is meant to be an absolute measure, more a relative measure. *Third*, the poverty line of MOLISA is of the same monetary value over the five-year period so it does not take into account the inflation during the period; thus it tends to underestimate poverty. *Four*, the national poverty line of MOLISA was used in all except 11 provinces in which "localised" poverty lines were used. Thus, poverty data from MOLISA used in the VNHDR 2001 are inconsistent between provinces because they are calculated based on both national poverty line and the localised poverty lines.

Source: Tien, Nguyen Van, 2002

Often, the nature of data collection does not make adequate provision for reporting and recording errors. Such errors are most common when data on income is sought from households during a survey conducted at any given point in time. Apart from recall errors, the respondents may have a vested interest in underreporting income, in the hope that lower levels of reported income could enable the household to gain access to some of the benefits that could be given by the government to households below the poverty line.

c) Non Comparability of Data over Time and Space

The biggest challenge in producing a MDGR is the non-comparability of data across time. The problem is particularly acute with respect to estimates relating to poverty, which are often not comparable due to differences in definitions used. Even within a country, a definition can vary across time and sources (See Box 2). This is often due to the keenness to refine definitions and include newer dimensions that become relevant over time¹⁰. Though improvements in definitions need to be encouraged, it would be desirable to have simultaneously estimates according to previously used concepts to allow for comparison across time.

Box 3: Definitional Differences across Time and Sources

In Nepal, a number of surveys have been conducted since 1970s to monitor poverty levels. However, each survey has adopted different definitions of poverty line. The 1976/77 household survey based calculations on minimum caloric requirement of 2250 calories; the 1991 Nepal Rural Credit Survey identified a poverty line without reference to caloric requirements; while the 1996/97 Nepal Living Standards Survey used yet another methodology. Each survey thus identified a poverty line, and reported proportion of people below that particular poverty line. In the absence of standardised definitions and sampling procedures, comparisons of poverty across time are constantly debated.

Source: Nepal HDR, 2001

Data on the same indicator may not be comparable across countries as the way in which the indicator is defined could differ. This is particularly true for some indicators such as proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (indicator 17), and proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source (indicator 29). These indicators suffer from definitional problems as each country might have its own definition of what constitutes '*skilled*' and '*improved*'. These problems have remained unresolved as attempts to standardise definitions has not yet percolated to all dimensions of human development indicators. The attempts have been confined largely to come of the health indicators that have been included in the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS).

¹⁰ In India, the National Statistical Commission's Report published in 2001 pointed out that the definition of economic activity was expanded in Census 2001 to include certain non-market activities, which while being very relevant in identifying these groups currently, causes problems in comparing data with the previous censuses.

6. Alternatives and Suggestions

The foregoing analysis indicated the way challenges faced by the NSOs. However, in view of the importance of the task entrusted to them, it is imperative that measures be undertaken to strengthen and reorient NSOs to enable them to meet the challenges. Infact, each MDG report highlights the problems faced in monitoring the MDGs and thus provide both a challenge as well as an opportunity to improve the National Statistical Systems. A few pertinent suggestions are listed out in order to ensure that the National Statistical Systems are well equipped to meet increasing demand for a variety of human development indicators on a regular basis.

- **Involvement of NSOs:** There is an urgent need for greater involvement of NSOs in the preparation of NHDRs and MDGRs so that they understand the requirement for human development data and jointly explore ways to ensure the availability of such data. This is crucial to bridge the communication gap existing between the producer and the user of information. Often the list of indicators that are to be monitored is drawn up without much consultation with the NSOs. This needs to be remedied at the earliest and a strong partnership between the NSOs, Planning Departments, and civil society organisations is required if development planning and monitoring are to be meaningful.
- **Timely Dissemination of Existing Data:** Often even the existing data is not utilised adequately. Measures need to be taken to ensure that the data collected is processed and disseminated in a cost effective manner. The opportunities presented by the newer information technologies need to be explored and utilised to the fullest extent possible towards this end.
- **Decentralisation of data collection:** This is an aspect to which insufficient attention has been paid hitherto. With the emergence of global data sets and the homogenisation of developmental agendas, the specificities of individual regions and ethnic groups tend to get ignored. Data collection by local level agencies would help in bringing out the variations at regional levels, which usually get concealed by use of averages at the national and international levels. In the context of human development, it is essential to recognise regional and cultural diversities and due attention be paid to compile data on such characteristics so as to enable the formulation of context specific policies. Decentralised data collection can act as a countervailing force to the emerging globalisation of data.
- **People's participation:** In the context of the above, it is also imperative that data on various developmental dimensions be collected with the full participation of people for whom all development effort is undertaken. Instead of using a top - down approach for information collection at the local level, it is important that people are involved in the process of both qualitative and quantitative data collection. Two examples from India where such a process is being used in two provinces in the country (Chhattisgarh and Kerala) would be useful. In Chhattisgarh, village level reports known as People's Reports (*Jan Rapats*) have been prepared in 18,000 villages with the participation of villagers. These reports are further consolidated at the next administrative tier, the district, which in turn are used to prepare the State HDR. This is being achieved with the help of local level NGOs and facilitators who are trained to collect information (Annexure 5).

The process however time-consuming since the relevant information has to be culled out from a number of village and district reports and when the consolidation is done at the higher levels some information might get lost. Despite these problems encountered in the compilation, the participatory procedure provides authenticity to the report and results in sensitisation of the people involved in the process. A similar exercise is also being undertaken in another State, Kerala where this approach is currently being adopted for a few villages on a pilot basis (Box 4). A similar approach was used in Papua New Guinea HDR, 1998 where the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) technique was used in sixteen villages in seven provinces to identify key issues of concern to the people.

Box 4: Participatory Process of Data Collection
Example from an Indian Province

In India the preparation of HDR at the province level (State of Kerala) is underway using participatory processes of data collection. Currently, it is being carried out on a pilot basis in two blocks (Aryad-Kanjikuzhy) of the State.

An important feature of the HDR in the two blocks is the participatory and inclusive methodology. The data collection on household socio-economic information and health status is being done through the women neighbourhood groups (NHGs). More than 75% of the households are members of the NHGs in which each family is represented by a woman member. Instead of an investigator canvassing schedules by visiting the households, the household schedules are filled by the members of the NHGs during their weekly meetings after collective discussion on each issue. The role of the investigator is primarily that of a facilitator of discussion. In this manner the reliability of information can be ensured and data reflects the concerns of the people at the grassroots level. The heightened public awareness creates a popular base for the policy outcome of the process. This process of data collection also provides qualitative information for the HDR.

Source: HDRC, UNDP, New Delhi

- **Standardise Definitions:** A serious attempt has to be made to standardise definitions and methodologies on a minimum set of indicators selected for regular reporting and monitoring at the sub-national, national and global levels. While some attempts have been made for specific dimensions of human development, a more systematic effort at covering the range of indicators included in the MDGRs is urgently called for.
- **Capacity Building and Training:** The need for capacity building and training can hardly be overemphasised. While the demands on the National Statistical Organisations are increasing and they are to assume additional responsibilities with respect to regular monitoring of a variety of social indicators, many of them not quantitatively measured hitherto, inadequate attention has been paid to their training needs. It is essential for statistical staff to be trained at all levels at regular intervals to bring to their attention the emerging trends as also the rising expectations from them. Particular attention needs to be paid to gender sensitisation as gender disaggregated data continues to be a neglected area in the activities of most NSOs. (Prabhu, 2002)

- **Coordination between Agencies:** Systematic efforts at coordination among different agencies and collaboration between the NSOs and international agencies to harmonise data and concepts need to be made on the lines of the PARIS 21(partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century) initiative in existence since 1999. The main purpose of the initiative is to create partnerships between policy makers, statisticians and users of statistical information at the national and international level. The MDGs and their monitoring procedures provide us with a unique opportunity to work towards strengthened data systems, which are critical for human development planning and policy making.
- **Increased Financial Resources:** It is indeed surprising that despite the enormous attention given to the preparation of various reports, there are no reliable figures available on the extent of resources committed to such exercises either at the level of national governments or by donors. National governments have traditionally not considered generation of statistics a high priority area. Moreover, since the beginning of the 1990s, coinciding curiously with the era when global reporting on human development has risen in importance, fiscal stringency at the level of countries could have in fact reduced the resources available to statistical systems. In view of this the necessary financial resources can only be allocated by a global coalition of national and international agencies. In fact, it is necessary that mechanisms to enable countries report on the MDGs be found expeditiously. To start with, a proportion of all development assistance must be preempted for the collection of data on a range of indicators used for monitoring human development progress and for capacity building of statistical systems. A small percentage, even 5 per cent of all development assistance flowing into a country may contribute to the rejuvenation of national statistical systems and provide the much required information to enable a systematic tracking of progress.

7. Concluding Remarks

This brief overview highlights the emerging trends in national and global reporting on a variety of social indicators and the demands it places on the national and global statistical systems. Even as attempts are being made to adopt more holistic concepts of development, including that of human development, the efforts at monitoring progress across countries and within countries could be stymied by the lack of necessary statistical information. Since most of the efforts at arriving at indicators that are selected for monitoring is being done rather independently, without prior consultation with statistical systems, there is a real danger that progress on a very vital developmental agenda drawn up by countries could be halting as monitoring systems are inadequate. It is in the interest of all concerned that the generation of necessary data at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels is given the attention that is due and any efforts at further extending the requirements of data of various types be put on hold till the issues relating to the current set of data are adequately resolved and the necessary financial and human resources required to fulfill this task be urgently mobilised.

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Annexure 1
Regional and National HDRs in Asia and Pacific Region by Year and Theme

Asia and the Pacific	1996*	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Pacific Region				Creating Opportunities			
South Asia		The Challenge of Human Development	The Education Challenge	The Crisis of Governance	The Gender Question	Globalisation and Human Development	Agriculture and Rural Development
Bangladesh	A pro-poor agenda		Monitoring Human Development		Fighting Human Poverty		Human Security in Bangladesh
Bhutan					Gross National Happiness		
Cambodia		General Human Development Report	Women's Contribution to Development	Village Economy and Development	Children and Employment	Societal Aspects of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Cambodia	
China		Poverty Alleviation and Human Development		Transition and the State			Making Green Development a Choice
East Timor							National HDR - Ukan rasika'an - East Timor - the way ahead
Fiji		General HDR					
Indonesia	General HDR					Towards a New Consensus	
India	General HDR					HDR on Governance and Human	

						Development	
Iran				General Human Development Report			
Laos			General Human Development Report			Advancing Rural Development	
Maldives			Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment			Challenges and Responses to Human Development	
Mongolia		General HDR			Reorienting the State		
Myanmar			General HDR				
Nepal			General HDR			Poverty Reduction and Governance	
Palau				Progressing with the past			
Papua New Guinea			General HDR				
Philippines		Women and Gender in Development			Quality, Access and Relevance in Basic Education		Human Capital, Employment and Well Being
Samoa			A situation analysis of Human Development				
Solomon Islands							National Human Development Report:

							Building a nation
South Korea			General HDR				
Sri Lanka			Regional Dimensions for Human Development				
Thailand				General HDR			
Tuvalu				General HDR			
Vanuatu	Moving on together						
Vietnam			Expanding choices for the rural poor			Doi Moi Process and Human Development	

* For few countries HDRs earlier than 1996 have also been prepared.

For further details please visit www.undp.org/hdro

Sources: Human Development Resource Office website

Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific website (www.undp.org/rbap)

The respective Country Office websites.

Annexure 2
Millennium Development Goals and Indicators

Goals and Targets	Indicators
Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty	
Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	1. Proportion of population below \$1 a day (PPP values) 2. Poverty gap ratio (incidence X depth of poverty) 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	4. Prevalence of underweight children (under five years of age) 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education	
Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education 7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds
Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women	
Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015	9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 10. Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year olds 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality	
Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	13. Under-five mortality rate 14. Infant mortality rate 15. Proportion of 1 year old children immunized against measles
Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health	
Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16. Maternal mortality ratio 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases	
Target 7: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS	18. HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women 19. Contraceptive prevalence rate 20. Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS
Target 8: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria 22. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures

	23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
	24. Proportion of TB cases detected and cured under DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course)
Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability	
Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes to reverse the loss of environmental resources	25. Proportion of land area covered by forest
	26. Land area protected to maintain biological diversity
	27. GDP per unit of energy use (as proxy for energy efficiency)
	28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) [plus two figures of global atmospheric pollution: ozone depletion and the accumulation of global warming gases]
Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water	29. Proportion of people with sustainable access to an improved water source
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	30. Proportion of people with access to improved sanitation
	31. Proportion of people with access to secure tenure [urban/rural disaggregation of several of the above indicators may be relevant for monitoring improvement in the lives of slum dwellers]
Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development*	
Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system	<i>Some of the indicators listed below will be monitored separately for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked countries and small island developing states.</i>
Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally	
Target 13: Addresses the Special Needs of the Least Developed Countries	Official Development Assistance
Includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction	32. Net ODA as percentage of DAC donors' GNI [targets of 0.7% in total and 0.15% for LDCs]
	33. Proportion of ODA to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
	34. Proportion of ODA that is untied
	35. Proportion of ODA for environment in small island developing states
	36. Proportion of ODA for transport sector in land-locked countries

<p>Target 14: Address the Special Needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states</p> <p>(through Barbados Programme and 22nd General Assembly Provisions)</p>	<p>Market Access</p> <p>37. Proportion of exports (by value and excluding arms) admitted free of duties and quotas</p> <p>38. Average tariffs and quotas on agricultural products and textiles and clothing</p> <p>39. Domestic and export agricultural subsidies in OECD countries</p> <p>40. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity</p>
<p>Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term</p>	<p>Debt Sustainability</p> <p>41. Proportion of official bilateral HIPC debt cancelled</p> <p>42. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services</p> <p>43. Proportion of ODA provided as debt relief</p> <p>44. Number of countries reaching HIPC decision and completion points</p>
<p>Target 16: In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth</p>	<p>45. Unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds</p>
<p>Target 17: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries</p>	<p>46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis</p>
<p>Target 18: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications</p>	<p>47. Telephone lines per 1000 people</p> <p>48. Personal computers per 1000 people</p>

* The selection of indicators for Goals 7 and 8 is subject to further refinement

Source: UNDP, MDG website (www.undp.org/mdg)

Annexure 3

Comparison between the International Development Goals (IDGs) and the Millennium Declaration

International Development Goals

- Halving the proportion of those in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015
- Enrol all children in primary school by 2015
- Make progress towards gender equality and empowering women by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005
- Reduce infant and child mortality rates by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015
- Reduce maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015
- Provide access for all who need reproductive health services by 2015
- Implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015

Millennium Declaration

- To halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.
- To ensure that, by the same date, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education.
- By the same date, to have reduced maternal mortality by three quarters, and under-five child mortality by two thirds, of their current rates.
- To have, by then, halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases that afflict humanity.
- To provide special assistance to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS
- By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers as proposed in the "Cities Without Slums" initiative.

Additions and deletions

New goals: hunger; safe water; gender equality for higher education (not just secondary); HIV/AIDS and other major diseases; children orphaned by HIV/AIDS; and improved lives for slum dwellers.

Goals cut: infant mortality and reproductive health services.

Infant mortality is part of the indicator on under-five mortality; whereas reproductive health services are included among the selected indicators for monitoring the MDGs.

Other aspects

The Millennium Declaration contains a number of development-related targets beyond those linked to poverty (as listed in paragraph 19). Environment and governance, for instance, feature prominently in other sections.

Source: United Nations Development Group, 2001

Annexure 4 Newly Developed Human Development Indices and Disaggregation in the Asia Pacific Region

I. Regional HDRs in Asia Pacific

a) Pacific HDR, 1999

New Index: The Vulnerability Index

Description: This index is being developed to demonstrate how small islands are vulnerable to various forms of disaster and abrupt changes in fortune.

New Index: Environmental Vulnerability Index

Description: The Index is still being developed. Preliminary results suggest that the development of EVI has begun well.

Components: 3 Sub-components –

- 1) Risk-Exposure sub-index – measure of potential risk, which measures the frequency and intensity of risk events that may affect the environment.
- 2) Intrinsic Resilience sub-index – indicates intrinsic vulnerability or resilience of the environment to risks.
- 3) Environment Degradation sub-index – reflects extrinsic vulnerability or resilience to external forces acting on the environment.

b) South Asia HDR, 1999

New Index: The Humane Governance Index, 1997

Description: HGI is constructed as a simple average of the three components. It is established as a parallel to the HDI for countries in the South Asian region.

Components:

1. Economic Governance

- Inflation
- Overall Budget Deficit (as % of GDP)
- Current Account Deficit (as % of GDP)
- Public Health Expenditure (As % of GDP)
- Public Education Expenditure (as % of GDP)
- Ratio of official to parallel exchange rate

2. Political Governance

- Corruption
- Bureaucracy Quality
- Democratic Accountability
- Ethnic Tension
- Government Stability
- Law and Order
- Socioeconomic Conditions

3. Civic Governance

- Freedom of expression
- Non-discrimination
- Political participation
- Rule of Law

II. National HDRs in Asia Pacific

a) China HDR, 2002 – Making Green Development a Choice

New Index: Health Risk Index (HRI)

Description: Environmental indicators introduced for the first time to reflect quality of environment and achievement in environmental protection across provinces.

Components: Four Indicators – HRI is a simple average of these indicators:

- Exposure to polluted outdoor and indoor air
- Polluted water
- Poor nutrition
- Access to health services

Disaggregation: Data collected for 27 provinces and 3 autonomous cities.

b) India NHDR, 2001 – General HDR

Modifications from the Global HDI:

- 1) The report concentrates on process indicators as opposed to only outcome indicators
- 2) Some dimensions for HDI and Gender Equality Index (GEI developed on the lines of the Global GDI) have been modified.
 - Instead of 'life expectancy at birth', 'life expectancy at age 1 and IMR' have been used
 - Instead of 'Adult Literacy Rate combined with Enrolment Ratio', 'Literacy Rate 7+ years and Intensity of Formal Education' have been used
 - Instead of 'Real GDP Per Capita in PPP\$', 'Per Capita real consumption expenditure adjusted for inequality' for HDI and 'Worker-Population ratio' in case of GEI have been used.

Disaggregation:

HDI, HPI and GEI have been estimated for the early 80's and 90's for all the states and Union territories.

c) Nepal HDR, 1998 – General HDR

Dissaggregation of HDI, GDI, GEM and HPI:

- 1) By rural and urban areas
- 2) By ecological regions
- 3) By development regions
- 4) By eco-development regions
- 5) By districts
- 6) By caste and ethnic groups

New Index: Capability Poverty Measure (CPM)

Description: Developed in 1996 Global HDR. CPM is a simple index, which gives equal weight to three indicators/components. This index is also being disaggregated by rural - urban areas, ecological regions, development regions and eco-development regions.

Components:

- 1) Percentage of underweight children under 5
- 2) Percentage of births unattended by trained health personnel
- 3) Percentage of illiterate female adults

New Index: HDM (Human Deprivation Measure) – developed by Human Development Centre, Islamabad. This index is also being disaggregated by rural-urban areas, ecological regions, development regions and eco-development regions.

Components:

- 1) Health deprivation – access to safe drinking water and by underweight children under 5 yrs
- 2) Educational Deprivation – adult illiteracy and children out of school
- 3) Income deprivation – lack of minimum income needed for basic necessities

d) Nepal HDR, 2001 – Poverty Reduction and Governance

Disaggregation of HDI, GDI and GEM:

- 1) By rural and urban areas
- 2) Across ecological belts
- 3) Across development regions
- 4) Across eco-development regions

New Index: Pro-poor Growth Index

Description: Established for the first time.

Components: 3 indicators -

- Poverty head-count index
- Per-capita GDP growth rate
- Gini coefficient (for the measure of inequality)

Disaggregation: Tried to compute the index for periods prior to the 1990's but due to lack of reliable and comparable estimates for poverty incidence and Gini coefficients, index could not be computed. Therefore, index computed only for period 1996/97-1999/00.

e) Philippines HDR, 2002 – Human Capital, Employment and Well-being

New Index: 2 types of HDI & GDI–HDI-1 and HDI-2 and GDI-1 and GDI-2

a) HDI-1 and GDI-1 – for inter-provincial comparisons

Components: Departs somewhat from the global HDR in its substitution of percentage of high school graduates in lieu of literacy rate, and its computation of the income index.

Disaggregation: By provinces

b) HDI-2 and GDI-2 – for comparing provinces with other countries

Components: Hews as closely as possible to the Global HDI and GDI computation

Disaggregation: Comparison of provinces with other countries using country data from Global HDR 2001

f) Vietnam HDR 2001 – Doi Moi and Human Development in Vietnam

Disaggregation:

- 1) Presents for the first time HDI, HPI and GDI for all 61 provinces and cities of the country.
- 2) The Provinces have been grouped in eight regions according to their General Statistical Office classification and have also been classified into three groups according to their HDI performance.

Source: Various Regional and National HDRs of Asia and Pacific

Annexure 5

Data Collection for Chhattisgarh (sub-regional) Human Development Report in India

Background -

A unique methodology has been adopted for the preparation of *Chhattisgarh ki Jan Rapat* (Chhattisgarh Human Development Report) - a “bottom up” approach at its best. The State Government decided to prepare village public reports on human development issues for all the villages in the State (called *Gaon ki Jan Rapats*). These village level reports were then to be collated at the district level. Finally the State report was to be prepared from these district reports.

Given the enormity of the task, a pilot was launched in October 2001 in five villages spread over four districts (Bastar, Sarguja, Rajnandgaon and Kawardha). Different NGOs undertook these pilot studies using different methodologies. The pilots identified the most suitable methodology for preparing the *Jan Rapats* and the pilots also identified the issues specific to Chhattisgarh that need to be captured in the *Jan Rapats*.

Following the pilot, a campaign called *Gaon Dahra Chalav Abhiyaan* (a call for going back to villages) was launched. Wide-ranging discussions were undertaken with the local government bodies in various districts where the concept of the *Jan Rapats* and the contents were discussed. The implementing mechanisms, possible hurdles and ways to resolve these were also enumerated at these meetings. Similar brainstorming sessions were held with NGOs, academicians and experts. All these discussions helped in crystallizing the structure of the *Jan Rapats*, the contents and linkages with human development and the implementation modalities.

A seminar was held in March 2002 to further elaborate on the structure, contents and methodology. Three committees were formed at the State level to move forward – data capture format committee, the social mobilisation committee and the training and capacity building committee. A nodal officer was nominated in each district to coordinate the preparation of *Jan Rapats*. At the village level, Rajiv Gyanodaya Kendras (village level learning centers) facilitated the process.

People’s Reports (Jan Rapats)

- Typically, a *Gaon ki Jan Rapat* (Village Report) consists of three parts –
 - Part 1 consists of basic data about the village. This data was provided by the government functionaries in a pre-designed format.
 - Part 2 is the actual minutes of the discussion with the village community. The discussions centred on the following themes –
 - Livelihoods
 - Information, learning needs and education
 - Health, indigenous and formal health care systems
 - Water, forests and land (natural resources)
 - Society and culture
 - Institutions
 - Any other issue of relevance to village / group.

These discussions were facilitated by people selected from the villages and are specifically trained and oriented to conduct the exercise. These people are called *Sangawaris* or facilitators. Over 6,200 *Sangawaris*,

which also included women, were selected and trained to conduct the field-work. The training of these facilitators was conducted by 144 Master Trainers who had been sensitised and trained over a five-day period.

After having received the training, these *Sangawaris* went back to their respective villages and chose a group of 8 – 10 persons called *Sahyogi Dal* (support group) in each village to mobilise the village communities and to assist in the entire process. The *Sangawaris* facilitated the discussions while the support group assisted them and also minuted the discussions. On each of the identified issues the community was assisted to discuss- the past status of the issue, the current status, the ideal status that the community would like to achieve, what the community would contribute and expectations from other agencies towards this end.

At least 4-6 group discussions were held in each village. Over 18,000 villages were covered under this process from July 2002 – January 2003.

- Part 3 – After completing the discussion, the *Sangawaris*, together with the *Sahyogi Dals*, collated essential points from the Part Two of the *Rapat* and drew an action plan for the village. This part was then presented to specially called *Gram Sabhas* for ratification. All the 18,000 reports were ratified by the respective *Gram Sabhas* on 26 January 2003. The Panchayats have the authority to move forward based on the recommendations emerging from the reports.
- The *Gaon ki Jan Rapats* were sent to the nodal officer in the respective districts. A team of 30-40 persons (research experts, academicians, NGOs, Government Officers, Panchayat representatives) was constituted at the district level to draw relevant information from the village reports and prepare a district report. All the sixteen district reports have been prepared and ratified by the district administration. Some districts have also prepared action plans on the basis of these reports.
- The district reports alongwith a 10% sample of the village reports have been sent to Sanket (the organisation entrusted with preparing *Chhattisgarh ki Jan Rapat*). Currently, the draft report is being written and the first draft is expected to be ready by end-April.
- Social mobilisation was central to the success of the process. Various *Kala Jathas* (a form of performing folk art) were organised to inform people about *Jan Rapats*. Street plays were conducted in *haats* (weekly markets) for wider dissemination. The monthly journal of the *Panchayats (Panchaman)* has a regular column featuring news about *Jan Rapat*. The Chhattisgarh Government website has extensive information on *Jan Rapats* in Hindi. (http://www.chhattisgarh.nic.in/download/JAN_RAPAT.HTM). There has been an audio-visual documentation of the process of preparation of *Jan Rapats* supported by UNDP.