1000 Days: An end and a new beginning
1,000 Days: An end and a new beginning
Introduction, Chris Bain (Director of CAFOD)

This Holy Week marks 1,000 days until the start of 2015: the year by which the Millennium Development Goals agreed by the United Nations more than a decade ago are due to be met. It is an appropriate time for such a milestone: a week when we are reminded of Christ’s instructions to his disciples to be of service to mankind, and of his own willing sacrifice.

This milestone should galvanize our efforts to be of service to the poorest in the world: to remind others that there are 1,000 days left to halve the number of people without basic sanitation; 1,000 days to halve the number of people suffering from hunger; 1,000 days to ensure that girls and boys everywhere are able to complete primary school. We must seek to fill every one of the next 1,000 days with progress towards the outstanding targets.

But whatever final achievements are recorded at the end of this period, 2015 must be a beginning not just an end. We must learn the lessons from the MDG process, and ensure that what replaces them is a new framework designed for the challenges of the next decade. A framework that builds on – but goes far beyond – the progress achieved by the MDGs, so that people living in extreme economic poverty are able to flourish and realise their full humanity through contributing to the common good.

But let us be clear: 1,000 days is a tiny amount of time for a challenge of this scale. The British Olympics Association began work on its bid for the 2012 Olympics in 1997, over 2,500 days before the bid was accepted and over
5,000 days before the Games themselves. Think how many decades of theoretical and practical work went on prior to the introduction of the Euro, and even then how many imperfections remained.

So the 1,000 days milestone is an opportunity but also a grave warning. If we do not start working right now, with the necessary clarity, urgency and resources required to achieve a strong outcome, we will reach 2015 with no effective global plan for tackling poverty: a betrayal of responsibility and an abdication of leadership that will rightly shame our generation.

With our global partners and our NGO colleagues, CAFOD is co-chairing the Beyond 2015 campaign, and working closely with the United Nations and the UK Government as time comes for them to bring forward their proposals. We stand ready to help them get this process right, but we will not hesitate to draw attention to any failings if they drag their feet.

This document outlines progress on the current MDGs and the key lessons that must be learned from them. It explains the work that is currently taking place on the post-2015 framework and sets out a 10-point plan to ensure that the new framework is a success. It is designed both to raise awareness and to provoke debate, and we do so from a position of optimism.

After all, the Easter story is one of hope. Hope that out of darkness will come light, and that every end marks a new beginning. This Easter, may we all be inspired to play our part both in working towards the MDGs in the 1,000 days remaining, and in building an even better framework to succeed them, one that will make a genuine difference to those who have so little.

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The Millennium Development Goals: Lessons the World Must Learn

What has worked?

While only a handful of MDG targets will be achieved by 2015 (see progress report below), we have seen modest to significant progress on nearly all of the goals; progress that may not have happened without the MDGs. In particular, African countries have made huge strides relative to their starting points on each MDG, even if they are still far behind on achieving the targets.

The MDGs represented the first global attempt to deliver development in a coordinated way, looking at water, sanitation, health, education, gender and the environment. The set of 8 straightforward goals, with targets and indicators, provided a strong, clear framework to rally governments, the international community and civil society behind a joint aim. That unity of purpose must be maintained.

If there has been a singular defining achievement of the MDGs, it is the way they have provided a powerful advocacy tool to shape the international development agenda. They represent the highest level political commitment to tackle global poverty the world has had. They have been translated into national development policies, poverty reduction programmes and NGO strategies. They have been adopted by local grass-roots organizations, inspired global solidarity campaigns and given people on the ground a tool to hold their leaders accountable.

The MDGs have also generated a huge amount of data that can be compared between countries and also over time to identify trends. This kind of data, especially when disaggregated by age, gender and other important factors, has provided a sound evidence base for donors and policy makers to use when setting priorities and allocating resources.

Most of all, the MDGs remain a living testament to the world’s promise to tackle extreme poverty. While there is still a lot to do until 2015 and efforts must be increased to reach all the remaining MDGs, there is cause for hope in the progress achieved to date.
What hasn’t worked?

The segmentation of the MDGs has helped to focus attention on a range of different issues, but this has unwittingly undermined the ability to address these issues as inter-connected problems. Moreover, while the MDGs reflect a focus on tackling the visible symptoms of poverty, a truly holistic approach would focus not just on the immediate causes of problems like lack of access to basic services and HIV infection, but also on the ultimate root causes of poverty: the imbalances in economic, social and political power.

MDG action works well to address problems across entire countries but often fails to reach those in most need. In some cases - where national averages have improved - women and girls, the very poor and those living far from cities remained worse off than the rest. Some of the greatest MDG successes are tempered by the lack of progress for the very poorest.

Looking at the areas of least progress, it is clear that some issues, such as the environment and gender equality, required much greater attention, resources, and political commitment. Meanwhile, other issues have been largely neglected because they did not feature in the MDGs at all, for example access to energy and the needs of people living with disabilities. Inequality within and between countries remains a key but neglected factor in rates of progress.

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Another central flaw of the MDGs is the fact that seven of the goals focus on change in developing countries and only one (on global partnership) addresses the developed world. This skewed focus is a reflection of global imbalances in power rather than a true reflection of the shared responsibilities to reduce poverty.

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And since the majority of poor people now live in Middle Income Countries, it is clear both that achieving growth in developing countries will not by itself succeed in reducing poverty, and that any new framework must seek to address extreme poverty wherever it exists.
Sustained growth in the developing world, particularly in Asian countries, is keeping the world on track to meet the poverty-reduction target.

However, after initial progress, the reduction of people working with low pay and a lack of social protection and safe working conditions has stalled and even reversed due to the economic crisis.

Worldwide, there are still one in five workers and their families living in extreme poverty, another target where progress has been stalled by the economic crisis.

The slow economic recovery following the crisis three years ago has not brought an increase in employment worldwide.

Despite increases in income, the proportion of people suffering from hunger has barely improved.

A quarter of children in the developing world are still underweight. In 1990, it was a third.

**Goal 1: Reduce hunger and poverty**

*By 2015, halve the number of people living on less than 1.25 USD a day, halve the number of people suffering from hunger and ensure full, productive and decent employment for all.*

Great achievements have been made in this area, and in all but two regions, primary school enrolment is at least 90 per cent. But hope is fading that the target will be fully achieved by 2015.

Sub-Saharan Africa has made the greatest improvements in school enrolment with 76 per cent of children going to school in 2009, up from 58 per cent in 1999.

Southern Asia and Northern Africa lead the way in expanding literacy among young people with 20 per cent and 9 per cent increases respectively between 1990 and 2009.

However, still around 69 million school age children around the world are not in school, and children who are female or poor, and children living in refugee camps or conflict environments are all proportionately less likely to attend school.

**Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**

*Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.*

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Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

- Girls are gaining ground in terms of equal access to education in the developing world, and some regions will have met the target by 2015.

- However, unequal access persists in many countries and regions, and poverty forms a major barrier for girls to access and stay in school.

- Other indicators on gender equality that are measured within this goal include the proportion of women in parliament and the share of women in paid employment that is not in the agricultural sector:
  - Representation of women in national parliaments is at its highest ever levels but still far from equal.
  - According to projections 41% of workers in the non-agricultural sector worldwide in 2015 will be women, rising from 35% in 1990.
  - But wide gaps remain for access to paid work in at least half the regions and by an overwhelmingly margin top level jobs still go to men.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the mortality rate of children under-five years old.

- Globally the mortality rate of under-5s has declined significantly from 89 deaths in 1,000 live births in 1990 to 60 in 2009.

- However, 8.1 million children still die before their fifth birthday – including 1 in 8 in sub-Saharan Africa – and children from the poorest households are two to three times more likely to die below the age of 5 than children from rich households.

- The target of a two-thirds reduction can still be reached if concerted action is taken to address the leading causes of death (diarrhoea, malaria, pneumonia), as can be seen by the 78% drop in measles deaths from 2000 to 2008 as the vaccination rate improved.

- Unfortunately, this resounding success could be in jeopardy due to shortfalls in funding, with babies from the poorest families still a lot less likely to receive lifesaving vaccinations than children from better off households.
The maternal health goal is one of the MDGs furthest off track. More than 350,000 women and girls still die annually from complications during pregnancy and childbirth, almost all of them – 99 per cent – in developing countries.

Gains made during the 1990s to reduce adolescent pregnancies – and the accompanying health risks – have stalled or reversed in many regions, even where overall fertility has declined. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest birth rate among young women aged 15 to 19 (12.2%) and this has changed little over the years.

Most maternal deaths, as well as injuries and disabilities caused by pregnancy and childbirth, could be avoided with simple medicine, equipment or health care. Some regions have made major gains in terms of increasing the numbers of skilled health personnel attending births, especially in Northern Africa and Southern Asia.

New HIV infections are declining, led by sub-Saharan Africa, but it remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for 69% of new infections, 68% of all people living with HIV and 72% of AIDS deaths.

There are over 33 million people living with HIV, including 10.8 Million people outside of sub-Saharan Africa, although the increase in this number is largely due to increased access to life prolonging treatment.

Access to HIV/AIDS treatment has expanded quickly and steady progress is being made in reducing the risk of HIV in newborns.

Intensive efforts have achieved a 20 per cent reduction of malaria, with major advances in African countries where the use of mosquito nets is rising rapidly, with lifesaving benefits for children.

Tuberculosis prevalence and deaths are declining, bringing the MDG target into sight.
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
Integrate sustainable development into policies and reverse the loss of environmental resources and biodiversity. Halve the number of people without access to safe water and sanitation and significantly improve the lives of slum dwellers.

- The target for access to safe drinking water has already been reached worldwide although the poorest people still encounter the most difficulties in gaining access. Access to basic sanitation has slightly increased but the target is still a long way from being met.
- Forests are still disappearing rapidly although slightly more slowly than before, while Asia has registered a net gain.
- Even though the percentage of slumdwellers is declining, the absolute number is rising due to rapid population increase in urban areas, with slum improvements failing to keep pace.
- Rich countries are not cutting greenhouse gas emissions fast enough or deep enough. The world is currently on course for a +4 degree global increase in temperatures.
- The biodiversity target has fallen abysmally short, and the loss of species is likely to continue throughout this century. Overfishing of the oceans continues to rise.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development
Further develop an open, rule based predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system, and deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries; address the special needs of least developed countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries; and make available information and communication technology.

- Aid to developing countries is at a record high, but remains $19 billion short of the G8 promises made at Gleneagles in 2005, with little sign of that funding gap being filled.
- The debt burden has eased for many developing countries, but not all and is growing again due to the global economic crisis.
- The UN measures progress on Overseas Development Aid (ODA) using the UN target of 0.7 per cent ODA of Gross National Income (GNI). The UK, with 0.56 per cent in 2010, is one of the largest donors and is on track to meet the target.
- Import tariffs on agricultural products from developing countries continue to fall, but barriers to trade in clothing and textiles are unchanged.
- The world is increasingly connected through mobile communication and high-speed internet connections but two thirds of the world's population have yet to gain access to the internet.
What Happens After 2015?
A Guide to the Post-MDG Process

International Discussions

After a slow start, the United Nations has finally put the official wheels in motion to start planning what comes after the Millennium Development Goals. Their leadership is crucial. The UN is the only body that fully represents every country in the world, with the authority to broker a genuinely legitimate global framework. If the UN process fails, the G8, G20 and other groupings of the richest and most powerful countries will call the shots on their own, and the final outcome will lack legitimacy.

The UN say they intend to organise consultation processes in 50 countries, as well as international consultations on health, education and other themes. Behind the scenes, scoping papers are being written and there are plans to appoint a panel of global leaders to oversee the process. They have also discussed ways of using new technology to engage ordinary citizens.

However, there are notable absences in the current debate from those both at the top and the bottom of global power structures. No high level politicians, global leaders or major statesmen have stepped forward in public to make post-MDG planning a priority. And there not yet any serious resources in place to ensure that people living in poverty are able to make their voices heard in this process.

The UN has released no concrete details on their consultation processes; less than half of the funds sought for these consultations have so far been secured; the 50 national consultation processes are due to start in May, but the subject countries have only just been confirmed; and UN coordinators around the world are being left to decide themselves what priority to give consultations in their countries and who they should include. Crucially the UN are not planning specific outreach to the poorest people as part of these consultations.

Elsewhere though, interest in the post-MDG framework is rapidly increasing. The Beyond 2015 campaign, co-chaired by CAFOD, now brings together 280 civil society organisations from over 70 countries, and government officials, foundations, private sector actors and other stakeholders are increasingly seeing this agenda as one requiring their involvement.
Three scenarios: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

With just 1,000 days left until 2015, and the process for agreeing a new framework still yet to be determined, no-one can predict the outcome of the post-MDG debate. However, we can identify three possible scenarios, depending on the way that the process is carried forward over the coming months:

- **The Good:** The ideal scenario would see an open, inclusive process of debate and consultation, with a clear and focused framework ready to come into effect by 2015. A high-quality, fully-funded consultation process would be led by the UN and complemented by civil society, with a surge of policy proposals from stakeholders in 2013 whittled down to a strong, concise and coherent framework, building on the success of the MDGs but improving the focus on issues such as the environment, inequality, extreme poverty and human rights. Global leaders would make the issue a priority at UN and other summits, seeking to maximise public understanding of and international support for the new framework. Finally, the new framework would deliver real, measurable change and progress in the world over the next decade.

- **The Bad:** The UN’s consultations might go well and a wide range of stakeholders could put forward concrete proposals in time for a major summit in 2013. However, if global leaders remain at a distance, the ensuing process to reduce the number of proposals and improve the focus will fail, negotiations will lack political strength and legitimacy, and the eventual agreement will likely be weak and unfocused, attempting to be ‘all things to all people’. Over the next decade, the resulting post-MDG framework will fail to have any real impact on progress in the world.

- **The Ugly:** In this worst case scenario, stakeholders will adopt a wait-and-see approach, reluctant to put concrete ideas on the table before their counterparts do so. As we reach the MDG deadline in 2015, there would inevitably be a ‘last minute rush’ to publish policy papers and fight for specific advocacy priorities. With time short and little goodwill built up in advance, negotiating positions will be based on self-interest rather than the big picture. Negotiations on the post-MDG framework would drag out to 2016-17 or beyond, over which time the impetus behind a replacement regime will fade away.

There are currently a number of factors pointing to the high risk of a ‘last minute rush’ process, and of an ‘all things to all people’ outcome. With the process still getting started, however, there is all to play for. It is still possible that we can bring about a strong post-MDG agreement that delivers real change and progress – but only if urgent action is taken now to steer the process of consultation and debate in a good, inclusive direction, as set out below.
The Post-2015 Framework: 
1,000 Days to Get It Right

A 10-point Plan for a Successful Post-MDGs Framework

1. **Wake up and act urgently:** Only 1,000 days remain until 2015. Time is far too short for any further delay. The United Nations needs to set clear and binding deadlines for proposing ideas and establishing the new framework, with proper time allowed for consultation, negotiation and agreement.

2. **Invest serious time and energy:** Collectively, governments, foundations and international NGOs must stop taking a ‘wait and see’ approach to the post-MDGs debate, and apply serious thought and resources to it. Many are wrongly assuming the UN has the capacity and resources to do all the work themselves.

3. **Consult early and widely:** Despite repeated calls from all sides for a wide and inclusive consultation process, the only consultations that have received funding so far are the UN’s national and thematic consultations, which do not cover all countries and do not engage with those affected by poverty directly. Civil society consultations, such as the one being conducted by Beyond 2015, and projects to engage with vulnerable and marginalized populations urgently need sufficient resources to provide their crucial input to the decision-making process.

4. **Listen to the voices of the poor:** People living in poverty also need to be directly engaged in debating and designing the new framework. Civil society leaders who represent these communities should have a seat at the table as decisions are made. Practically and morally, it is no longer possible to impose solutions upon people, without their say-so or buy-in.

5. **Remember it’s international:** The new framework needs to address shared problems that require international cooperation, rather than common problems that are found in many countries but require national action. All issues chosen should fulfil 3 criteria: they are of great significance for people living in poverty; they need to be addressed through international cooperation; and international goals would be the right tool to drive actual progress in the real world.
6. **Put the environment at the centre:** Environmental issues are of huge significance to people living in poverty but the world failed abysmally to make progress on MDG targets to protect and preserve environmental resources and eco-systems, the basis for many poor people’s livelihoods. Environmental sustainability must be a core element to a post-2015 framework and this will mean radically changing and reducing the environmental impact of our own economies and lifestyles.

7. **Remove the barriers that hinder the poorest:** The new framework must go further than the MDGs by focusing on the causes of poverty and inequality, and explicitly targeting the groups who have made least progress to date: women and girls, and people in rural and remote areas.

8. **Get the leaders talking:** Global leaders need to step forward to champion the issue of post-MDG planning. The UK government must show leadership both in putting 2015 on the agenda at international meetings, and stressing that it wants to develop its thinking in partnership with others around the world, particularly those in the Global South.

9. **See the bigger picture:** For every stakeholder involved in this process, it is tempting to see it as an opportunity to get a particular pet issue recognised as an international priority. But we cannot allow a framework which delivers for the greater good and drives real progress to be derailed because our individual wishes and concerns are not reflected in the final agreement. Especially with time so short, every stakeholder must keep their focus firmly on the big picture.

10. **Continue progress towards the current MDGs:** The debate on what should happen after 2015 has been held back by fears, especially in developing countries and amongst NGOs, that this will distract from continued efforts to achieve the MDGs. Planning beyond the MDG timeline should complement continuing efforts to achieve the original goals – the two efforts must go hand in hand.

"Time is far too short for any further delay. The UN needs to set clear and binding deadlines for proposing ideas and establishing the new framework, with proper time allowed for consultation, negotiation and agreement."
Conclusion: An End and a New Beginning

As UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon (right), has said: “When the MDGs were first articulated, we knew that achieving them would be only half the job. We knew that too many men, women and children would go largely untouched by even the best efforts. That is why we need to work with all partners to sustain the momentum and to carry on with an ambitious post-2015 development agenda.”

The MDGs have been a vital step forward for the world, shaping the international development agenda for the last decade, identifying the key indicators of extreme poverty, and ensuring that significant progress has been made – and important lessons learned – on each area.

However, the MDGs have failed to make progress on environmental sustainability, putting any progress made in danger of reversal, they have not addressed all the symptoms of poverty, nor have they effectively tackled the systems that are keeping people poor. And for all the progress made across the world, the very poorest in each country have made least. These are all signs that the current system is not working for the common good.

A strong and legitimate post-2015 framework which addresses these issues can only come about if we take urgent action to make it happen. We must start this process as we mean to go on by listening to those who currently have no voice. By doing so, we can understand where we have gone wrong and agree a new plan to redress the balance.
While continuing progress towards the current MDGs, we urgently need the UN to clarify the timelines for agreeing the new post-2015 framework, and its broader scope and purpose. This work must be on the agenda whenever global leaders are gathered together, and all stakeholders must start to commit the serious time, energy and resources that this work requires.

The UN has signalled good intentions on its consultation process, but none have so far been realised. The longer they leave it, the less opportunity there is for others to identify and fill the gaps, and the less confidence we can have that the voices of the poorest are brought into this debate. If they are not, the new framework will lack moral authority, political legitimacy and practical impact. The days of solutions being imposed on the poorest countries by the richest are over, and any framework designed on that basis will be worthless.

The post-2015 process offers the chance not just to complete the work begun by the MDGs, but to improve hugely on its design, outcomes and monitoring. However, at present, we are in grave danger of failing even to pick up the baton, let alone taking it forward to win the race.

This would betray not just the legacy of the MDGs, but the billions of poor people whose futures our choices will determine. We cannot let them down. We cannot afford any more delay, nor can we afford a hastily-reached agreement of good intentions, which fails to deliver any genuine progress in people’s lives. It is not too late, but the countdown from 1,000 days has begun, and we cannot wait any longer.
If you are interested in finding out more about the Beyond 2015 Campaign, and CAFOD’s proposals for the post-MDG framework, please contact Dr Amy Pollard, CAFOD’s lead analyst on aid and the post-2015 process, and co-Chair of the Beyond 2015 Campaign. Contact details are as follows:

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