

South Africa and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Democratic South Africa introduced a progressive constitution, institutional and legislative frameworks through which it would implement the transformation project from a pariah state of apartheid to a democratic prosperous, non-sexist, non-racial society. To this end and over a period of time South Africa, created and adapted a set of planning tools to lead and manage its development. The South African agenda and the objectives set out in its development path embed the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). South Africa submits its fifth report on the eight MDG targets as agreed upon during the United Nations Millennium Summit in the year 2000. The country produced MDG country reports in 2005, 2010 and 2013 with updates in 2007 and 2008. The MDG 2013 report, including the previous ones, seeks to provide an account of progress or otherwise made on the targets set out in the goals. Below we list the goals.

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. To promote universal primary education
3. To promote gender equality and empower women
4. To reduce child mortality
5. To improve maternal health
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. To ensure environmental sustainability
8. To develop a global partnership for the development.

The 2013 report also includes the domesticated indicators which are applicable to the South African context. The key feature and contributor in the 2013 MDG report has been the availability of data emerging out of the Population Census of 2011.

Organisational arrangements for managing the MDG process

South Africa has adhered to the consultation requirements outlined in the compilation of the MDG report and continues to improve on this front and in September 2010 the Cabinet directed Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) to institutionalise participation in the MDG reporting processes. As part of progressive improvement, the governance structures for the 2013 MDG report writing process were expanded to reinforce the existing reporting structure. In the previous reporting cycles the National Coordinating Committee (NCC), the Technical Working Group (TWG), and the Sectoral Working Groups (SWGs) were the structures responsible for drafting the report. From the feedback of Civil Society, the following structures were added in the writing of the report. These were the Report Drafting Team (RDT) and Expanded Report Drafting Team (ERDT) who consisted largely of Civil Society representatives.

As will be illustrated in the structures of planning, the MDGs do not constitute a separate plan. Thus in order to address implementation and secure embedding them in the National Development Plan (NDP) of South Africa, Provincial Growth and Development Plans and the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) of municipalities, the 2013 MDG Report (MDGR) process has been designed to include participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) at all levels of the governance structures. This includes provincial and local level structures.

Methodology of the 2013 country report

National and provincial workshops on the methodology of MDG compilation were held during

2011 and 2012. These workshops brought together representatives from government departments, academia, civil society and international agencies. The workshops covered issues such as indicator domestication amongst others. Domestication of indicators was achieved by adjusting the MDGs to reflect the local situation whilst ensuring that the globally designed targets and indicators are in line with the local reality. Furthermore the workshops resolved and built metadata and data sources repository, as well as managing issues of data quality and integrity. In this regard the following issues were addressed:

- Identifying MDG indicators which might need twinning, where the MDG indicator can be used for international comparison purposes, while the domestic equivalent would be used for monitoring national development;
- Identifying and isolating out of the report some MDG indicators which might be inappropriate in the South African context, e.g. bed nets for malaria when the local anti-malaria strategy is to use house sprays;
- Creating scope for new targets and indicators as may be required by the goals to properly reflect the South African context.

Consultations that would encourage stakeholder engagement and participation in the development process created a forum of a team of experts who were assigned the task of writing the reports namely the Report Drafting Team (RDT). They drafted the eight goal reports independently from each other. The country report on the other hand was written by a second team of experts and was based on the goal reports. The team worked under the guidance of the MDG Secretariat which was based within the National Statistics System Division in Stats SA. The Secretariat facilitated the gathering of the data through the SWGs and facilitated engagements between all stakeholders and the RDT. Members of CSOs were offered several opportunities to interact and discuss with the authors of the report. While inputs generated from these consultations were taken into account, the report largely remained the work of the appointed authors to synthesise the inputs. The ERDT was responsible for the technical editing of the report and ensuring compliance with the internationally agreed and locally designed MDG reporting format.

Governance of the MDGR process revolved around the NCC, which is responsible for steering the MDG preparation process. The committee consists of high ranking staff from data providing departments, UN agency representatives, and civil society representatives and provides the overall policy direction on MDGs progress reporting in the country.

Structure of the 2013 country report

This report consolidates the eight 2013 goal reports. Each MDG corresponds to a separate chapter and is structured in the following manner: Background (which states context and problem statement), facts and figures (describes and discusses the factual and scientific basis of the problem), Insights (discusses the determinants and correlates of the problem and points to possible solutions), conclusion and recommendations (deliver concise advise on how the problem can be solved).

The table that covers facts and figures in each chapter includes and discusses all MDG indicators as well as those indicators that have been domesticated. The domesticated indicators which are not included in the report are presented in the annexure of the report. Status on the likelihood of achieving of set targets in 2015 is colour-coded and classified. The classification provides for: Achieved, Likely or Unlikely.

Achievability Criteria**Description**

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| 1. Achieved | The set target has been achieved. |
| 2. Likely | Likely that the set target will be achieved. |
| 3. Unlikely | Unlikely that the target will be achieved. |