

Accelerating Progress Towards Reaching Sustainable Development Goals

Baral KP¹, Yadav UN¹, Baral G²

¹Patan Academy of Health Sciences, Lalitpur, ²Paropakar Maternity and Women's Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal.

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There is time bond succession from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals from 2015 as a defined point of demarcation. This is an ultra short sociopolitical intervention in order to transform society into a healthier state. This is an unnatural process that depends on will and resources. As the country is in political transition, it would be an opportunity to assure to implement programs and plans early ahead.

Keywords: millennium development goal, Nepal, sustainable development goal

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INTRODUCTION

In September 2000, leaders of 189 countries endorsed the Millennium Declaration, with a set of eight measurable goals ranging from halving extreme poverty and hunger to promoting gender equality and reducing child mortality, by year 2015. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) was revolutionary and realistic with a clear monitoring framework. Sustainable progress have been made and the world have realized that post-2015 agenda must be put into discussions on building sustainable world where environmental sustainability, social inclusion and economic development will be valued equally.¹

The Rio+20 conference, galvanized a process to develop a sustainable goals with besieged attention directed towards traditionally marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, and women.² Building upon experience and lessons learned from MDGs, the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were put forwarded for bridging the gaps spanning from 2015-2030.

METHODS

National and global literatures on policy, planning, reports, guidelines and recommendations have been reviewed. Critical appraisal has been made based on past MDG status and future SDGs in terms of federal restructuring of the country.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dr Kedar Prasad Baral
Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences, Patan Academy of Health Sciences
Lagankhel-5, Lalitpur, Nepal
Cell#: +977-9851145081, Email: kedarbaral@pahs.edu.np

Table-1. Key MDG indicators achieved during MDG era for Nepal

Indicator	2000	2005	2010	2015	Source
Population growth	2.2	1.5	1.1	1.2	WB cited CBS projection ⁵
Life expectancy at birth (in years)	62.1	64.8	67.10	71	UNDP (2014), NPC (2016) ^{6,7}
GDP growth rate (percentage)	5.8	2.9	3.5	5.5	MoF, UNDESA (2015) ^{8,9}
Population below poverty line (percentage)	38	31	25.4	21.6	NPC and UNCT (2014), NPC (2016) ¹⁰⁻¹²
Underweight children aged under 5 years (percent)	53	43	38.6	30.1	MoHP et al. (2012b), CBS (2015b), NPC and UNCT (2013) ¹³⁻¹⁶
Under five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	91	61	54	38	MoHP et al. (2007, 2012) ^{17,18}
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	415	281	281	258	NPC (2002), MoHP (2009), WHO et al.(2015) ¹⁹⁻²¹
Population with sustainable access to improved water source (percent)	73	81	80.4	83.6	NPC (2005), CBS (2004), MoWSS (2016) ²²⁻²⁴
Population with sustainable access to sanitation (percent)	30	39	43	81	NPC (2005), CBS (2004), MoWSS (2016) ²²⁻²⁴

DISCUSSION

Nepal's progress in MDGs

Nepal occupies the space in the list of least developed country (LDC) in South Asia, is characterized by sluggish economic growth, a low level of human development and by slow socio-economic under development.³ On the top of this, underdevelopment spans from weak governance structures to politically and socially fragile condition.

Despite the long political instability and absence of elected representative at regional and local level, Nepal have made exemplary achievement in eradicating poverty level, decreasing proportion of underweight children, increasing literacy rate, decreasing under five children mortality rate, decreasing maternal mortality ratio and improving access to sanitation and clean drinking water [Table.1]. The MDGs status report of Nepal shows that, while most of targets achieved, some were partially achieved and there are some unfinished agenda as well.⁴ The report have also highlighted that factors like increased rate of urbanization, accelerated labor migration, the remittance cultured economy, the proliferation of information and communication technology and high proportion of young people in the population might affect the country's future developmental agenda.

SDGs and Window of Opportunity ahead for Nepal being signatory of SDGs, committed to achieve it by framing and aligning national policies, implementation framework and allocation of human and financial resources. National Planning Commission (NPC) is undertaking pivotal role in implementing the programs in light of SDGs. The policies developed under umbrella of government of Nepal seek to achieve sustainable development goals by bridging the gaps between the services delivered and the expectations of the services users. Accordingly, government is in process of updating various policies fitting to country new federal structure like new National Health Policy is been drafted in 2017 and is in process of endorsement. Further based

on lessons learned from MDGs, Nepal is one of the first countries to have produced a "National Report on SDGs" that charts a pathway for implementation of 17 SDGs with 169 targets till 2030. At the global level, SDGs is aspirational and universal, and focusing on a participatory approach that will help Nepal to define national targets to meet the stated goals.

The SDGs are very ambitious and will need huge resources to meet the targets by 2030. Moreover, in achieving SDGs, we have to think big on designing implementation framework at the province and local level focusing hard-to-reach population, marginalized and ethnic communities; annual plans and budgets, mid-term expenditure framework for budget absorption, and result based development management; developing innovative cost-effective approach fitting the federal structure and further, on scaling up to the unreached populations.²⁵ In addition, monitoring framework and disaggregated database should be developed in order to track progress on 17 goals and targeted interventions.

Nepal has adopted a federal system, which indicates that overall development of the country will be more balanced, inclusive and rapid; but this might pose a new challenges. However, challenges can be broken down by visioning comprehensive and common vision for sharing the resources, strategy to combat deep rooted corruption and implementation of gender equity and social inclusion policy at every provincial and local level planning, which in turn helps the country to achieve national targets set in line with SDGs.

CONCLUSIONS

At the outset of federal structure of governance in the country it is the high time to collaborate with external development partners in line with social and economic reforms in priority. To make Nepal's system more equitable, fair and effective, there is an urgent need for more critical thinking, and healthy and inclusive discourse for improving the goals stated in SDGs as a whole.

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