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**Are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) feasible?
Can the deadlines be met particularly for education and
gender?**

The case of Ethiopia

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**Are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) feasible? Can the deadlines be met particularly for education and gender?
The case of Ethiopia**

Abstract

This paper addresses the feasibility of the MDGs in Ethiopia, in general and in particular Education and Gender issues in relation with the deadline of 2015 a target set by the UN millennium declaration.

The paper will assess the possibility of achieving universal primary education by 2015 in Ethiopia, for all school age children. The role required by parents and the community, private sector and what has been so far to achieve these goals will be reviewed as a follow-up to my previous paper (educating the community, Western Michigan's Ethiopian American Foundation International conference, 2003).

Both for education and gender equality in education, the paper will look at the policy options that lead to the achievement of the set targets.

The paper will also try to briefly look at the progress in gender equality while at the same time looking at the quality and efficiency of education

Finally, problems encountered, challenges, conclusions and recommendation while trying to achieve the MDGS will be presented.

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1. Introduction

This paper is written for the 3rd Ethiopian American Foundation International Conference on contemporary Development Issues in Ethiopia that will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from June 18-19, 2005 at the Ghion Hotel.

In the paper, background to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), MDGs in Ethiopia, the Current situation of the Education Sector and Gender equality, Policy of Education, the system of Education and its strategies, the present policy towards the Education sector, the extent of enrolment and the progress in gender equality in enrolment are dealt with.

Owing to the persistent problems of the sector, the presenter's view on the achievement of the two goals within the specified period of time i.e. 2015, problems, challenges conclusion and recommendations are also presented.

2. Background to the Millennium Development Goals

The general situation of the poor countries being more or less the same in all spheres of life, the UN and almost all leaders of the poor countries in agreement set 8 MDGs (see Annex 1), in the year 2000. There was an assumption that these goals could bring both social and economic development for developing countries.

To this end, the UN Development organs have started working on the goals by taking their respective part, in each country, that deal with MDGS. The United Nations Development Programme's Central and Eastern African (CEA) Sub-Regional Resource Facility (UNDP/CEA-SURF) has been contributing its part to these activities. Accordingly, the CEA-SURF has organized an MDG Forum in Addis Ababa in June 2002. As a follow up to the June Forum, the CEA- SURF has undertaken a stocktaking exercise on the CEA countries in which I was one of the consultants. The report is being published now.

3 MDGs in Ethiopia

Ethiopia took the preparation of the Poverty Reduction and Strategic Paper (PRSP) in 2000 and has already prepared the full PRSP. It was approved in 2002 and the country is now in its third year of implementation of the "Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction program" (SDPRP). The 2nd one is under preparation.

The objective of Ethiopia's SDPRP is to reduce poverty by enhancing rapid economic growth while at the same time maintaining macroeconomic

stability. In the SDPRP, it is indicated that real GDP was targeted to grow by at least 7 percent per annum (p.a). Agriculture, industry and services are expected to grow at average annual rates of 7.5 percent, 7.8 percent, and 8 percent, respectively.

The SDPRP expresses the Ethiopian Government's commitment to work towards attainment of the MDGs by 2015. It states that the economy must grow in real terms by 5.7 percent p.a. until 2015 if poverty is to be reduced by half from its present level.

The government of Ethiopia formed partnership between the UN agencies and the government ministries to jointly work in monitoring, participation in policy discussion, in MDG specific activities like media campaign, and preparation of reports. The First Annual Report of the SDPRP is finalized and the 1st MDG Report (MDGR) was launched in 2004.

The MDGR states that domestic resources cannot cover more than 40 percent of the direct costs required for Ethiopia to achieve the MDGs (about USD 40 billion). Ethiopia would need an ODA flow of around USD 1.9 Billion per year to assist the realization of the real GDP growth of 5.7 percent per year, which can lead to reduction of poverty by half by 2015. Considering the yearly average ODA flow of around USD 900 million from 1990 to 1999, the country will need about USD 1 billion more each year. The report reveals an estimated financing gap of around USD 1.6 billion per year in order to achieve the MDGS. It also mentions that significant debt relief; increased development assistance and access to external markets can easily cover the gaps.

4 Current situation of the Education Sector and Gender

4.1 Policy of Education

The general objective of the education policy and its strategies of implementation indicate provision of primary education for all its citizens, improvement in the quality and efficiency of education, encouragement of other sectors to participate in the sector, Non-Formal Education and enhanced equity in gender.

4.2 The system of Education and its strategies

The Ethiopian educational system has been changing a number of times when governments change. During the Imperial period, the school structure was 4-4-4 (4 years of elementary, 4 years of junior secondary and 4 years of senior secondary). During the Military/Derg period, it was 6-2-4. At present, the schooling setup is changed to 8 years of primary (1-4 lower primary and 5-8 upper primary), 2 years of general secondary and 2 years of preparatory for university education or technical and vocational education.

Students in grade 10 i.e. 8+2 sit for general education examination prepared by Ministry of Education (MOE). Those who get a pass mark will go to senior secondary school and those who fail to achieve the required results go to vocational training. To follow up the progress made in the sector, MOE set a number of indicators putting a time frame of (2004/05) for its achievement, as shown in the table below.

- In 2001/02 the student/teacher ratio was 65 in primary education. This was 15 more students per teacher compared with the standard set by MOE as 50 students per teacher (MOE annual report, 2003/04), thereby affecting both quality and efficiency of education.
- The ratio of student to books is 1:2.5 but the status in 2002/03 is not indicated whereas the target set for 2004/05 is 1:1 as indicated in the table below. By the time this target is achieved, it is expected that the quality and efficiency of education would improve. To achieve quality in education, efficient mode of delivery, commitment and capacity of teachers, frequent student teacher contact and sufficient number of books for all students is a pre-requisite.
- As reflected in the table below the target for access indicators has been met even before the target date. As for quality indicators particularly Share of upper primary teachers (grades 5-8) who are qualified it seems that more effort should be exerted to meet the 2004/05 target.
- The efficiency indicators too are well below the target though the averages surpass the target. Regarding the equity indicators for underserved regions, they are below target though girl's enrolment from grade one to six has shown a relative increase.

Indicators

<i>No</i>	<i>Suggested Indicators</i>	<i>Base year 2000/2001 (%)</i>	<i>Status of 2002/03 (%)</i>	<i>2004/2005 target (%)</i>
1	Budgetary and Expenditure indicators			
	• Education's share of the total budget (1995)	13.8(%)	20.6*	19.0(%)
2	Access indicators			
	• Gross enrolment rate at primary (1-8)	57.4(%)	68.4(%)	65(%)
	o Girl's	47(%)	59.1(%)	57(%)
	o Boy's	67.3(%)	77.4(%)	72.8(%)
	• Total number of primary schools	11,780	13,181 (105.87%)	13,201 (105.85)
3	Quality indicators			
	Share of lower primary (grades 1-4) teachers who are qualified	96.6(%)	96.5(%)	99(%)
	Share of upper primary teachers (grades 5-8) who are qualified	23.9(%)	32.1(%)	80(%)
	Primary school student/textbooks ratio	2.5	n.y.a	1
	Grade 4 sample assessment of learning achievement	47(%)	n.y.a	50(%)
4	Efficiency			
	Primary school student/section ratio	70	74	60
	Grade 1 dropout rate	27.9(%)	31.4(%)	14.2(%)
	Total Primary school dropout rate	17.8(%)	19.2(%)	8.9(%)
	Average primary school dropout for girls**	16.9(%)	18.5(%)	8.5(%)
	Average grade 4 to 8 repetition rate***	10.3(%)	5.6(%)	6.4(%)
	Average grade 4 to 8 repetition rate for girls***	13.4(%)	6.3(%)	8.1(%)
	Coefficient of primary school efficiency	31.8(%)	35.3(%)	50(%)
5	Equity			
	Gross primary enrollment ratio in the under-served regions			
	Afar	<i>11.5(%)</i>	<i>14.8(%)</i>	<i>20(%)</i>
	Somali****	10.6(%)	<i>15.1(%)</i>	<i>20(%)</i>
	Share of girls in primary school enrollment (grades 1-6)	40.3(%)	42.6(%)	43.3(%)

Source: Education statistics annual abstract 2003/04

*Provisional expenditure

** Calculation done using geometric means

*** Sept/Oct 2004 data

**** 1995 E.C (2002/03)

4.3 Education Expenditure

Education expenditure is one of the useful indicators for the sector's development. As shown in the above table, the target for 2005 was to allocate a budget of 19% of the total expenditure. However, the actual expenditure in 2002/2003 is not given and it is difficult to see the increasing or decreasing trend of the expenditure. Anyway, owing to the increase in population, it seems that the government still needs to increase the education budget.

4.4 Infrastructures

As it is well understood, educational facilities have impact on access, quality, efficiency and equity in education. It can be witnessed from the table above, the number of schools has increased through time, though it might not be able to contain all the young children who are looking for access to primary education.

4.5 Enrolment

As shown in above table, total enrolment is an increasing trend. It is indicated that the enrollment of primary students target for 2004/05 was 65% of the school age children. It seems that reaching to 68.4% in 2002/03 has already surpassed the enrolment rate targeted for 2005. Eventhough the gender gap is still there, the target for girls and boys enrollment in 2005. i.e. 57% and 72.8% respectively has been passed in 2002/03.

5 Gender policy

The gender policy of the country indicates the government's commitment to abolish the gender disparity at all levels no later than 2015.

5.1 Disparity

5.1.1 Gender

As shown in the above table, gender disparity in enrolment is very high. It is higher compared even with other African countries. Girl's enrolment in Ethiopia is mainly affected by the insecurity, cultural beliefs, sexual harassment by male colleagues and teachers. In addition the long distance they travel from home to schools, in rural areas, makes them vulnerable to rape, early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, in the under served regions, only 43.3% of the 61% are girls in primary education, as reflected in the above table.

6 Regional disparity

The number of schools, teachers and school facilities between rural and urban areas and between regions is not equitably distributed. MOE has taken Addis Ababa as a point of reference to check the gap in regional disparity, in primary Gross enrolment Ratio (GER), and found out that there is still a huge gap. Gambela and Harari have shown improvements in GER while the other regions have shown greater gap.

7 Other actors and Community participation

To improve the existing situation in gender disparity and increase in enrolment the parents/community awareness on education particularly on

girls' education is of paramount importance. As indicated in the paper "educating the community", 2003 Ethiopian American Foundation, international conference of WMU, by Meskerem Shiferaw, parents in particular and the community at large could play a major role in the student's overall achievement. As indicated in the policy of education, the community, private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations are called for to participate in improving the education sector.

In this regard, international & local NGOs are assisting the government in providing non-formal schooling, rehabilitation and refurbishing of old schools and adult non-formal education, in general. They also provide textbook, production of furniture and equipment. Moreover, while the NGOs are constructing schools the communities participate in providing labor and local materials.

According to the Ethiopian Investment Authority, the private sector is also participating in constructing schools all over the country. In addition, it is also assisting in text book production and provision, production of furniture, supply of education materials and equipment. It is also in the meantime providing employment.

The participation of the community and other actors as mentioned above brought the schools nearer to the community which assisted in the increase in enrollment.

8 Relationship between MDG2 (primary education) and Gender equality (MDG3)

It is clear that there is relationship between MDG2 and MDG3 in the sense that both goals are working towards improving gender equality in education and at different levels, respectively. As indicated in the Millennium Development Goals Report (MDGR) of Ethiopia:

- if primary enrolment expands by 1% per year, the economy would register 0.1%age increase in per capita income
- If gender disparity in primary enrolment was reduced by more than 0.5% every year, the country can register 0.4% in the growth per capita

9 Major problems of the education sector and gender

education

- Low budget allocation
- Low quality of education
- Low enrolment at all levels compared with the school age children
- Gender and regional disparity in enrolment
- Higher student teacher ratio
- Absence of required number of textbooks
- Inadequate number of qualified teachers at all levels

gender

- Socio-cultural factors which reduce enrolment rates, specially of girls
- Lack of awareness on gender equality which leads to bias

10 Challenges

As we are all aware, Ethiopia's economic performance is highly dependent on nature and foreign assistance. Therefore, rain shortage, deterioration in commodity prices and declining foreign assistance can easily disrupt the MDGS process.

11 Conclusion

It is likely that the universal primary education goal will be achieved, according to the government data, even before 2015. The writer cannot refute this idea since there is no independent data source. However, if one looks at the shortage of finance as indicated in the PRSP and section 3 of this report, the increase in population of school age children and the dependence of the economy on weather conditions; above all reliance on foreign assistance makes it unthinkable.

With regard to the gender gap in enrolment, as indicated in the education statistics of 2004, though there was improvement over the decade it might not be achieved before or on 2015.

12 Recommendation

The writer recommends more encouragement on the full participation of all actors including the community in the sector's improvement both physically and in giving back-up to the betterment of educating their children.

Annex 1

MDGs goals, targets and indicators

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1.

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Indicators

1. Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day (World Bank) a
2. Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty) (World Bank)
3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption (World Bank)

Target 2.

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicators

2. Prevalence of underweight children under five
3. Years of age (UNICEF - WHO)
5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy Consumption (FAO)

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

Indicators

6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education (UNESCO)
7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 (UNESCO)
8. Literacy rate of 15-24-year-olds (UNESCO)

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

Indicators

9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education (UNESCO)
10. Ratio of literate women to men of 15- to 24-year-olds (UNESCO)
11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (ILO)
12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (IPU)

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

Target 5.

Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the Under five-mortality rate

Indicators

- 13. Under-five mortality rate (UNICEF - WHO)
- 14. Infant mortality rate (UNICEF - WHO)
- 15. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles (UNICEF WHO)

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

Target 6. Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 And 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Indicators

- 16. Maternal mortality ratio (UNICEF - WHO)
- 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel L (UNICEF - WHO)

Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread Of HIV/AIDS

Indicators

18. HIV prevalence among 15-to-24-year-old pregnant women (UNAIDS-WHO-UNICEF)

19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate (UNAIDS, UNICEF, UN Population Division, WHO)

19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex

19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS

20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 (UNICEF-UNAIDS)

Target 8.

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Indicators

21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria (WHO)

22. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective Malaria prevention and treatment measures (UNICEF - WHO)

23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis (WHO)

24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under DOTS (internationally recommended TB control strategy) (WHO)

Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 9.

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and program and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Indicators

25. Proportion of land area covered by forest (FAO)

26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area (UNEP-IUCN)

27. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP) (IEA, World Bank)

28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) (UNFCCC, UNSD) and consumption

of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons) (UNEP-Ozone Secretariat)

29. Proportion of population using solid fuels (WHO)

Target 10.

Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation

Indicators

30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural (UNICEF - WHO)

31. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural (UNICEF - WHO)

Target 11.

By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Indicators

32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure (UN-HABITAT)

Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

Indicators for targets 12-15 are given below in a combined list.

Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.

Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction - both nationally and internationally

Target 13.

Address the special needs of the least developed countries.

Includes: tariff and quota-free access for least-developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC's and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

Target 14.

Address the special needs of landlocked countries

and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the

twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)

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 Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the

least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and Small Island developing States (SIDS)

Indicators

Official development assistance (ODA)

33. Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors' gross national income (GNI)(OECD)

34. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation) (OECD)

35. Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied (OECD)

36. ODA received in landlocked countries as proportion of their GNIs (OECD)

37. ODA received in small island developing States as proportion of

their GNIs (OECD)

Market access

38. Proportion of total developed country imports

(by value and

excluding arms) from developing countries and from LDCs, admitted

Free of duties (UNCTAD, WTO, WB)

39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries

on agricultural

products and textiles and clothing from developing countries

(UNCTAD,

WTO, WB)

40. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP (OECD)

41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

(WTO, OECD)

Debt sustainability

42. Total number of countries that have reached

their Heavily Indebted

Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) decision points

and number that have

reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)

(IMF - World Bank)

43. Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative,

US\$ (IMF - World Bank)

44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of

goods and services (IMF -

World Bank)

Target 16.

In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

Indicators

45. Unemployment rate of 15- to 24-year-olds, each sex and total (ILO) f

Target 17.

In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

Indicators

46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis (WHO)

Target 18.

In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Indicators

47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population (ITU)

48. Personal computers in use per 100 population (ITU) and Internet

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