



# Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific - 2013

## An overview of the progress made

### The regional view

Taken as a region, the Pacific is an early achiever or on track to achieve the gender balance in tertiary education, HIV prevalence, TB incidence, protected areas and CO2 emissions per \$1 GDP MDG indicators. However, out of the rest of the 17 indicators that have sufficient data, the region has only been progressing slowly or regressing. Removing the Papua New Guinea (PNG) effect (PNG comprising about 70% of the population in the Pacific) improves progress on gender equality in education, TB prevalence and forest cover, but reveals a regression on CO2 emissions. The following is a summary of progress against the eight MDGs in the Pacific as presented by the 2013 Pacific Regional MDGs Tracking Report and the Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2012/13.

### MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

This is the largest challenge for many Pacific island countries. Progress is constrained by low economic growth and a lack of job opportunities; the global financial crisis further retarded progress. Income inequalities persist across all countries and are especially prominent between urban and rural areas. Associated migration to urban areas and monetisation places pressure on supportive social structures resulting in further marginalisation. Limited job opportunities and high rates of subsistence agriculture mean poverty in the region is mostly 'poverty of opportunity' rather than food poverty. Accordingly, seasonal worker programmes and remittance transfers are a significant aspect of the economy and are important in achieving MDG 1.

### MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

The majority of countries are on track to achieve MDG 2. However, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu are recording mixed progress. PNG and Kiribati are off track. A continuing challenge is improving access to rural/outer island areas. Additionally, the quality of education is of concern for all countries, with many students finishing school without basic literacy and numeracy skills, thus undermining the achievement of universal primary education.

### MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

All countries except PNG, Solomon Islands and Tonga are on track to achieve gender parity in education. However, concerns over the attendance and performance of boys in high school have emerged. Gender barriers in labour markets, gendered stereotypes about appropriate employment and traditional expectations about unpaid domestic and caring work have meant only Cook Islands, Niue and Palau are on track to achieving gender equality. Violence against women is also prominent across the region. Representation of women in parliaments is also the lowest of any region in the world.

### MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

Advancement towards the achievement of this MDG is difficult to ascertain. The Pacific Regional MDGs Tracking Report states that the Pacific is doing extremely well towards this goal, with only PNG being off track and Kiribati, Nauru and Solomon Islands posting mixed progress. However, as shown in the table from the Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report (next page), only Vanuatu is on track for achievement. This discrepancy is likely due to the difficulties of data collection in the Pacific and a reliance on different proxy indicators between the two reports.

### MDG 5: Improve maternal health

Progress in achieving the reduction in the maternal mortality ratio is mixed, with only half of countries on track. However in countries of less than 250,000 people the maternal mortality ratio, deaths per 100,000 live births breaks down, as the statistical impact of an individual event is exaggerated. Only PNG, Fiji and Solomon Islands have populations greater than 250,000. Skilled birth attendance is seen as a better indicator in other countries. Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Niue, Palau, RMI, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu reported closer to 100% skilled birth attendance. Women in rural, outer island areas are the most at risk due to limited access to skilled personnel. In the wider reproductive health area, lack of knowledge about family planning has also contributed to slow progress. Geographical constraints and dispersed populations also limit the delivery of health services.

## MDG 6: Combat HIV/Aids and other diseases

While most countries have a low HIV/AIDS prevalence, high rates of STIs, low condom use and a lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS means that its spread is a serious risk. PNG is making gradual progress towards combating HIV/AIDS, but is unlikely to meet the target. Fiji, Kiribati and RMI are also off track. Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu are recording mixed progress. Malaria is only endemic in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with only PNG off track to achieving the MDG target. Multi-drug resistant TB in PNG, FSM and RMI is an obstacle to its reduction and these countries, along with Kiribati, are off track in achieving malaria indicators.

## MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Most countries are on track with integrating sustainable development into national plans and for reducing biodiversity loss. Mainly due to the impacts of extractive industries like mining, logging and fishing, Nauru, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are off track for these targets. Only Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Palau Tonga, and Vanuatu are on track for improving access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation, with these issues being particularly acute for Micronesian countries. These are compounded by climate change-induced sea level rise. More generally, climate change holds significant risks for all Pacific island countries due to its effects on extreme weather events, along with sea level rise.

## MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

The coordination between countries and development partners is important to achieve all MDGs. ODA has doubled since 2002, with around two-thirds of it directed at the social infrastructure and services sector, which includes education, health, water and sanitation. Aid fragmentation remains an issue and there are calls for simpler aid modalities. Regarding market access, while there are trade agreements in place, many countries cannot capitalise on them due to technical barriers. A more open and non-discriminatory trading system that addresses specific needs of Pacific Island countries is needed to overcome these issues.

## After the MDGs

The MDGs have demonstrated the value of rallying global support around common objectives. As they expire in 2015, global discussions are well underway to agree on their replacement. This post-2015 development agenda should have human rights, equality and sustainability at its core. For more information check out our Post-2015 Factsheet.

### Recommended Resources

- [Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2012/13](#)
- [The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013](#)
- [2013 Pacific Regional MDGs Tracking Report](#)
- [UN Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015](#)

Goal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	\$1.25 per day poverty Country line poverty Underweight children	Primary enrolment Reaching last grade Primary completion	Gender primary Gender secondary Gender tertiary	Under-5 mortality Infant mortality Maternal mortality	Skilled birth attendance Antenatal care (≥ 1 visit)	HIV prevalence TB incidence TB prevalence	Forest cover Protected area CO <sub>2</sub> emissions per GDP Safe drinking water Basic sanitation
Pacific	American Samoa		●	●	■	●	●
	Cook Islands	■	●	●	■	●	●
	Fiji	●	●	●	■	●	●
	French Polynesia		●	●	■	●	●
	Guam		●	●	■	●	●
	Kiribati		●	●	■	●	●
	Marshall Islands		●	●	■	●	●
	Micronesia (F.S.)		●	●	■	●	●
	Nauru		●	●	■	●	●
	New Caledonia		●	●	■	●	●
	Niue		●	●	■	●	●
	Northern Mariana I.		●	●	■	●	●
	Palau		●	●	■	●	●
	Papua New Guinea		●	●	■	●	●
	Samoa		●	●	■	●	●
	Solomon Islands		●	●	■	●	●
Tonga		●	●	■	●	●	
Tuvalu		●	●	■	●	●	
Vanuatu		●	●	■	●	●	

● Early achiever    ▶ On track    ■ Slow    ◀ Regressing/No progress