The Millennium Development Goals:

Gendered Pathways/ Dimensions

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Introduction

In September 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit, 189 Governments reaffirmed their commitment to fulfill a collective responsibility for sustainable development and poverty eradication by the year 2015. They adopted the Millennium Declaration with, inter alia, a set of development goals framed to reflect the "fundamental values" espoused in the Declaration. Included among these values was to assure equal rights and opportunities for women as well as men:

"No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured". (United Nations, 2000a)

A year after the adoption of the Declaration, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan proposed a "Road Map" for implementing the Millennium Summit Goals. In its Annex, his report outlined the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) along with a set of 18 time-bound targets (MDTs) and 48 indicators (MDIs). The choice of targets and indicators resulted from consultations with the UN Secretariat, the IMF, the OECD, and The World Bank. None of the goals, targets or indicators is new. They derive from the global conferences of the 1990s and from the body of international norms and standards codified over the past half century.¹ What sets the Declaration apart from other international agreements is the specification of target dates for attaining the goals, and quantification of a number of the targets.

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**The Millennium Development Goals**

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

The third of the eight MDGs explicitly refers to "gender". The inclusion of this goal reflects the push in the 1990s at the international level for gender equality. Following the global women's conference in Beijing in 1995 and as a result of other global conferences held in the 1990s, the case for a gender lens on development has been increasingly supported and there is a growing body of research that is helping to demonstrate critical links between gender equality and socio-economic development. It is therefore not

¹ The MDGs were inspired by the core list of development goals and targets of OECD that became known as the International Development Goals (IDGs). The goals also stem from those set out at global conferences held in the 1990s with the notable omission of the goals on reproductive health from the Cairo Conference. The indicators derive from the OECD's, IDGs and from the UN system's Development Assistance Framework.
surprising that Governments agreed at the Millennium Summit on the importance of "promoting gender equality and empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable" (United Nations, 2000). In effect, gender was viewed as a "pathway" to other development outcomes.

However, despite growing recognition of the importance of gender, the gender dimensions of the other MDGs were not made explicit. Nor did gender feature prominently in the targets and indicators outlined by the Secretary General. The objective of the present paper is therefore to examine the MDGs and related targets and indicators from a gender perspective. The paper aims to show that putting a priority on women (and girls) offers a compelling, and in many cases, a win-win approach for policy makers and planners toward implementing the MDGs.

Viewed from a gender perspective, the MDGs can be grouped into three categories: those having spillover effects or positive externalities; those that may be instrumental for goal achievement, and those that target women and/or girls because of the degree to which women and girls constitute a disproportionate share of the affected population, and/or because women's agency is a key factor for progressing toward the goal:  

- **Goals with spillover effects/positive externalities:**
  - Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education
  - Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women
  - Goal 5. Improve maternal health

- **Goals where gender is an instrument:**
  - Goal 4. Reduce child mortality
  - Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- **Goals where gender is both an instrument and a basis for targeting:**
  - Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
  - Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

The 'gendered' pathways explored in the present paper reflect the above groupings and are linked to the indicators specified in the Secretary General's Road Map. The pathways are not viewed as exclusive since a number of variables necessarily contributes to goal achievement. Reducing child mortality (Goal 4), for example, in addition to being linked to mothers' education and command over income, is linked to factors such as safe water and access to basic health and social services. Moreover, several of the MDGs are interdependent, and progress toward one may affect progress toward others. For instance, greater access by women to credit is positively correlated with increased empowerment (Goal 3). At the same time access to credit by women yields social and economic benefits, especially for poor families (Goal 1). Similarly, fair and equal access to

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2 Thanks go to Shanta Devarajan, Chief Economist at the World Bank, for proposing these categories at the World Bank Workshop on Poverty and Gender: New Perspectives held on 7 May 2002
productive resources and employment opportunities can advance gender equality (Goal 3) and enhance economic efficiency (Goal 1). (World Bank, 2001b, p. 23)

This paper does not discuss the specific interventions that would be required for a gender-focused approach to the MDGs. Certain types of interventions are, nevertheless, implicit, such as increasing girls' enrollment and retention in school. Analysis of differential progress toward the goals by males and females should be considered when designing specific interventions. Trade-offs and cost-effectiveness will also come into play. But here too, the strategic nature of a gender-aware approach should not be overlooked.

Nor does the paper examine issues of relative cost or institutional arrangements associated with achieving the MDGs. The cost of implementing the MDGS has been calculated in a recent World Bank policy research working paper (Devarajan, Miller and Swanson, 2002). The role of institutional reform in reducing gender inequalities is discussed extensively in the recent World Bank Policy Research Report: Engendering Development through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources and Voice (World Bank, 2001b).

There has been some criticism by gender specialists of the scope of the MDGs and the related targets and indicators. For example, the absence of population goals has been of concern. But, it was not within the limited objectives of this paper to critique the choice of goals, targets and indicators. Clarification and refinement of the MDGS is expected to be part of the UN system's on-going task of monitoring the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration.

Gender Dimensions/Pathways to the Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs are taken up here in the order in which they were presented in the Secretary General's Road Map. Only the first seven MDGs are addressed. The eighth goal: "Develop a global partnership for development" deals with trade, finance for development, debt relief, youth employment, access to affordable drugs and access to new technologies. (While Goal 8 largely deals with the means for achieving the first seven goals, the international community should address it through a gender lens as well taking into account growing evidence of the differential impact of debt and trade on women and men).

In the analysis that follows, the related targets and indicators proposed in the Secretary General's Road Map are reiterated for each of the first seven MDGs. A brief status report on global progress in relation to each goal is then provided, with a focus on gender gaps in relation to goal achievement. A gendered pathway for achieving each goal is then postulated and evidence to support the pathway is cited from available research.

3 The concept of empowerment, for example, is difficult to measure because of its elusive meaning and the different values associated with it. See Kabeer, 1999.
MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

Targets:
Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day
Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicators:
- Proportion of population below $1 per day (MDI 1)
- Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty) (MDI 2)
- Share of poorest quintile in national consumption (MDI 3)
- Prevalence of underweight children (under 5 years of age) (MDI 4)
- Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (MDI 5)

Status:
Women are still the poorest of the world's poor, representing two thirds of those living with under a dollar a day. Over the past two decades, the number of rural women living in absolute poverty has risen by 50 percent, as opposed to 30 percent for men. (United Nations, 2001)

Women have a higher incidence of income-poverty compared to men; women’s income poverty is more severe than men’s income poverty, and over time, the incidence of income-poverty among women is increasing compared to that among men. (Cagatay, 1998)

Even when men and women in the same household cultivate separate plots as in much of Africa, women often control smaller land parcels (Udry, 1996).

In some countries girls receive either less food or poor quality food (Das Gupta, Lee, Uberoi, D. Want, L. Want, and Zhang, 2000).

It is estimated that women in Africa receive less than 10 percent of all credit going to small farmers and 1 percent of the total credit to the agricultural sector largely due to women’s low ownership of land to use as collateral (UNDP, 1995).

Gendered pathway:
Girls with some education and rural women with access to productive resources such as land and fertilizer have higher agricultural productivity and are major contributors to reducing household poverty. Women are key to the nutrition security of the household, particularly if they have command over income.

Evidence:
After many years of research and on-the-ground experience, the importance of gender equality for reducing poverty can no longer be questioned, according to World Bank President, James Wolfensohn (World Bank, 2000)

When food enters the household, women manage the food. They are the people most invested in assuring that the entire family has access to the food.
Therefore, programs that provide women the ability to gain food resources and to improve their families’ status are well aimed at working to alleviate hunger. (Bertini, 1995)

Many families rely on women's production to keep them out of poverty - or to keep them from falling deeper into poverty. For example, in post-transition Mongolia, if women's contributions are ignored, the rural gini and household poverty gap ratios would be 0.63 and 32 percent, respectively. But, when women's income is counted, the ratios drop to 0.49 and 29 percent. This means that for ultrapoor households women are crucial to preventing poverty from worsening. Strategies that consider how best to enhance women's economic contribution can in turn enhance their potential for reducing household poverty. (Subbarao and Ezemenari, 2001)

During crisis, women are the provisioners of last resort, or the de facto safety net in societies that do not have social safety nets in place. (World Bank, 2001c)

The nutrition security of the household, including that of children, depends almost exclusively on women. (IFPRI, 1997)

*Human capital* (see also Goals 2 and 3)
There is a strong association between poverty and gender disparities in basic education and health that is critical to girls' and boys' ability to participate in development and to attain a basic quality of life. (World Bank, 2001b)

Reducing inequalities in human capital by income and *gender* boosts growth and makes it more pro-poor. (Klasen, 2001).

Progress in closing gender gaps in schooling accelerates economic growth. For example, for middle- and high-income countries with higher initial education levels, an increase of 1 percentage point in the share of women in secondary education is associated with an increase in per capita income of 0.3 percentage points. (World Bank, 2001b)

In 63 countries, gains in women's education made the single largest contribution to declines in malnutrition in 1970-1995, accounting for 43 percent of the total. (World Bank, 2001a)

*Increased access to productive resources* (*See also Goal 3*)
In Africa, improving rural women's access to productive resources including education, land, and fertilizer could increase agricultural productivity by as much as one-fifth". (World Bank, 2000)

Given equal access to resources and human capital, women farmers can achieve yields equal to or even significantly higher than those of men, and women farmers
are more likely to adopt new technologies by copying other women farmers. (USAID Newsletter, 1997)

In Sub-Saharan Africa, establishing land rights for women raises productivity on female-managed plots - increasing women's as well as their families' incomes. (World Bank, 2001b)

In South Africa land represents an opportunity for women to meet a variety of needs, including those which are socially defined as primarily their responsibility, such as running the household and child care. (Walker, 1997)

**Credit and command over income (See also Goal 3)**

Providing financial services to women has emerged as an important means of combating poverty. In Bangladesh, for example, micro-credit provided to women has higher returns in terms of raising household consumption (income) than the same credit provided to men. (World Bank, 2001a and b)

In the Dominican Republic, women micro-entrepreneurs earn less than men in the same occupation, but contribute substantially more to household needs (80 percent of their income goes to the household compared to only 60 percent for the men). (Espinal and Grasmuck, 1993)

Women headed households in Kenya allocate a greater proportion of income to obtain more calories per adult equivalent than men headed households (controlled for land size and household composition). (Buvinic and Gupta, 1994)

Assets controlled by women have a positive and significant effect on spending allocations for the next generation. (Quisumbing and Malluccio, 1999).

The effect of household borrowing by women in Bangladesh was almost twice that of borrowing by men; it increases girls' enrollment, has a significant impact on boys' and girls' nutritional well being and smoothes household consumption. (Khandker, 1998)

The marginal effect of female income for child nutrition is four to eight times larger than that of male income. (Thomas, 1990, 1997)

**MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education**

**Target:**

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

**Indicators:**

Net enrollment ratio in primary education (MDI 6)
Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 (MDI 7)
Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds (MDI 8)
Status:

While the primary enrollment gap between girls and boys has narrowed globally from 8 percentage points to 5 percentage points, (UNICEF, 2002, p. 90), in 1998 there were some 113 million school age children not enrolled in primary education, 97 percent of whom lived in developing nations and nearly 60 percent of whom were girls, particularly girls from rural areas. (United Nations, 2001)

The gender gap in enrollment is closing in those regions where girls' enrollment in the past was low (Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding Southern Africa), Southern Asia and Western Asia, but in 22 African and 9 Asian countries, enrollment ratios for girls are still less than 80 percent those of boys. (United Nations, 2000)

Disparities in retention rates between boys and girls and between children of rich and poor families remain serious. (United Nations, 2001)

Two-thirds of the world's 876 million illiterates are women; many live in rural areas and many in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia despite improvements in some regions to half or less the levels of 20 years ago. (United Nations, 2000)

Gendered pathway:

Increasing school enrollments and retention rates for boys and girls, and increasing female literacy, yield high social and economic returns.

Evidence:

Experience has shown over and over again that investment in girls' education translates directly and quickly into better nutrition for the whole family, better health care, declining fertility, poverty reduction and better overall performance. (United Nations, 2001)

Despite some research that points to the conservative nature of schooling as a socializing agent, investments in girls' schooling are the best investments that governments can make because of their documented high social and economic returns.(Summers 1994 and Stromquist, 1994)

The private rate of return to an additional year of schooling for women is generally at least as large as that for men. Marginal returns for women are higher in Bolivia, Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire, Indonesia, and Thailand, but about equal for men and women in Colombia and Peru. (Schultz, 1991)

Short-term productivity effects of gender inequality in schooling are compounded over time through effects on technology adoption. Higher education levels make female farmers more likely to adopt new agricultural technologies that may raise farm productivity. (World Bank, 2001b)
In 63 countries gains in women's education made the single largest contribution to declines in malnutrition in 1970-1995, accounting for 43 percent of the total. (Smith and Haddad, 2000)

Everything else being equal, countries in which the ratio of female-to-male enrollment in primary or secondary education is less than 0.75 can expect levels of GNP that are roughly 25 percent lower than countries in which there is less gender disparity in education. (Hill and King, 1995)

There is a strong statistical association at the individual level between the number of grades (or levels) of schooling attained (particularly for women) and various subsequent demographic outcomes including age of marriage, the number of births, child health and mortality and children's educational attainment. (Jejeebhoy, 1995; Bledsloe, Casterline, Johnson-Kuhn and Haaga, 1999).

When households with similar resources are compared in seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, children in female headed households have higher school enrollment and completion rates than children in male headed households. (Haddad, Brown, Richter and Smith, 1995)

It is estimated that in Brazil, illiterate women have an average of 6.5 children, whereas women with secondary level studies average 2.5. (Chlebowska, 1990)

**MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**

**Target:**
*To eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015.*

**Indicators:**
- Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education (MDI 9)
- Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24 year olds (MDI 10)
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector* (MDI 11)
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (MDI 12)

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* The indicator on women in wage employment, while useful ignores the important role women play in household work that is generally unremunerated. UNIFEM provides an explanation of why women’s employment in the non-agricultural sector was chosen for the UN Indicator Framework, which provided the basis for the MDG indicators. See UNIFEM, 2000.
**Status:**

There has been a narrowing of the gender gap in education with growth in educational attainment. In Europe and Central Asia and Latin America, average female secondary enrollment rates now exceed male rates, and women have on average about 90 percent as many years of schooling as men. In Sub-Saharan Africa, female secondary enrollment rates were just 14 percent in 1995 and average schooling attainment was just 2.2 years in 1990. In South Asia, women have on average only about half as many years of education as men, and female enrollment rates at the secondary level are still only two thirds of male rates. (World Bank, 2001b)

Gender equality in secondary education enrollment had been achieved by only 11 percent of countries by 1999 and 16 percent more boys than girls were enrolled in secondary education. (UNIFEM, 2000 and UNICEF 2002)

Two-thirds of the world's 876 million illiterates are women; many live in rural areas and many in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia despite improvements in other regions to half or less the levels of 20 years ago. (United Nations, 2000)

Women's share of paid employment in industry and services increased in most regions from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s (with the exception of parts of Eastern Europe) (UNIFEM, 2000, p.10). At the same time, participation rates for men ages 55-64 and 65 and above have been declining (World Bank, 2001b).

In nine developing countries, men spend on average 76 percent of their time in market work and 24 percent in non-market work, while women spend 34 percent of their time on market work and 66 percent of their time on non-market work (UNDP, 1995).

Women earn less than men, (World Bank, 2001b) and generally provide an unequal share of unpaid care to family members (UNIFEM, 2000).

In all regions except East Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia, the average shares of parliamentary seats held by women remained at less than 10 percent between 1975 and 1995. (World Bank, 2001b)

**Gendered pathway:**

Gender equality creates an environment of equal opportunities and power critical for achieving gender equality in other dimensions, such as education, health, and political participation. Reducing gender disparities and empowering women contribute to the fulfillment of international human rights obligations,\(^5\) benefiting women who experience discrimination, and society as a whole. Women's empowerment may mean loss of privilege by men, but may also liberate and empower men. Having more women in public decision-making reduces corruption.

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\(^5\) The Millennium Declaration has a section on "Human rights, democracy and governance" that calls for combating all forms of violence against women and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The benefits to women and to society of stopping violence against women are linked to women's empowerment but this link is not made in the Declaration.
Evidence:

Education (see Goals 1, 2 and 4)

Empowerment
Gender inequalities in education and access to productive assets, employment, or earnings affect power relations between women and men - and thus their relative ability to bargain and influence decisions within their households. (World Bank, 2001b)

In Bangladesh, employment of women has increased their social prestige, control of income, and their decision-making power in the family. (Kabeer 1999, Paul-Majumdar and Begum, 2000)

Increasing women’s independent access to credit empowers them. For example, female borrowing increases female control of nonland assets. (Pitt and Khandker, 1998, Khandker, 1998)

Men's attitudes as proxied by education can be conducive to women's well-being and empowerment. Women's labour force participation in Bangladesh, for example, was found to be more closely associated with male education than with their own, while data from Kenya and Ghana suggest that male education was an important factor in lowering male reproductive goals and bringing them in closer to female goals. (Khandker, 1998)

Men stand to gain as well as lose from women's empowerment. Women's empowerment means the loss of the privileged position that patriarchy allotted to men,... however,... women's empowerment also liberates and empowers men, both in material and psychological terms... they find that they have lost not merely traditional privileges, but also traditional burdens.(Batliwala, 1993)

A study of women's experiences of economic empowerment in South Asia sponsored by UNIFEM and the Aga Khan Foundation, found that when women organize they shape the process of empowerment in ways that are appropriate to their own needs, interests and constraints. And, what may seem like shifts in women's status within their family, community or village often represents a significant shift in women's consciousness, perceptions, security and power. (Carr, Chen and Jhabvala, 1996)

Labor force participation
Women’s entry into waged and salaried work in industry and services does not necessarily mean that they escape from subordination within their families. Moreover, they are often subject to new forms of discrimination in the work place. At the same time as women’s share of paid employment in industry and services is rising, the rights associated with such employment are falling. (UNIFEM, 2000)
In Indonesia, while women receive lower wages than men, on average they receive wage increments that are higher than those that men receive for every additional year of primary schooling. At the secondary level the impact on women’s wages is 50 percent larger than that on men’s. (Behrman and Deolalikar, 1990 and Schultz 1993, 1998)

Care activities of women and girls and the high cost of childcare outside of the home often restrict girls from going to school and women from entering the labor force. (World Bank, 2001b and Connelly, DeGraff, and Levinson, 1996 and 1999)

Women’s participation in the labor force may mean that they have to keep their daughters out of school to work at home. (UNIFEM, 2000)

An increasing number of women are migrating internationally, often as temporary workers in low-paid jobs. (UNIFEM, 2000)

Economic independence makes women less vulnerable to violence in the home; if women can obtain a living in their own right, they are more likely to leave a home where they are beaten or abused. (UNIFEM, 2000)

Political participation
Women’s presence in parliaments and in ministerial positions alters the traditionally male approach to social welfare, legal protection and transparency in government and business (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000).

Where women have greater rights and play a greater role in public life, levels of corruption in government are lower. (World Bank, 2001a and 2001b and Dollar, Fisman and Gatti, 1999)

One of the benefits of having more women in decision-making seems to be reduced corruption. In the Republic of Georgia, firms owned or managed by women are significantly less likely to make unofficial payments to government officials than those owned or managed by men. (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti, 1999)

**MDG 4: Reduce Child Mortality**

**Target:**
Reduce by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 the under-five mortality rate.

**Indicators:**
- Under-five mortality rate (MDI 13)
- Infant mortality rate (MDI 14)
- Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles (MDI 15)
Status:

Worldwide under-five mortality rates are declining; under-five mortality decreased from 94 to 81 per 1,000 births between 1990 and 2000. (United Nations, 2001)

Approximately 11 million children under-five still die annually in developing countries, mostly from preventable diseases (United Nations, 2001) South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have the highest rates of child mortality. (UNICEF, 2002)

Worldwide, reported measles incidence declined by nearly two thirds between 1990 and 1999, but in more than 15 countries, measles vaccination is still less than 50 percent. (UNICEF, 2002)

Gendered pathway:

Women (particularly mothers but also other female caretakers) who have some education, autonomy in terms of having a voice in matters concerning themselves and their families, and control over cash income are key to reducing under-five mortality, and women's education is a key determinant of child immunization.

Evidence:

Schooling (see also Goal 2)
In 25 developing countries, all else being equal, even one to three years of maternal schooling reduces child mortality by about 15 percent, whereas a similar level of paternal schooling achieves only a 6 percent reduction. (Kirk and Pillet, 1998)

If Sub-Saharan Africa had the same female to male ratio of years of schooling as Eastern Europe, or about parity, Africa's under five mortality rate would have been more than 25 percent lower than it was in 1990 (167 per 1000), after controlling for income, average levels of schooling and other regional differences. (Klasen, 1999)

A 10-percentage point increase in female enrollment appears on average to lower the infant mortality rate by 4.1 deaths per 1,000 live births, controlling for factors such as GDP per capita. Countries where girls are only half as likely to go to school as boys have on average 21.1 more infant deaths per 1000 live births than countries with no gender gap, again controlling for other factors. (Hill and King, 1995)

Mother’s education improves nutrition directly through quality of care mothers provide and through mothers’ ability to mitigate adverse shocks such as price changes that might reduce food intake. (Thomas and Strauss, 1992)

A Demographic and Health Survey in more than 40 developing countries shows that the mortality rate of children under five is lower in households where mothers have some primary schooling than in households where they have no schooling and much lower in those where mothers have some secondary schooling. (World Bank, 2001b)
Careful analyses of household survey data from Demographic and Health Surveys has shown that mothers with more education, including secondary education, are more likely to adopt appropriate health-promoting behaviors, such as having young children immunized. (World Bank, 2001b)

Autonomy and command over income (see also Goal 1)
Controlling for the independent effects of per capita income, greater autonomy among women is associated with lower infant mortality. (Boone, 1996)

Bangladesh reduced infant mortality rates by about 25% between 1990-1998 with immunization, campaigns on treating diarrhea, better sanitation and access to safe water, special scholarships for girls, and expansion of micro credit for women. (A Betterworld for All, 2000)

In Brazil, the marginal impact of female controlled income on child survival is 20 times that of male-controlled income. (Thomas, 1990)

**MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health**

**Target:**
Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

**Indicators:**
- Maternal mortality ratio (MDI 16)
- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (MDI 17).

**Status:**

Estimates of maternal mortality for 1995 indicate that about 515,000 women die each year of pregnancy related causes, 99 percent of them in developing countries. (United Nations, 2001)

Average maternal mortality rates are 8 deaths per 100,000 live births in OECD countries and 49 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, but in South Asia they reach as high as 410 and in Sub-Saharan Africa as high as 571. (UNICEF, 1999)

The risks of dying in pregnancy or childbirth are greatest in Sub-Saharan Africa, i.e. 1 in 13 compared to 1 in 157 in Latin America. South Asia has the fewest skilled attendants at delivery, i.e. only 29 % compared to 83 % in Latin America. (UNICEF, 2002)

Globally, skilled attendants and skilled nurses assist only about 56 percent of births. There has been only a small increase in the percentage of births that are attended by skilled personnel in some 53 countries where maternal mortality is generally less severe, and there has been no significant overall change in global maternal mortality ratios. (UNICEF, 2002)

Ninety-nine percent of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries where the absence or shortage of prenatal or delivery care is a major cause of preventable deaths and injuries during pregnancy and childbirth. (World Bank, 2001c)
Gendered pathway:

A mother's life is valued not only in itself, but has value for her family, especially her children, and also for her community and country. Protecting women during maternity has high returns to society as a whole.

Evidence:

When a mother dies, the family and community suffer, and surviving children face higher risks of poverty, neglect or even death. (World Bank, 1993)

Reducing maternal mortality in developing countries brings important social and economic gains because the vast majority of women who die or are seriously injured by maternity related causes are in the prime of their lives, most often with children and other dependents. (UNFPA, 1998-99)

Safe motherhood initiatives "are a sound investment, promising high social and economic returns at low cost." (UNFPA, 1998-99)

Women who space their pregnancies, maintain good health, have few complications during pregnancy and who have healthy children have more productive energy, thus improving their income-earning capacity. (UNFPA, 1998-99)

Safe motherhood interventions bring about improvements that affect the health system more broadly by promoting a functioning primary health care system in the community and referral system linked to a health facility capable of providing essential obstetric care, particularly for emergencies. (UNFPA, 1998-99)

MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Targets:

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Indicators:

HIV prevalence among 15-to-24 year old pregnant women (MDI 18)
Contraceptive prevalence rate (MDI 19)
Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS (MDI 20)
Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria (MDI 21)
Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures (MDI 22)
Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis (MDI 23)
Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (MDI 24)
Status:

In 2001, 3 million people died of AIDS. There are an estimated 36 million people living with HIV/AIDS of which around half are women. Ninety-five percent of those affected are in developing countries. (United Nations, 2000 and 2001)

Of the 5 million adults newly infected with HIV/AIDS, 2.3 million or 46 percent are women. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there are 12-13 women currently infected with the virus for every 10 African men (United Nations, 2000). And among 15-19 year olds, there are four or five infected young women for every infected young man. (UNAIDS, 1999)

AIDS has orphaned more than 13 million children aged 14 or younger. (UNAIDS, 1999) It is expected that the number of AIDS orphans will rise to around 40 million in the next two decades in Sub-Saharan Africa alone. (United Nations, 2001) Many of these orphans are being cared for by elderly women who are themselves poor. (Matshalaga and Powell, 2002)

Among low-risk adults, such as pregnant women, infection rates are higher in cities where there is a large gap between male and female literacy rates. (World Bank, 2001b)

In 2000, malaria killed more than 1 million people, mostly children in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa, malaria related illnesses claim the lives of one out of every 20 children below age five. (McCarthy, Wolf, and Yi Wu, 2000).

WHO estimates that tuberculosis accounted for 1.7 million deaths in 2000. It is a leading infectious cause of death in women worldwide especially during their reproductive years. (Connolly and Nunn, 1996)

Gendered pathway:

In most regions of the world, gender roles influence the transmission of the HIV virus and help determine who is infected. Women-headed households, -including households headed by young girls and elderly grandmothers, increasingly are responsible for the care of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Women play a critical role in protecting families against waterborne and other diseases like malaria and in seeking treatment for tuberculosis.

Evidence:

Because of women's multiple roles in the epidemic - potential 'infectee', caregiver, transmitter of infection - to be successful in halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, we must give particular attention to reaching, working with, and serving women. (Mboi, 1996)

Power differences between men and women are a key issue in the spread of HIV/AIDS, as is lack of education for women (and men) about the pandemic. (UNIFEM, 2000)

Smaller gender gaps in literacy translate into lower HIV infection rates, even after accounting for the effects of per capita income and other factors known to affect HIV prevalence. (World Bank, 2001a)
In Zimbabwe, increasing numbers of orphans are being taken care of by elderly grandmothers. The extended family holds the key to the problem of orphan care. (Matshalaga, 2000)

In 12 communities in Pakistan, contraceptive use was highest in settings with greater choices in schools, including schools for girls. (Sathar, Lloyd, Haque and Mete, 1999)

**MDG 7: Ensure environmental stability**

**Targets:**

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

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

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

**Indicators:**

- Proportion of land area covered by forest (MDI 25)
- Land area protected to maintain biological diversity (MDI 26)
- GDP per unit of energy use (as proxy for energy efficiency) (MDI 27)
- Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) (MDI 28)
- Proportion of people with sustainable access to an improved water source (MDI 29)
- Proportion of people with access to improved sanitation (MDI 30)
- Proportion of people with access to secure tenure (MDI 31)

**Status:**

The livelihoods of around 1 billion rural people are at risk because of desertification and land degradation; nearly 2 million women and children die annually in developing countries from exposure to indoor air pollution (cooking smoke); in poor rural areas lack of water and energy infrastructure can mean long hours for women and girls collecting water and fuel.

**Gendered pathway:**

Women and girls in developing countries, especially in rural communities, are the primary collectors, users, and managers of natural resources for household use. Their input into decisions on environmental conservation is critical for finding successful, practical strategies, and both high productivity and returns to sustainable agriculture are more likely to result when women have durable access to or ownership of productive land.

**Evidence:**

When programs to promote environmental sustainability reach women, they are likely to prove more effective. (OECD, 1999)

In their role as managers of natural resources, women's active involvement in solving problems is a precondition to establishing workable environmental
conservation practices for economic productivity and food supplies. (Michel, 1995)

Secure access to productive land often means women may be more likely or able to adopt long-term environmentally sustainable agricultural practices. (Michel, 1995)

In rural Morocco, having wells or piped water increases the probability that both girls and boys will enroll in school. But the impact is considerably larger for girls, who are responsible for collecting water. (Khandker, Lavy and Filmer, 1994)

Women and men tend to have different responsibilities for domestic purchases. Failure to recognize their different roles as consumers may result in consumption patterns that contribute to environmental damage. (World Bank, 2000)

An irrigation scheme in the Philippines succeeded because it recruited women community organizers; it ensured the membership of both spouses in water user associations, and it actively encouraged women to assume leadership positions. (Quisumbing, 1994)

In resource-depleted areas of India, women spend an average of four to five hours a day collecting household fuel and as a result, girls may drop out of school to help out at home. (World Bank, 1999)

Conclusions

A set of gendered pathways/dimensions for implementing the Millennium Development Goals has been outlined here. The analysis is based on studies that support the argument that education for women and girls, - while a goal in itself, also has important spillover effects contributing to achieving the goals of reducing child mortality, relieving hunger and poverty, and combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Expanding women's access to and command over income and productive resources contributes to poverty reduction, reductions in child mortality, and nutrition security. Women are critical in protecting the environment and ensuring effective use of natural resources including water, soil and trees. In effect, gender is not only an important instrument for achieving the MDGs, but has spillover effects, and provides grounds for targeting.

But, in spite of the evidence showing the benefits of a gender-aware approach to the MDGs, some countries continue to have a preference for not investing, or for "under-investing", in women and girls. Those countries, according to researchers David Dollar and Roberta Gatti, "pay a price... in terms of slower growth and reduced incomes". (Dollar and Gatti, 1999) In the context of the Millennium Declaration, countries that continue to invest more in men and boys than in women and girls will also be guilty of ignoring the fundamental values put forward in the Millennium Declaration.
Without a radical shift from 'gender blind' to 'gender responsive' development policies, budgets and programs, the Millennium Development Goals will remain platitudes. Gender should become the "default" mechanism for donors, governments and communities if they are truly committed to attaining the MDGs. The social and economic returns to investing in women and girls and closing the gender gap are high and there is an ethical and human rights rationale for doing so. Evidence from countries around the globe confirms that if there are large and persistent gender inequalities, societies will pay the price of more poverty, more malnutrition, more illness, and more deprivations of other kinds.
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