

**GENDER, DEVELOPMENT AND THE UN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
DISCOURSES AND POLICIES AIMED AT ENGENDERING THE UN MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

By
Kadri Aavik

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Department of Gender Studies*

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Supervisor: Prof. Susan Zimmermann
Second reader: Prof. Eva Fodor

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Abstract

In this thesis I examine discourses and policies around engendering the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight quantifiable development targets adopted in the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000, to be achieved by the year 2015. I investigate gender mainstreaming into the MDGs by examining various influences to the UN in incorporating the dimension of gender into the MDGs as well as by considering feminist critique on the MDGs.

It is argued here that the gender dimension in the MDGs should rather be considered as a reductive reformulation of gender-related commitments adopted in international development conferences since the 1980s, and part of the UN's overall gender mainstreaming efforts, as opposed to involving substantial redefinitions or reorientations that would have emerged shortly before 2000. Further, this research suggests although the UN emphasizes the contribution of the civil society in influencing the preparation process of the MDGs, particularly relating to the inclusion of gender elements in the goals, the civil society, as represented by NGOs and the international women's movement, played a much more significant role after the MDGs had been officially announced by the UN. Their major contribution has involved drawing explicit links between gender and various aspects of poverty and hence emphasizing the importance of considering the gender aspect in MDG-based strategies and policies aimed at alleviating poverty on local and national levels. In addition, I show that the MDGs took as their basis the International Development Goals (IDGs), devised by the OECD in 1996, a fact which is not explicitly articulated in the background material to the MDGs published by the UN.

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Introduction

The present thesis aims to examine the discourses and policies around engendering the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight quantifiable development targets adopted in the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000, to be achieved by the year 2015. I am taking a look at the historical aspects of the UN's incorporating gender into the MDGs by considering discourses around this process as well as studying the UN policies and recommendations, and suggestions addressed to the UN (including those following the official adoption of the goals) on how to integrate gender into strategies of achieving the MDGs. The thesis investigates the political process of establishing the MDGs in order to locate the debates around adopting them with the focus on mainstreaming gender into these targets.

My reasons for having chosen this particular topic have to do with the practical experience I have had in the areas of development co-operation and global education, as I participated in a four-month development project which involved teaching in a township school in South Africa in 2005. Apart from this practical experience, I do not have extensive theoretical background knowledge in the field of development, and thus I have decided to compensate for this lack in choosing to write my thesis on a topic in the field of gender and development.

My contribution to the existing scholarship in conducting this research entails tracing the (feminist) influences of the various agents involved in engendering the MDGs as well as identifying major points of feminist critique on the gender aspects within the MDGs after they had been adopted. To my knowledge, such kind of analysis has not been explicitly conducted before.

Research questions and main arguments

The central question of my research is: How was gender mainstreamed into the MDGs and which actors were involved in this process? In addition, I have identified the following sub-questions, which support my overarching research question: Has gender been implicitly built into the MDGs and what is the relation of the gender dimension in the MDGs to gender in the major development models as conceptualized in the international development discourse? How are the MDGs seen from the perspective of a variety of feminist critique? How and to what extent have the civil society, feminist groups and other organizations pursuing a gender/feminist agenda influenced the establishment of the MDGs and what are their major points of critique on the addressing these goals?

My main arguments, which I support with evidence in the body of my thesis, are the following. First, I argue that, given the relevance that gender as a category in devising development policies had acquired in international development discourse and policy-making (largely as a result of the UN World Conferences on Women) by the time the MDGs were being drafted, that is, by the late 1990s, it would have been unlikely that a set of major universal development targets, such as the MDGs, could have disregarded gender as one of its core elements. Yet, I suggest that the gender dimension in the MDGs should rather be viewed as a reductive reformulation of gender-related targets and commitments adopted in these conferences, as opposed to involving substantial redefinitions or reorientations that would have emerged shortly before 2000. In addition, the inclusion of gender elements in the MDGs should be viewed as part of the UN's overall gender mainstreaming efforts. Second, I show that the MDGs took as their basis the International Development Goals (IDGs), devised by the OECD in 1996, a fact which is not explicitly articulated in the background material to the MDGs published by the UN. As for the gender dimension in these goals, the gender-related

commitments made in the UN World Conferences on Women might have influenced how gender was conceptualized in the IDGs. Finally, I maintain that, although the UN emphasizes the contribution of the civil society in influencing the preparation process of the MDGs and, particularly, the inclusion of gender elements in the goals, my analysis suggests that the civil society - i.e. NGOs and the international women's movement - relating to gender as a thematic area, played a much more significant role *after* the MDGs had been officially announced by the UN. The major contribution of feminist civil society organizations (CSOs) and scholars debating over the position of the category of gender in the MDGs has been drawing explicit links between gender and various aspects of poverty and hence emphasizing the importance of considering the gender aspect in MDG-based strategies and policies aimed at alleviating poverty on local and national levels.

Sources and methods

In conducting this research, I am using various types of documents, such as reports, policy documents, and proceedings that have been published by different bodies such as the UN Millennium Project, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and other organizations and agencies dealing with development, as well as feminist critique in the form of essays and articles by individual authors considering the MDGs from a feminist perspective. In addition, I draw upon literature dealing with gender mainstreaming in development discourse in general. The reason why I am investigating this diverse body of literature is that it will provide a more integrative overview of the perspectives of the different agents who are engaged in or influencing the international discourse and policy-making in the field of gender and development and the MDGs in particular. The main research methods I will be using in analyzing these diverse types of texts identified above is content and discourse analysis, with the aim to see how certain concepts and themes have been investigated in these texts in order to answer my research questions.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 of my thesis begins with a review of major development models (Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD)), serving as an introduction to the relevant gender-related concepts and themes in the international development discourse. In addition, I consider (feminist) critique of these models and how the latter model relates to gender mainstreaming as an emerging approach in the international development discourse in the 1990s. The second part of the chapter outlines how the UN conceptualizes development in relation to women and gender and gives an overview of the major UN bodies and agencies engaged in producing development discourse and policies focusing on women and gender issues. In addition, I consider the history of engendering development policy and practice by the UN and gender mainstreaming within the UN system. An overview of the WID and GAD development models and their relation to gender mainstreaming, as well as an introduction to the UN's development discourses and policies, as provided in this chapter, serve as starting point to the gender discourses specifically around the MDGs that I am analyzing in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 2, I examine the MDGs from various aspects related to the category of gender. First, I give an overview of the MDGs, followed by an outline of how the gender dimension in the MDGs relates to the WID and GAD development models as discussed in the previous chapter. Next, I consider the MDGs in relation to national and local contexts and look at the monitoring process of the MDGs. The second part of the chapter aims to investigate who, how and when influenced the inclusion of gender in the MDGs during the drafting process of these goals, tracing the reports of the major conferences of the UN and its bodies engaged in producing international development discourse and policies working towards establishing the MDGs in the period of time prior to the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. I identify the major agents involved in this discourse and the key events relating to gender in development,

taking place in the arena of international development policy-making as represented by the UN.

Chapter 3 considers feminist critique and recommendations regarding the gender dimension in the MDGs in the period of time following the adoption of the MDGs, that is, the early 2000s, as my findings suggest that a substantial amount of critique on the address of the MDGs was articulated at that time. This includes critique on gender indicators which are used in measuring the implementation of the MDGs and feminist critique on these. My analysis in Chapter 3 refers back to the UN Conferences on Women discussed in the previous chapter.

Chapter 1: Gender in international development. Discourse, policies and the UN

Serving as an introduction to the relevant gender-related issues in the international development discourse and policy as well as within the UN system, this chapter first outlines the major development models in the international development discourse – Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) – as the UN development discourse and policies concerning women’s issues have been influenced by research conducted in the fields of WID and GAD. The last sections of the chapter consider gender mainstreaming within the UN system and the UN’s conceptualization of development, providing a basis for the discussion of the inclusion of the gender dimension into the MDGs as elaborated on in the next chapter.

From Women in Development to gender mainstreaming

Historically, the WID discourse in the arena of international development policy coincides with the UN Decade for Women (1976 – 1985) and the UN World Conferences on Women, taking place at that period, and draws many of its insights from the Western liberal feminist discourses in the 1970s which called for equal rights for women (UN INSTRAW). The WID approach emerged in the 1970s as a challenge to the “top-down” development theories which served as basis for designing development policies at that time. “Top-down” development models impose allegedly universal policies on local contexts without paying attention to the explicit needs of local populations, as opposed to “bottom-up” or people-centered/participatory approaches, which stress that the needs of local residents and political sub-groups should be the starting point of successful development policies. The latter

approaches emphasize “subjective well-being” over an “exclusive focus on GDP or even human development indicators” (Richardson & Hamilton, 2006).

One of the key insights provided by the WID approach was the recognition that modernization affects men and women differently and as a consequence, the processes of modernization and economic development in Third World countries would lead to the overall deterioration of women’s position (Razavi & Miller, 1995, p. 2). As liberal feminist discourses suggested, women’s disadvantages could be eliminated by “introducing equal opportunity programmes and anti-discriminatory legislation, or by freeing labor markets” (ibid., p. 3) while disregarding power relations between the two sexes. When translated into the context of development, this approach paid attention primarily to women’s productive labor and focused on their integration into local economies (which primarily refer to systems of production and labor markets in this context), disregarding issues of social welfare and reproductive matters (ibid.). Another highly important source of influence on the WID approach was the study by a Danish economist Ester Boserup, entitled *Women’s Role in Economic Development* (1970), serving as a critique of colonial (agricultural) policies which disregarded Third World women’s economic productivity and used patriarchal Western models to define “appropriate” female tasks, devising and imposing development policies on Third World nations accordingly (Tinker, 2004; Jaquette, 2004; Jain, 2005; UN INSTRAW; Pearson & Jackson, 2000).

These two approaches constituted major influence on WID and in fact shared many similarities, the most important one being the integration of women into economic structures and development programmes. As pointed out by Pearson and Jackson (2000, p. 2), liberal feminist agenda shared this concern with WID: while the former aimed to achieve gender

equality by “extending education and employment opportunities to women in Western states”, the latter sought to “integrate women into [development] policy and practice”, thereby attempting to achieve gender equality in development.

Drawing from these insights, the advocates of WID argued that if women were granted the same privileges and rights that men had and were brought into the productive sphere more fully, not only would they make a positive contribution to development, but they would also be able to improve their status vis-a-vis men (Razavi & Miller, 1995, p. 5; Jain, 2005, p. 57). In many ways, the WID approach advocated the integration of women in development programmes.

An important point of criticism on WID, articulated by Suellen Huntington, in the study “Issues in women’s role in economic development: Critique and alternatives” (1975), challenges WID’s assumption that prior to colonialism and the introduction of Western economic and agricultural development policies, African women were self-sufficient farmers enjoying equal status with men (Razavi & Miller, 1995, p. 5). As this historical evidence can be disputed and it can instead be argued that women have always had more inferior social and economic status than men, it follows that equality should rather be pursued as a goal on its own merits, rather than relying on such questionable claims (ibid.). This point is made from the side of those arguing that gender equality should stand as a goal on its own because in case gender equality is being linked to achieving other aims by drawing connections between gender equality and meeting a certain other goal, contesting these connections might lead to rejecting the relevance of gender equality altogether. This issue is relevant to my analysis in later sections of my thesis, where I consider whether the achievement of gender equality, set as a goal in the MDGs, has been prioritized as an aim on its own or whether is rather seen as a

tool facilitating the meeting other goals. However, on the practical level, one of the reasons why WID emphasized that gender equality is a means to solve other development challenges rather than a just target on its own was that this approach was more effective in lobbying the feminist agenda within the UN system and on the arena of the entire international development discourse.

GAD as a development model in the international development discourse emerged largely as a result of criticism to the WID approach. According to the main points of that criticism, WID disregarded the “relational nature of [women’s] subordination” and power relations between women and men while considering women as an isolated and homogeneous category (Razavi & Miller, 1995, pp. 12-13). The conceptual shift from WID to GAD did not only constitute a change in language, but reflected the idea that “it is not women *per se* who are to be problematized (...) but also points to the centrality of gender analysis in the development of effective policies at all levels” (Pearson & Jackson, 2000, p. 5).

The GAD approach attempts to reveal how “gendered subordination is constructed by a variety of institutions: the household, the market, the state, and the community” (UN INSTRAW). It also focuses more closely on gender relations and the socially constructed gender differences, seeking to challenge them (Reeves & Baden, 2000). In general, the GAD approach, being more concerned with empowerment and participation, uses gender analysis as one of its principal methodologies (UN INSTRAW).

Constituting an important element in GAD is the bottom-up approach to development that this model is emphasizing, which implies collective action in dealing with development issues and calls for an increased involvement of the civil society, as represented by NGOs (ibid., p. 37).

One of the most substantial points of critique on GAD addresses the practical implementation of the basic idea behind the GAD model on the policy level, that is, the shift from the category of “women” to that of “gender” which aims to challenge existing gender relations. For instance, in the NGO Forum taking place in Beijing, 1995, several NGO representatives articulated the concern that focusing on gender, rather than on women, is counter-productive, as it turns the discourse back to men, “denying the very existence of women specific disadvantage” (Baden & Goetz, 2000, p. 21). A related concern expressed by NGOs and development workers in the same Forum pointed out that several developing countries are not ready to adopt the GAD approach as a basis of designing development policies, since they “have not yet addressed the problems of women in development” (ibid.). Perhaps for these reasons, despite theoretical differences between the WID and GAD approaches, critics have suggested that “the distinction is not as clear in practice, and that development institutions have remained focused on WID efficiency criteria.” (UN INSTRAW”).

I return to WID and GAD in Chapter 2 where I consider how gender in the MDGs relates to these theoretical development models.

In the following section I look at the emergence of gender mainstreaming as a dominant approach dealing with women’s and gender issues in development. I consider this aspect because gender mainstreaming is relevant to my analysis of the MDGs which looks at feminist efforts to integrate gender into the MDGs.

Gender mainstreaming became a dominant theme in the international development policy circles dealing with gender issues in the 1990s, emerging from the earlier WID discourse calling to integrate women in development (Baden & Goetz, 2000, p. 20). Arising after the

UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi, 1985, gender mainstreaming called for “systematic procedures and mechanisms within organizations – particularly government and public institutions – for explicitly taking account of gender issues at all stages of policy-making and programme design and implementation” (ibid.). These insights stem from the GAD approach which takes into account women’s contributions and needs in devising policies and thereby seeks to bring about changes in existing programmes and policies with the overall aim to achieve gender equality.

Development and the UN, the UN structures concerned with development and women’s issues

This section first briefly outlines how the UN conceptualizes the notion of development as articulated in the UN development discourse and policies and lists the UN bodies dealing with development and women within the UN system. It is followed by a look at the history of engendering development policy and practice by the UN and gender mainstreaming within the UN system. These historical aspects of engendering development policies within the UN are relevant to my discussion on the gender elements in the MDGs in Chapter 2, as engendering the MDGs took place in the framework of the overall gender mainstreaming efforts within the UN.

In the course of the previous decades, the concept of ‘development’ has changed meanings as a result of shifts in the global political context: while in the early years of development, it was primarily defined in terms of national economic growth, it gradually became conceptualized through the needs of people and “local self-reliance” (Weiss, Forsythe, & Coate, 2001, p. 252). “By the mid-1990s, official UN definitions of development were stated in “sustainable-human-development” terms” (p. 228).

The principal UN body dealing with development issues is the UN Development Programme (UNDP), providing development assistance in the form of advice, training and grants to developing countries. The UNDP operates under the UN Economic and Social Council and was one of the founding members of the UN Development Group (UNDG), bringing together over 25 UN agencies engaged in development. The primary UN institutional bodies engaged in women's issues are the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. An important UN body regarding gender and women's issues is the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, which, established in 1997, oversees and supports gender mainstreaming efforts within the entire UN system. As for the UN bodies dealing specifically with the MDGs, the primary body engaged in working with the MDGs between 2002 and 2006 was the Millennium Project and its 10 thematic task forces, whose work is being continued by the UNDP's MDG Support team as of January 2007.

The history of engendering development policy and practice by the UN

In this subsection I give an overview of the UN World Conferences on Women, which constituted an important influence on efforts to introduce women's issues into the UN policies as well as to the later gender mainstreaming efforts within the UN system, while the agendas and outcomes of the later conferences already represent more specific influences on the MDGs. I will return to the specific outcomes of these conferences in the next chapter, where I indicate how these relate to the MDGs.

In 1985, 15 years prior to the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, the development issues appearing in the MDGs, such as "eliminating gender disparities in education at all levels, achieving universal primary education (which require massive efforts to educate girls), reducing maternal mortality, and (...) eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (whose victims

are overwhelmingly women and children), (...) appeared on no authoritative lists of the most pressing [global] development problems, except those compiled by scholars and policy makers associated with the Women in Development movement and reflected in the resolutions of the 1985 Nairobi conference that marked the end of the first UN Decade for Women” (Murphy, 2006, p. 201). Murphy suggests that the shift in the UN development paradigm towards the inclusion of women’s issues in the international development agenda started from the early 1970s when the UN “began to be aware of the centrality of women to development” (ibid.), which coincides with the emergence of the WID approach in academia and in the international development discourse. These efforts to include a gender perspective in the UN discourse and policies intensified in the following decades. Hence it is crucial to examine the UN World Conferences on Women at that period of time in order to learn when and how the key gender issues which were later introduced in the MDGs, began to be formulated.

The idea of the UN World Conferences on Women emerged from the gradually strengthening women’s movement in the 1970s and the UN female employees’ demands to end gender-based discrimination at their workplace (Tinker, 2004, p. xix). Although each conference had a unique agenda, altogether they constitute a “consequent series and systematic process towards the aim of advancement and empowerment of women” (Pietilä, 2007, p. 42). These international conferences started within the framework of the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985), which as argued by Zinsser, was a “quiet revolution, largely ignored by the media”, a gradual process as a result of which “women ceased to be the ‘invisible majority’” (Zinsser, 1990, p. 20). The overall theme of the Decade was Equality-Development-Peace, these three objectives being considered “interrelated and mutually reinforcing, such that the advancement of one contributes to the advancement of the others” (Pietilä, 2007, p. 42). The Decade

brought about a “critical change in thinking at the UN Secretariat and among Member States concerning the status of women” (Pietilä, 2007, p. 37). Some of the most important outcomes of this decade included the establishment and institutionalization of officials responsible for women’s issues in national governments as well as within the UN system and even more importantly, the quantification of women’s lives in the form of collecting gender-disaggregated statistics, which the UN required governments to collect, thereby helping to make inequalities more visible (Pietilä, 2007, p. 43). When considering the overall impact of the Decade, Zinsser suggests that in addition to the abundance of official documents and statistics issued on women’s matters, an important intangible aspect should also be considered, as “never before had women’s voices, women’s concerns and women’s perspectives been so clearly presented and so clearly heard” (1990, p. 23) as well as conveying the message to the international development community that “women live in an inferior condition and that this situation is not acceptable” (p. 24). As an important outcome of the Decade, women began to be seen no longer as “instruments for development”, but as “intellectuals, policy-makers, decision-makers, planners and contributors, and beneficiaries of development” and their human rights and dignity started to be recognized as “values in their own right. (Pietilä, 2007, p. 55)”

In this section I present the key outcomes of these UN World Conferences on Women. In the 1st UN Conference on Women in Mexico City, 1975, the UN General Assembly identified three objectives which became the basis for the UN’s work on women’s issues. The first two of them are related to women in development, specifically, “full gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination” and “the integration and full participation of women in development” (UN, 2005). An important outcome of the conference was the adoption of the World Plan of Action, which urged governments and the international community to follow

“a set of minimum targets, to be met by 1980, that focused on securing equal access for women to resources such as education, employment opportunities, political participation, health services, housing, nutrition and family planning” (Choike - a Portal on Southern Civil Societies). This conference marked a shift in how women were perceived in relation to development, as it was realized that development without full participation of women was impossible (*ibid.*). In addition to these issues, an important outcome of the conference was the establishment of INSTRAW and UNIFEM – UN entities which operate in the area of women and development, conducting both research and practical activities.

The key outcome of the Second World Conference on women and gender equality in Copenhagen, 1980, was the identification of three spheres requiring measures in order to achieve equality, peace and development: women’s and men’s equal access to education, employment opportunities and adequate health care services (UN, 2005), which in many ways is a reaffirmation of the themes outlined in the previous conference.

The most important result of the UN Conference on Women in Nairobi 1985 and in fact, one of the most significant documents produced during the UN Decade for Women, was the formulation of the document “Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 1986-2000” (FLS). “In adopting these Strategies, 157 States joined in making a commitment to take concrete measures by the year 2000 to eliminate all forms of sex-based discrimination” (Pietilä & Vickers, 1996, p. 107). Importantly, these FLS contained a request to the UN Secretary-General to initiate the System-wide Medium-term Plan for Women and Development, 1990-1995, adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council in 1987. The Plan, based on the FLS, aims to “translate the development aspects of the FLS into a consistent an efficient approach to guide the planning and programming for individual

organizations of the UN System” (ibid., p. 108). As the UN points out, the Nairobi Conference “recognized that gender equality was not an isolated issue, but encompassed all areas of human activity” and hence “it was necessary for women to participate in all spheres, not only in those relating to gender” (UN, 2005).

The most important outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (PfA), adopted in the Beijing Declaration by 189 governments, commits them to ensure that “a gender perspective is reflected in all (...) [their] policies and programmes” (United Nations, 2001, p. ix), building on “commitments made during the United Nations Decade for Women 1976-1985, [...] at the Nairobi Conference, as well as on other related commitments and agreements achieved in the series of United Nations global summits and conferences held in the 1990s” (ibid., p. 5). The PfA highlighted several approaches “as important strategies for the promotion of women’s advancement and achievement of gender equality”, which included “the mainstreaming strategy, the life-cycle approach, partnership between women and men, promotion and protection of human rights and integration of gender concerns in policies and programmes for sustainable development (United Nations, 2001, p. 7).” In addition, the PfA highlighted twelve critical areas of concern which were recognized as main obstacles to women’s advancement. These included the following broad areas: (1) the effect of poverty on women, (2) unequal and inadequate access to education and training, (3) women’s access to health care, (4) violence against women, (5) the impact of armed conflict on women, (6) gender inequalities in relation to economic structures and access to resources, (7) inequalities between men and women in decision-making and sharing power, (8) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, (9) inadequacies in promoting and protecting women’s human rights, (10) stereotypical representation of women in the media, (11) women’s relation

to the environment and environmental protection, and (12) discrimination against the girl-child. I will return to these critical areas of concern in Chapter 2 when I consider their relation to the MDGs.

In addition to the official UN World Conferences on Women, an important role in engaging in women's issues in the international development discourse, was played by NGO forums, taking place parallel to the major UN conferences on women, participated by women's organizations, women activists and researchers. The impact of the NGO forums on the official UN conferences and resolutions adopted on these is rather indirect, as it is extremely difficult for women to directly influence decisions made at world conferences, and thus, their efforts should be concentrated on lobbying their governments and providing recommendations to inter-governmental bodies (Pietilä, 2007, p. 52).

Gender mainstreaming within the UN system

Having mentioned earlier how gender mainstreaming emerged in the arena of international development discourse in general, this section outlines how it became institutionalized within the UN system in particular.

As the WID approach was gradually being replaced by GAD in the arena of international development discourse, the UN began placing increasing emphasis on gender mainstreaming within the organization as well as in its development policies. The principle of mainstreaming gender, with the ultimate aim to achieve gender equality, as the central element of all UN interventions, including the areas of policy development, research, planning and implementation, was established by the Beijing Platform of Action (United Nations, 2001, p. 7). As defined in report of the UN's Economic and Social Council, issued on September 18, 1997, gender mainstreaming "is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and

experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality” (UN Economic and Social Council, 1997, p. 2). Since 1997, gender mainstreaming efforts within the UN system are supported, monitored and overseen by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI). While the OSAGI sets as its priority the promotion of gender equality, it at the same time realizes the need to complement gender mainstreaming with specific interventions targeted at women’s empowerment and advancing women’s issues in particular (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, 2001, p. 1), which suggests the awareness that the GAD approach might not always be sufficient and in particular contexts the need to rely more extensively on WID might arise.

Chapter 2: The MDGs and gender

In this chapter I explore discourses around engendering the MDGs during the process of drafting the goals. Locating the discourses around the dimension of gender in the MDGs often cannot be separated from examining how the MDGs as an entire set of development targets were formed, since gender is conceptualized by the UN as a central element linking all the goals.

My aim in this chapter is to present evidence to the following arguments. First, in view of the gender-related commitments articulated in the UN World Conferences, gender as a category in devising development policies had acquired such relevance in the international development discourse and policy-making by the time the MDGs were being drafted, that it would have been unlikely that a set of major universal development targets such as the MDGs, could have disregarded gender as one of its core elements. Yet, I suggest that the gender dimension in the MDGs should rather be viewed as a reductive reformulation of gender-related commitments adopted in international development conferences starting from 1985 and part of the UN's overall gender mainstreaming efforts, as opposed to involving substantial redefinitions or reorientations that would have come into play shortly before 2000. Second, I point out in this chapter that the MDGs were substantially based on the International Development Goals (IDGs), a set of development targets devised by the OECD in 1996, a fact which the UN does not explicitly mention in its discourses on the background to the MDGs. Finally, I argue that although the UN emphasizes the contribution of the civil society in influencing the preparation process the MDGs and particularly the inclusion of gender elements in the goals, my analysis suggests that the civil society as relating to gender

as a thematic area, constituting NGOs and the international women's movement, played a much more significant role after the MDGs had been officially announced by the UN.

While it is often not easy to establish a direct link between a certain gender aspect in the MDGs and its discussion in the international development discourse, it is possible to identify the major issues of debate around the MDGs, the agents in these discourses and when they occurred, as well as relevant gender and development related events on the international arena at the time, which is the aim of this chapter. In addition, regarding the evolvement of gender issues in the international development discourse, I argue that the UN's initiative of incorporating gender as the central element of all the MDGs should be viewed in the framework of the overall efforts of mainstreaming the gender perspective into all programmes and policies within the UN system which the organization has gradually been pursuing since the 1970s. Hence, positioning gender as the central element of all the MDGs, starting from the discursive level, and making it as a separate goal in itself, is not a new issue suddenly appearing in the MDGs, but a logical continuation considering the progress of the gender mainstreaming agenda within the UN. I suggest that one of the reasons why gender elements in the MDGs have received a wide attention and (feminist) critique has to do with the scope and impact of the MDGs on the level of global development policy, as the MDGs constitute a global policy framework according to which specific country strategies are developed. The MDGs, being devised and articulated on the international development arena, serve as basis for creating location-specific policies, since each particular local context is faced with different challenges and each recommendation in the MDGs might not apply to specific country or regional settings. Hence, the MDGs should be treated as a broad discursive framework rather than strategies ready to be implemented in every context.

Before I go into my analysis of the political process of including gender into the MDGs, a critical remark about the use of language in the sources, and its consequences for the analysis, is in place. My research of the UN documents has shown that a typical characteristic of the UN official discourse around the efforts of drafting the MDGs and other development targets within the UN is the construction of an abstract concept referred to as the “international community” as the agent involved in devising these development targets. Such abstract identification of agents also concerns those actors who are articulating criticism towards the gender dimension in the MDGs and are being identified in my source materials in similar abstract terms, such as "women", "NGOs", "women's organizations", "women from around the world", "the international women's movement", without any further specification. In addition to that, the nature of the UN discourses and the language used in the organization's publications tends to be rather impersonal with an extensive use of the passive voice, focusing on decisions taken and implemented, rather than mentioning the specific actors behind certain resolutions and policies. Also, the majority of the UN documents on development present discursive outcomes and end results outlining (envisioned) policies and statements rather than providing details on the drafting processes of certain policies. These issues make it difficult to trace specific influences on the UN resolutions and policies without focusing on draft documentation of various steps leading up to the creation of the final documents. Although I feel somewhat uncomfortable using these abstract and very general terms to refer to the actors involved in influencing the discourses around the MDGs and not being able to identify them explicitly, I realize that considering the number of agents as a result of whose collective efforts the MDGs as universal development targets emerged, it is perhaps understandable that the role of any particular organization or let alone individual cannot specifically be pointed out without going deeper into much more detailed, and not readily available evidence.

Before tracing influences on the inclusion of the gender dimension in the MDGs, I introduce the Goals and consider them in relation to national and local contexts.

Overview of the MDGs

The MDGs, a “set of eight time bound, quantifiable targets to overcome human deprivation” (UNDG, 2001-2007) were adopted in the UN Millennium Declaration in September 2000 by a 189 nations, mainstreaming “a set of inter-connected and mutually reinforcing development goals into a global agenda” (Background to Millennium Development Goals):¹

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

These 8 MDGs comprise 18 targets whose progress is measured by 48 indicators. The target for Goal 3 is eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education in all levels of education by 2015 and it is measured by the following 4 indicators (UN Statistics Division, 2003):

1. Equal ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
2. Equal ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year-olds
3. Increase in the numbers of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
4. Increase in the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments.

It should be pointed out that although only Goal 3 explicitly focuses on gender issues, several other targets and indicators are related to issues specifically concerning women such as Goal 5 - Improve Maternal Health and Target 7 of Goal 6 (HIV Prevalance Among 15-24 year-old

¹ A full list of the MDGs with all targets and indicators is provided in Appendix 2

pregnant women). As the systematic collection and use of sex-disaggregated data constitutes an important aspect of gender mainstreaming within the UN system (UNDP, 2006, p. 4; Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, 2001), the UN in its reports and guidelines to policy makers encourages the collection of sex-disaggregated data (where possible). However, this suggestion has not substantially found its way to the MDGs, as besides these four global indicators used by the UN to measure progress towards Goal 3, only a few other indicators collect sex-disaggregated data. I will return to the MDG targets and indicators involving the gender dimension in Chapter 3 when I present feminist critique articulated on the address of these targets and indicators.

In order to devise strategies for achieving the MDGs, the UN Secretary-General commissioned The Millennium Project in 2002. The establishment of this body triggered substantial discourses and activities around the MDGs, especially those pertaining to the relationship of the MDGs as a global framework to national contexts, subsequent to the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. The work of the Millennium Project, comprised of 10 thematic Task Forces, including researchers, policy-makers, NGO representatives, and experts from the UN agencies and the private sector, culminated in the publication of the report *Investing in Development: A Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (UN Millennium Project, 2002-2006). Since January 1, 2007, the Millennium Project has been integrated into the UNDP, where the MDG-focused work is being continued by the UNDP's MDG Support team.

The gender dimension in the MDGs in relation to the history of the Women in Development and Gender and Development approaches

In this section I consider how gender in the MDGs as a practical policy framework engages with the theoretical models outlined in Chapter 1, with the aim to determine whether gender

in the MDGs follows more the WID or the GAD approach and whether gender-related targets in the MDGs have been conceptualized according to a “top-down” or participatory approach as defined by Richardson and Hamilton, as introduced in Chapter 1.

When devising contemporary development policies involving women’s issues, the UN in its official discourse claims to use GAD as the theoretical model behind these policies (DAW, 1999, pp. vii-viii), maintaining that gender should be a central element in all these policies. I suggest, in contrast, that the way how gender has been conceptualized in the MDGs follows more the WID model.

The MDGs are quantifiable and numerical targets, moving towards gender equality as defined in quantitative terms (such as the proportion of women in national parliaments, the ratio of girls to boys in primary education etc.). In ways how gender has been conceptualized in the MDGs, and their targets and indicators, the focus is rather on simply bringing in sex-disaggregated statistics, an approach which does not challenge gender relations behind these statistics, as I show in Chapter 3. This indicates following the principles of the WID model, which highlights the importance of supplementing existing development discourse and policies with women’s issues. Also, as I will later show, much of the international development discourse and policies, including the MDGs, operate from the stance that addressing women’s concerns is an essential means to contributing to overall development rather than serving as a goal on its own, which is indicative of the WID approach. Yet, at the same time, the UN, influenced by feminist discourses, has been increasingly emphasizing the centrality of gender as an element linking all the MDGs (UNDP, 2003) and furthermore, as a core aspect in all development policies it devises which suggests a shift towards the GAD approach.

The MDGs formulated as universal targets applicable to any context could be viewed as following a top-down development approach. However, when taken as a framework for devising location-specific policies which involve local residents and take as a basis country-specific issues, the MDGs can be employed as bottom-up or people-centered approaches. This is being achieved via the MDG-based national strategies, which devise country-specific targets based on the overall MDGs framework. I consider these national strategies in the next section.

MDGs in relation to the practical policy level

The official UN resolutions are legally non-binding to member states, that is, they lack the force of law, yet, “their political and moral power is considerable, and consequently they provide activists in individual countries and internationally, as well as the UN system, with powerful tools for change” (Tinker, 2004, p. xx). As for the role of the MDGs in relation to national contexts, the UNDG stresses the need to reach the MDGs at the country level by “explicitly incorporating their targets and time horizons into key economic policy decisions, national planning documents, and requests for development assistance” (UNDG, 2001-2007), stressing that “each region will require tailored strategies and interventions to achieve the MDGs” (UN Millennium Project, 2005, p. 23).

While the MDGs have been conceptualized on the highest level of international development discourse, the UN emphasizes that they should be treated “not as abstract ambitions but practical policy objectives” (UN Millennium Project, 2005, p. 55). On the practical level, the link between the MDGs and their implementation on local levels is achieved by the so-called country-level MDG Reports (MDGRs) which the countries submit to the UNDP and whose purpose is to track progress towards achieving the MDGs. I will further discuss the monitoring process and the MDGRs in the next section. Importantly, each country is flexible to set its own targets on its way to achieving the MDGs in these reports. Hence, each country

is able to determine, based on its own particular context, which are the most crucial development issues to be addressed in order to achieve the MDGs.

When considering which countries the goals apply to, the same UN Millennium Project report suggests that “the goals are relevant wherever poverty exists” (p. 6), yet MDG targets and indicators do not pertain to (Western) countries which have been labeled as developed. While the UN does not explicitly list the countries which should use MDGs as development targets, it is clear that the countries considered as part of the global South are subject to MDG-based development policies, while the role of the global North is to assist them in their efforts. This becomes evident when looking at the MDGRs submitted to the UN. The list includes reports submitted by 134 countries (UNDG, 1997-2007), only two of which are from developed nations (France and Portugal), emphasizing the role of these countries as donors of development assistance. However, a few Central European countries, such as Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary, which are not considered developing countries, have presented their MDGRs to the UNDP where they have elaborated their own MDG based strategies. For instance, the Czech Republic has devised its own country-specific target for Goal 3 – reducing differences in the earnings of men and women (Millennium Development Goals Report - Czech Republic, 2004).

In addition to the MDGRs, monitoring the progress of the MDGs on local levels takes place via tracking the progress of the 48 MDG indicators, which are basis for regional and global reports. At the global level, the UN Secretary-General reports annually to the General Assembly and presents a more comprehensive report every five years, while at the country level, the UN Country Team supports governments in compiling national MDGRs (UNDG, 2001, p. 2).

Guidelines for preparing national MDGRs are outlined in the document *Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals at the Country Level* and an updated version of the same document, *Country Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals*, issued by the UNDG in 2001 and 2003 respectively. According to the second guidance document, the purpose of the MDGRs is to provide public information and social mobilization, as opposed to detailed analysis and policy recommendations (UNDG, 2003, pp. 1-2). Hence, the MDGRs constitute advocacy and awareness raising tools drawing attention to global development challenges as outlined in the MDGs.

A comparison of these two documents provides insightful information regarding the discourses around the gender dimension in the MDGs as well as the origin of the MDGs, indicating important shifts in the UN discourse, relating to my main points in this chapter. Both guidance documents include a section providing background information to the MDGs. While in the earlier document, published in 2001, the UNDG refers to the International Development Goals (IDGs), briefly mentioning that they have been incorporated into the MDGs, no mention of the IDGs is made in the second document, issued in 2003, where the UNDG states that “the MDGs help to reinforce strategies to achieve other internationally agreed objectives reached at world summits and global conferences during the 1990s. They build on the outcomes of these conferences” (UNDG, 2003, p. 1). The comparison of the two documents brings to light information about the dimension of gender in the MDGs too, indicating a shift in the UN discourse towards a more gender-aware perspective, which indicates feminist influence on the UN discourses. The second document contains a section explicitly pointing out that “gender equality is at the heart of the MDGs; thus sex-disaggregated data are essential for monitoring MDG progress”, calling for MDGRs to use sex-disaggregated data for all goals (UNDG, 2003, p. 6). Such explicit emphasis on gender in

the MDGs is missing from the first document. Importantly, in the second document, the UNDG recognizes that “gender discrimination does not occur indiscriminately; it is often mediated through a multitude of channels (e.g. education, socio-economic status, rural/urban location, ethnicity)” (ibid.), an awareness of a combination of social factors influencing women’s lives and experiences contributing to their disadvantaged social and economic position. This statement articulated by the UNDG appears to be based on feminist critique on the gender dimension in the MDGs, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

A year after the adoption of the MDGs, in September 2001, the UN issued the report of the Secretary-General *Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration*, which gives an overview of the situation regarding the status of the MDGs and provides strategies for action in order to meet the MDGs. In presenting the development targets, the document goes beyond an exclusive focus on strategies of achieving the MDGs by bringing in a number of additional goals and targets, including those involving gender. For instance, it sets as a goal “to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (UN Secretary-General, 2001, p. 38) and claiming that the promotion of gender equality is one of the priority issues for the UN. The Road map views these development targets as a comprehensive framework, integrating the MDGs with other development issues.

The influence of the UN World Conferences on Women on the gender dimension in the MDGs

To support the argument that the gender dimension in the MDGs was influenced by gender-related debates and discussions in the UN conferences taking place in the 1990s which also made a significant contribution to mainstreaming gender perspectives into international development discourse and policy-making, and hence the MDGs, the outcomes and major

points of discussion in these conferences should be considered, which I will do in the following section. It was largely due to these debates that gradually, the international development community realized that “development, if not engendered, is endangered” (UNDP, 2003, p. 2). Also, a look at the results of these conferences, in the form of policies and recommendations, indicates that a significant proportion of gender-related development targets, devised in these conferences, found their place in the final version of the MDGs.

According to the UNDP, the MDGs “synthesize, in a single package, many of the most important commitments made separately at the international conferences and summits of the 1990s” (UNDP). Regarding the dimension of gender, the most relevant of these events constitute the UN World Conferences on Women, which “helped to increase awareness of the gender dimensions of equality, development and peace” (United Nations, 2001, p. 4). Exerting an important influence on the progress of the UN discourses on women and development, which ultimately led to the inclusion and consolidation of the gender dimension in the MDGs, were the succession of the four UN World Conferences on Women, taking place in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995), as I outlined in the previous chapter. Additionally, I considered the follow-up to the Beijing 1995 conference on women – the Beijing +5 (2000). I presented the major results of these conferences in Chapter 1 in pointing out how these events contributed to the increasing awareness of women’s agenda within the UN system and in the UN development policies. In the next sections, I consider more specific influences of the last two conferences on the gender dimension in the MDGs.

The areas of concern relating to women outlined in the Beijing PfA encompass a much wider range of issues than the final version of the MDGs. The MDGs take up only a minor part of

this agenda and in most cases, partially, incorporating only concerns (1) the effect of poverty on women, (2) unequal and inadequate access to education and training, (3) women's access to health care. For instance, in the case of concern 1, while the UN discourse suggests a comprehensive understanding of linkages between women and poverty, as influenced by research in that field in the form of WID and GAD approaches, the targets of Goal 1, Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, and indicators measuring its progress, do not include any elements of gender. Further, concern 3 – women's access to health care – has been reduced to encompass only maternal health in the MDGs (Goal 5), suggesting that women in the MDGs are seen first and foremost in reproductive terms.

Considering these inadequacies in the MDGs when compared to a more inclusive conceptualization of issues affecting women's experiences in the PfA, it is not surprising that much of the feminist critique on the address of the MDGs regards these targets as a minimalist agenda as far as gender issues are concerned and the international women's movement is urging governments to consider these 12 critical areas of concern when developing country-specific development policies instead on exclusively relying on the MDGs.

The outcome document of the Beijing+5 Conference of 2000 (the UN General Assembly Special Session "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century") titled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" is the basis for the Report of the Secretary-General "Implementation of the Outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the Special Session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace in the Twenty-first Century" (A/55/341). It is worth to note here that the Special Session took place

from June 5-9, three months before the Millennium Summit taking place from September 6-8. At this Special Session, “199 actions to be taken at the national and international levels by Governments, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, including international financial institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society were agreed on” (DAW, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2000). Several targets were set and a number of existing ones reconfirmed (ibid.):

- a. Closure of the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005, and free and compulsory and universal primary education for both girls and boys by 2015;
- b. The achievement of a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women through;
- c. The creation and maintenance of a non-discriminatory, as well as gender sensitive legal environment through reviewing legislation with a view to striving to remove discriminatory provisions as soon as possible, preferably by 2005;
- d. Universal access to high quality primary health care, throughout the life cycle, including sexual and reproductive health care, not later than 2015;

The first two of these targets appear as targets for Goal 3 of the MDGs, while the last two have not been included in the MDGs.

As another point to be emphasized about the actions set at the Special Session, many of these “identified specific groups of women as their primary target” (DAW, 2000), such as older women, rural women, migrant women, female household heads, and entrepreneurs, to name a few categories, thus recognizing that the category of “women” is too broad, and in need of distinguishing sub-groups of women whose lifestyles and needs may differ dramatically from each other. As evident, not all of these categories represent entirely disempowered and marginalized groups of women. The MDGs, however, treat women who are the target group of the development strategies, as a uniform category – as “poor” women, seeing their roles

largely in reproductive terms and instrumentalizing them as girls and mothers, with the emphasis being on reproductive and maternal health.

The above comparison of some of the outcome documents of the UN World Conferences on Women and the final version of the MDGs suggests that the MDGs take up a reductionist agenda compared to what became the official UN policy in relation to gender since the 1970s.

OECD International Development Goals as a basis for the MDGs

While the UN emphasizes the relevance of the international conferences and summits of the 1990s as the space from where the MDGs were gradually emerged (United Nations, 2001), a look at two documents, the OECD 1996 strategy *Shaping the 21st Century*² and a joint report, *A Better World for All*³, published by the IMF, OECD, UN, and the World Bank Group in 2000, presents a challenge to this perspective. These documents indicate that the MDGs were strongly influenced and, in fact, built upon the International Development Goals which were set by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD in 1996, elaborated in the OECD strategy *Shaping the 21st Century*, which later served as basis for the report *A Better World for All*, jointly published by four major international institutions – IMF, OECD, UN and the World Bank on the 26th of June 2000, before the Millennium Summit in 8-9 September in the same year. Thus, it is worthwhile to examine the two reports, comparing them to the MDGs in order to establish what has been added or modified, especially in terms of gender, as well as the major debates surrounding the establishment of development goals in these documents.

² *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*. (1996). DAC, OECD.

³ 2000 - *A Better World for All: Progress Towards the International Development Goals*. (2000). IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank Group

It is appropriate to start with the first document, *Shaping the 21st Century*, as it is a basis for the subsequent report *A Better World for All* and the MDGs. While the MDGs have been agreed upon as development targets by 191 UN member states and hence claim to be universal, it is crucial to note that *Shaping the 21st Century* was prepared by the OECD, an organization grouping 30 of the world's developed and industrialized nations, the large majority of them being Western countries. The document builds on the conviction that “industrialized countries have a strong moral imperative to respond to the extreme poverty and human suffering that still afflict more than one billion people [in the year 2000]” (DAC, OECD, 1996, p. 1). Recognizing that the goals should be quantifiable, the DAC proposes the following seven development goals, grouped in three broad categories (DAC, OECD, 1996, p. 2):

Economic well-being:

- a reduction by one-half in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

Social development:

- universal primary education in all countries by 2015;
- demonstrated progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005;
- a reduction by two-thirds in the mortality rates for infants and children under age 5 and a reduction by three-fourths in maternal mortality, all by 2015;
- access through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015.

Environmental sustainability and regeneration:

- the current implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015.

Importantly, the OECD recognizes that while these goals are “expressed in terms of their global impact, (...) [they] must be pursued country by country through individual approaches that reflect local conditions and locally-owned development strategies” (DAC, OECD, 1996, p. 2), an idea which is later reflected in the concept of the MDG country reports.

As evident from this list of goals, gender equality is included as one specific goal among the goals pertaining to social development. However, when compared to the gender dimension in the MDGs, gender in the IDGs is not yet conceptualized as a central element in the progress towards all the goals to the extent it has been done in the MDGs, as gender equality is seen only in terms of eliminating gender disparities in education.

The document calls for “development co-operation strategies” (ibid., p. 5) which would also embrace the efforts of the developing countries whom the aid is targeted at to actively take part in efforts to enhance human development, declaring that development “must be seen as a collaborative effort” and emphasizing that “paternalistic approaches have no place in this framework” and encouraging the local actors to “assume greater responsibility for their development” (ibid., p. 13). Yet, behind the intended discourse of development *co-operation* hides the rhetoric of development *assistance*, since the role of developing countries as equal partners in development co-operation is only encouraged when they comply with the development schemes and the overall concept of development as defined by their wealthier partners in the North, who possess epistemic and financial privileges. The OECD claims that “in a changing world, old distinctions between “North” and “South”, as well as between “East” and “West”, are becoming blurred (ibid., p. 6). Yet, while the socio-economic boundaries might indeed be blurring between the “East” and “West” as the result of the collapse of communism in the former region, decreasing distinctions between the “North” and “South” are more debatable. The way how the framework of economic and social development has been defined in the international development arena, has implied the construction of the binary of “developed” and “developing” countries and devising development policies accordingly, corresponding to the formerly used “South” and “North” division, further polarizes the distinction between the discursively constructed “wealthy

global north” and “impoverished global south”, the latter being viewed by the former as a disempowered recipient of aid either in the form of funds or elaborate development schemes devised by the former. This discourse relates to Arturo Escobar’s views on development, arguing that “thinking of development in terms of discourse makes it possible to maintain the focus on domination” (Escobar, 1995, pp. 5-6). This entails the discursive construction of categories and terms in the development discourse by Western scholars and development experts, one of them being the category of “women” who are seen as “having ‘needs’ and ‘problems’ but few choices and no freedom to act” (ibid., p. 6).

As for the background for the formulation of the International Development Goals, the OECD recognizes the role of UN conferences taking place in the 1990s, “addressing subjects important to development - education (Jomtien, 1990), children (New York, 1990), the environment (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), human rights (Vienna, 1993), population (Cairo, 1994), social development (Copenhagen, 1995), and women (Beijing, 1995)” (ibid., p. 9).

Next, I examine the document *A Better World for All*. The MDGs as a label for a set of development goals announced by the UN only three months after the publication of this report, is not yet used in that document. In terms of their formulation, the goals set in this document are closer to the MDGs than those in the previous report. The report claims that the goals set there build on global UN conferences and summits of the 1990s, while no explicit mention is made of the OECD efforts in drafting the IDGs in 1996 (IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank Group, 2000, p. 2). The set of seven new goals has been constructed around the concept of poverty and strategies for its eradication, recognizing that the goals are mutually reinforcing. The goals have been formulated as follows (ibid., p. 5):

| | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015 | R |
| 2. | Enroll all children in primary school by 2015 | E |
| 3. | Make progress towards gender equality and empowering women, by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 | M |
| 4. | Reduce infant and child mortality rates by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 | R |
| 5. | Reduce maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015 | R |
| 6. | Provide access for all who need reproductive health services by 2015 | P |
| 7. | Implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015. | I |

As evident, the IDGs contain gender equality as a separate goal; yet, it is still conceptualized solely in terms of achieving equal numbers of school enrollment for girls and boys. In Goal 3 of the MDGs, education is continued to be seen as a major indicator of gender equality while three additional dimensions have been added. Importantly, the focus on providing access to reproductive health services, which has been emphasized in the IDGs and earlier targets, is entirely missing from the MDGs.

Shortly after the publication of the document, the development goals as expressed in *A Better World for All* became subject to harsh criticism by the civil society organizations gathered in on the World Summit for Social Development +5 Conference (UNGASS) in Geneva and these organizations “called on the UN to withdraw its support” (RORG-samarbeidet, 2004). The criticism on the address of the goals included the following major points. First, the civil society organizations claimed the negotiations and procedures around drafting the specific

objectives of the goals were not transparent and inclusive enough, as the OECD who originally drafted the goals, represents only northern countries while the UN, standing for almost all world nations, by adopting these goals excluded most of these countries from drafting process, thereby reinforcing “the perspectives from the North and disempowering the South”. Second, the criticism pertaining to the content of the report addresses the concepts used in the development discourse of the document, stating, similarly to Escobar’s arguments on the discursive construction of development, that the people whose lives the development goals are supposed to improve are conceptualized as passive “victims of poverty” in need of help by Western development programmes. Furthermore, as the “poor” are being patronized, poverty as such is seen as solely a problem of the South, ignoring patterns of poverty in the North. Finally, it is pointed out that the new goals do not address the causes of large-scale Third World poverty, which is seen as the consequence of economic policies devised by (Western) International Financial Institutions (IFIs), focusing on export-led growth while disregarding “wealth distribution and environmental sustainability”. Drawing from these points of critique, the NGOs proposed among other issues that instead of adopting the new goals outlined in *A Better World for All*, the UN should reject the document and instead commit to realizing the goals set in the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development in 1995, emphasizing that “the goals of Copenhagen cannot be achieved if developing countries are marginalized in the decision-making process in the international institutions” (RORG-samarbeidet, 2000). However, despite this criticism, these goals were not modified extensively before the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 declaring the MDGs.

The role of the civil society in contributing to the gender-related discourses around the MDGs

A number of documents emphasize that the content of the eight MDGs has been advocated by a large number of civil society organizations (CSOs) for decades and stress that “the goals are

unlikely to be achieved without the active involvement of civil society” (Boulle & Newton). My evidence indicates that the engagement of the civil society, and in particular, women’s organizations, occurred primarily *after* the adoption of the MDGs in 2000. This is also suggested by the fact that the critique articulated by the CSOs on the address of the IDGs that I presented in the previous section, was not considered by the UN. It is suggested by Bissio (2003, pp. 153-154) that the specific formulation of the MDGs in the Millennium Declaration was a process where NGO involvement was low, arguing that “the [Millennium] Declaration is a UN General Assembly resolution, and NGOs then had no participation at all in that body”, as “there were no open preparatory committee meetings to negotiate the Declaration and the UN secretariat itself took a leading role in its drafting”. He goes on to claim that “civil society participation in the Millennium Summit was indirect” (ibid.).

As they became involved in the discourses around the MDGs after their adoption, the CSOs have primarily been active in directing local campaigns and coordinating efforts on the national level towards the achievement of the MDGs. For instance, an important event with the aim to stimulate civil society action towards the MDGs took place in September 2004 when more than 750 NGOs worldwide took part in the 57th annual NGO Conference organized by the UN Department of Information and the NGO/DPI Executive Committee.

When looking at the influence of the civil society on the debates surrounding the gender dimension in the MDGs, the UN official discourse, as articulated in the UNDP publications, emphasizes the role of the abstract entity of the “international women’s movement” in generating critique on the MDGs. Particularly, the UNDP stresses the contribution of the international women’s movement in establishing a separate goal (Goal 3) explicitly addressing women’s issues, and which represents a “global affirmation of women’s rights and

gender equality as core values of development” (UNDP, 2003). Also, the UNDP recognizes their attempts to consolidate gender as the central element to all the goals and promote gender mainstreaming in devising MDG-based local policies (ibid.). Some of the leading organizations within the international women’s movement working on promoting gender issues in the MDGs are WEDO who has been working closely with UNIFEM and FEMNET, African Women’s Development and Communication Network. (Mainstreaming Gender to Achieve the MDGs: Summary Record, 2003).

As for the particular contribution of women’s organizations and feminist advocates to promoting the gender dimension of MDGs, the UNDP encourages them to engage in national levels to mainstream gender into the MDGRs as well as promote national awareness of women’s rights and gender equality (UNDP, 2003, pp. 2-3). Yet, while the civil society and women’s NGOs have influenced the discourses on MDGs subsequent to their adoption as well as local policy-making, the state still remains the entity primary responsible for devising development policies. As suggested by Razavi and Miller, “while women’s NGOs and grassroots organizations have an important role to play in creating space for women to politicize their demands, there are serious limits to what institutions of civil society can achieve” (Razavi & Miller, 1995, p. ii).

The international women’s movement has identified a number of challenges relating to gender in the MDGs. These include lobbying for Goal 3 to “include women as agents of change, decision-makers and policy beneficiaries”; ensuring that the indicators of all MDGs can be disaggregated by gender and contain in addition to quantitative indicators, also qualitative ones; ensuring that poverty is understood as a complex variable, not isolated from structural, economic and social causes (Mainstreaming Gender to Achieve the MDGs: Summary Record,

2003). Importantly, the international women's movement emphasizes that governments should refer to commitments made in the UN Conferences in the 1990s and implement these in their development policies, since several of these, such as reproductive rights focused on women and violence against women, which are seen as not having been included in the MDGs yet central to achieving gender equality (ibid.).

To summarize the points I have made in this chapter, my comparison of the MDGs with the key outcomes of the Beijing World Conferences on Women in 1995 and 2000 has shown that the MDGs have disregarded several commitments made at these events and hence constitute a reductive agenda of the results of these conferences. In addition, I have demonstrated that the MDGs have been based on the IDGs, devised by the OECD in 1996, also considering the gender dimension of these goals. Finally, I have indicated that the role of the civil society in influencing the discourses around the gender dimension in the MDGs was not extensive prior to the adoption of these Goals.

Chapter 3: Feminist critique of the MDGs

This chapter explores critical insights articulated by various feminist agents regarding the content of the MDGs and their conceptual background, as well as feminist critique on targets and indicators devised to measure the implementation of the goals on national and local levels. Some of that critique refers back to the UN World Conferences on Women, discussed in the previous chapter, pointing to the limitations of the MDGs compared to the gender-related commitments reached at these conferences.

However, before proceeding to these issues, I briefly consider the general position of feminism⁴ in relation to globalism and internationalism, as the UN constitutes an intergovernmental institution articulating globalist discourses and policies. This also entails discourses on the institutionalization of gender into policies in international development arena. The aim is to explore why feminists seek to influence the discourses and policies of international institutions. Valcárcel (2002, p. 30) argues that “the presence of feminism in international institutions (...) ensures that gender-based technical assistance programs are appropriate and effective” and emphasizes the importance of shifting the articulation of the agendas of feminist movements to the international arena, since “nations are no longer the appropriate framework within which to solve many problems that have worldwide ramifications and are beyond the scope of individual States”. Given the impact of many internationally devised development policies such as the MDGs in relation to local contexts (as local strategies are based on global policies), the conceptualization of women’s issues on the global policy level has important implications on how they are being translated to national

⁴ By feminism I mean here the broad framework of feminist ideas of gender equality (as originating from Western feminist discourses), rather than any specific feminist movement and the articulation of these ideas in the contemporary international political arena.

contexts. International institutions are of “significant interest to feminists given that they reproduce and contribute to women’s subordination through their assumptions, working procedures and activities” (Razavi & Miller, 1995, p. ii). The international women’s movement, has since the 1970s attempted to exert influence on international development agencies and governments to ‘integrate’ women into the development process with the aim to bring forward women’s concerns in development and to prevent the marginalization of women’s issues in the international development arena (ibid.).

Before discussing feminist critique relating specifically to the MDGs, I consider some relevant points of a more basic critique addressed at the very foundations of Western development initiatives involving women in Third World contexts and attempt to show how this relates to the MDGs.

A very fundamental point of critique, which is targeted at all development policies devised by Western societies, claims that development policies aimed at the discursively constructed Third World (the term masking neocolonial relations between industrial nations and their former colonies) envision Western forms of “cultural, socioeconomic, and political development for Third World countries (...) if they are to achieve progress, prosperity, and democracy” (Acosta-Belen & Bose, 1990, p. 302). Further, development policies for the Third World “have been formulated from the ideological and economic perspectives and interests of industrialized countries (ibid.). This last view relates to Escobar’s critique of development as a discursively constructed concept in order to sustain (Western) hegemony in international development discourse and policies (1995, pp. 5-6), which I pointed out in Chapter 2 when analyzing the IDGs. As the MDGs are substantially based on the IDGs devised by the OECD,

as I showed earlier, and the countries to whom the MDGs apply to, were not directly included in this preparation process, this critique could be applied to the MDGs.

Much of the (feminist) critique on the address of the MDGs stems from a common origin, which can be summarized by the overarching problem of how to measure development. As Richardson and Hamilton point out, the major agents in international development policy-making, such as the UN, measure development based on indicators of economic growth, such as the GNP and GDP. However, as the authors suggest, this approach does not take “a holistic view that reflects a population’s socio-economic and cultural diversity” and does not “offer space for subjective input by a country’s residents” (Richardson & Hamilton, 2006). As for how this relates to the MDGs, they point out that these goals are “based on expert judgments on what constitutes ‘human development’ rather than on the feedback from the citizenry regarding local and regional priorities” (ibid.). Instead, they suggest “bringing in the subjective well-being” to overcome the shortcomings of “top-down” (ibid.) development, as I discussed in Chapter 1.

At this point I wish to return to the question posed in Chapter 1: do the MDGs and the discourses around them conceptualize the achievement of gender equality as a target in its own merit, or is gender equality primarily viewed as a tool facilitating meeting other goals? My evidence suggests that while the UN makes efforts to conceptualize achieving gender equality in the MDGs as a target to be achieved in its own merit, often gender equality in the UN and international development discourse is being linked to other development issues, emphasizing other development targets that achieving gender equality will help to reach. For instance, in the foreword of her handbook for policy-makers, *Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals*, Naila Kabeer argues that “gender equality is essential to eradicating poverty” and suggests that “empowering and

investing in women brings a huge development dividend” (2003, p. 13). In the discourse of the World Bank Group, an institution in close partnership with the UN and focused on promoting sustainable development much like the UN, Goal 3 of the MDGs is introduced as follows: “when a country educates its girls, its mortality rates usually fall, fertility rates decline, and the health and education prospects of the next generation improve” (The World Bank Group, 2004), which shows that gender equality is rather seen as a means towards reaching other goals than an end goal for its own sake. The UNDP report, *Millennium Development Goals – A Look Through a Gender Lens* points out that “attempting to achieve the MDGs without promoting gender equality will both raise the costs and decrease the likelihood of achieving the other goals” (UNDP, 2003, p. 2), again suggesting that gender equality serves as an element to facilitate meeting other goals.

Critical feminist perspectives on the MDGs by the civil society

As I argued in the previous chapter, the civil society’s⁵ role in influencing the discourses around the MDGs (in the form of critique) became more visible once the Goals had been adopted. Therefore I present three substantial points of critique articulated by the civil society on the address of the MDGs after their establishment. The first has to do with the lack of consideration of multiple social factors affecting women’s lives, the second point relates to the inadequacies of the indicators used to measure progress towards the MDGs, while the third critique deals with the MDGs as a minimalist agenda in relation to the earlier commitments articulated in development discourses engaged in gender issues.

The first set of critique addresses the need to establish links between several social factors influencing women’s lives as well as to recognize fundamental causes behind women’s disadvantaged position. Therefore, CSOs express the need to consider the intersection of

⁵ as represented here primarily by the collective entity of the international women’s movement/organizations

multiple factors such as race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation when devising effective development policies relating to poverty eradication and women's empowerment, since often women's experiences are determined by a combination of these categories, which the MDGs ignore (Barton, 2005, p. 2). Relating to this point, they articulate need to recognize the integrality and indivisibility of women's rights, arguing that "it is not possible, for example, to think about promoting education for women if at the same time they cannot access water because this service has been privatized. It's impossible to analyze poverty without taking into account women's political participation and violence against women" (Obando, 2003). Barton (2005, p. 1) has argued that poverty cannot be eradicated and gender equality achieved "without addressing the fundamental causes of these problems, including issues of power, distribution of resources, militarism, fundamentalism and current economic orthodoxy." As the UN has not considered these issues in the MDGs, according to the standpoint of this critique then, the connections between gender and poverty as well as the multiple factors affecting women's experiences and status have not been sufficiently recognized.

Second, I consider the critique which suggests that the targets and indicators used to measure progress towards the MDGs are insufficient and inadequate to be used for the purposes they have been designed for. In Chapter 1 I gave an overview of the monitoring process of the MDGs and discussed the targets and indicators used to measure progress towards the Goals. Several scholars and development experts have criticized these indicators from a feminist perspective, pointing out that gender is not sufficiently reflected in the indicators of the MDGs (Waldorf, 2003, p. 6). Much of this criticism points to goals which are not directly considered as relating to gender issues, yet whose success very much depends on the achievement of gender equality. For example, Kabeer (2003, p. 20) notes that women have

not been included in the poverty reduction goal as the indicators used to measure progress towards that goal are not gendered.

As relating specifically to Goal 3, CSOs point out that the targets to measure progress towards achieving that Goal are too limited, despite feminist contributions to Task Forces 3 and 4 (responsible for dealing with gender equality and education and maternal mortality, respectively). “Task Force 3 has proposed seven interdependent strategic priorities for implementation of the goal at the national level. These include access to secondary education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, lightening women’s unpaid workload, property and inheritance rights, equality in employment, representation in government, and combating violence” (Barton 2005., p. 8). To give an example of a more specific influence, it was pointed out at the round table discussion “Mainstreaming Gender to Achieve the MDGs”, co-hosted by WFUNA and the NGO Section of the DESA, taking place in June 2003, that while gender equality in the MDGs is measured by the UN on the global level by four indicators: women’s political participation in national parliaments, education, literacy and wage employment, the UNDP report *Millennium Development Goals - National Reports: A Look Through a Gender Lens* (2003) emphasizes only one indicator, that is, education; hence, it was proposed be these organizations that at national levels, women’s movements should advocate for the inclusion of all four indicators in devising country policies (Mainstreaming Gender to Achieve the MDGs: Summary Record, 2003).

Taking the critique referring to inadequacies of the targets as a starting point, I suggest that to consider gender equality only in terms of women’s education, political representation, and wage employment, as the UN has chosen to do, disregards a number of crucial gender disparities that women and girls in developing countries are faced with, such as first and

foremost, women's unpaid work which is especially relevant in the context of the Third World, which the UN development policies are targeted at. To think of women's empowerment only as relating to these areas of life, i.e. mostly to the public sphere of women's activities, leaves the private environment untouched, and thereby contributes to maintaining the patriarchal structures that are present at that level. Even if we concentrate on these four elements of the target of Goal 3, meeting those does not necessarily mean that there is sufficient progress towards gender equality. For example, providing education to girls does not necessarily empower them in other areas of life and if traditional and patriarchal systems remain intact, women's position in relation to men's is likely to remain subordinate. Even if an equal ratio of boys and girls in education is achieved, this statistical indicator does not say anything about the actual quality of the education, or the possibility that boys and girls are treated differently at school in many parts of the world. As Kabeer has noted, "the 'hidden curriculum' of school practice reinforces messages about girls' inferior status on daily basis and provides them with negative learning experience, thus creating a culture of low-self esteem and low aspirations" (2003, p. 179-180). In societies where women's roles are defined in reproductive terms, education is used as a tool to prepare girls to be better wives and mothers, which has little to do with the empowerment envisioned by the UN, as argued by Kabeer (*ibid.*, 177).

As the third critical point on the address of the MDGs, the civil society has expressed concern regarding the minimalist agenda of the MDGs as far as the gender perspective is concerned, leaving out important outcomes reached at the UN Conferences on Women, such as in the Beijing Conferences of 1995 and 2000, as I showed in Chapter 2. Therefore, many women's organizations consider the MDGs a minimalist agenda, and in their programmes to advance women's issues in both the international and national contexts, they strongly rely on the

Beijing Platform for Action in addition to promoting only the MDGs (Barton, 2005, p. 17). Indeed, one of their priorities has been to include these plans with national MDG-strategies and to expand MDG indicators at national levels (ibid.). For instance, WEDO sees the MDGs as omitting important gender issues established in the Beijing Platform of Action and they thus call for the inclusion of these perspectives in developing MDG-based policies. In their Information and Action Guide, the WEDO suggests lobbying governments to use a more wide-ranging set of indicators to measure progress towards gender equality, such as the usage of “sex-disaggregated data to measure and monitor the impact of fiscal and social policies on women compared with men, including those data that have been marginalized or are missing from the MDGs” (WEDO). WEDO suggests that the MDG indicators should be expanded and those drawn up on the UN world conferences, such as the Beijing PfA, should be used.

Conclusion

The aim of my thesis was to examine discourses and policies around engendering the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by tracing various influences on the process of mainstreaming gender into the MDGs. In doing so, I have conducted discourse and content analysis on UN policies and other documents, as well as taken a look at recommendations and critique addressed to the UN on how to better integrate the gender dimension into the MDGs and into strategies of achieving them.

My research aimed to answer the overarching question of how the UN mainstreamed gender into the MDGs and who was involved in this process. To support this question, I have explored sub-questions, such as: how has gender been mainstreamed within the UN system? What is the relation of the gender dimension in the MDGs to the major development models dealing with women's issues in development, as conceptualized in the international development discourse? How has the civil society influenced the discourses around the gender dimension in the MDGs? What has been the role of external actors to the UN in contributing to the preparation process of the MDGs? How are the MDGs seen from the perspective of a variety of feminist critique, provided by the civil society and other agents pursuing a gender/feminist agenda?

In order to provide an introduction to the concepts and themes from the field of development and to the points elaborated in this thesis, I have outlined two major theoretical models dealing with women in development in the international development discourse, WID and GAD, pointed out the conceptual shifts between them. In addition, I have considered how

gender in the MDGs relates to these models and the UN's position in the international development discourse.

I have argued, first, that given the relevance that gender as a category in devising development policies had acquired in international development discourse and policy-making by the time the MDGs were drafted in the late 1990s and adopted in 2000, it would have been unlikely that a set of major universal development targets such as the MDGs, could have disregarded gender as one of its core elements. This increasing emphasis on gender in the arena of international development policy occurred largely as a result of the UN World Conferences on Women. Yet, the gender dimension in the MDGs should rather be viewed as a reformulation of gender-related commitments adopted in these conferences and part of the UN's overall gender mainstreaming efforts, as opposed to involving substantial redefinitions or reorientations that would have emerged shortly before 2000.

Second, my research has suggested that while the UN does not explicitly articulate the influence of the OECD International Development Goals, adopted in 1996, in its background information to the MDGs, the IDGs were actually taken as a basis for the MDGs. The gender dimension in the IDGs might have been influenced by gender-related discourses and explicit events on the international development arena, such as the UN World Conferences on Women, starting from the 1970s.

Finally, I have suggested that although the UN emphasizes the contribution of the civil society in influencing the preparation process the MDGs and particularly the inclusion of gender elements in the goals, civil society played a much more significant role in engendering the MDGs after the Goals had been officially announced by the UN. The major contribution of feminist civil society organizations (CSOs) and scholars debating over the position of the

category of gender in the MDGs has been drawing explicit links between gender and various aspects of poverty and hence emphasizing the importance of considering the gender aspect in MDG-based strategies and policies aimed at alleviating poverty on local and national levels.

As for suggestions for further research in tracing feminist influences on the discourses around the MDGs, I propose that the topic could be additionally explored in the direction of an explicit content analysis of various not readily available UN documents in the form of resolutions and proceedings of meetings, looking at several draft versions of these documents and comparing them to the finally adopted resolutions in order to trace the details of including gender in the MDGs.

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Appendix 1: List of acronyms

| | |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee (OECD) |
| DAW | Division for the Advancement of Women (UN) |
| DESA | Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN) |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization (UN) |
| GA | General Assembly (UN) |
| GAD | Gender and Development |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| HIPC | Heavily Indebted Poor Countries |
| IDGs | International Development Goals |
| IFI | International Financial Institution |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INSTRAW | International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN) |
| IPU | Inter-Parliamentary Union |
| ITU | International Telecommunications Union |
| MDGR | Millennium Development Goals Report |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OSAGI | Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) |
| PfA | Platform for Action |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNDG | United Nations Development Group |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNGASS | United Nations General Assembly Special Session |
| UNICEF | The United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |

| | |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------|
| WEDO | Women's Environment and Development Organization |
| WFUNA | World Federation of United Nations Associations |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WID | Women in Development |

Appendix 2: Full list of MDGs, targets and indicators⁶

GOAL 1 - ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Target 1: Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day

1. Proportion of Population Below \$1 (PPP) per Day (World Bank)
2. Poverty Gap Ratio, \$1 per day (World Bank)
3. Share of Poorest Quintile in National Income or Consumption (World Bank)

Target 2: Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

4. Prevalence of Underweight Children Under Five Years of Age (UNICEF)
5. Proportion of the Population below Minimum Level of Dietary Energy Consumption (FAO)

GOAL 2 - ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Target 3: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

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 at all levels by 2015

9. Ratio of Girls to Boys in Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Education (UNESCO)
10. Ratio of Literate Women to Men 15-24 years old (UNESCO)
11. Share of Women in Wage Employment in the Non-Agricultural Sector (ILO)
12. Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (IPU)

GOAL 4 - REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Target 5: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five

13. Under-Five Mortality Rate (UNICEF)
14. Infant Mortality Rate (UNICEF)
15. Proportion of 1 year-old Children Immunised Against Measles (UNICEF)

⁶ Source: UNDP: Millennium Development Goals at <http://www.undp.org/mdg/goallist.shtml>

GOAL 5 - IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Target 6: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

- 16. Maternal Mortality Ratio (WHO)
- 17. Proportion of Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel (UNICEF)

GOAL 6 - COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Target 7: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

- 18. HIV Prevalence Among 15-24 year-old Pregnant Women (UNAIDS)
- 19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate and Population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, UNICEF, UN Population Division, WHO)
- 20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years

Target 8: Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

- 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):
- 23. Prevalence and Death Rates Associated with Tuberculosis (WHO):
- 24. Proportion of Tuberculosis Cases Detected and Cured Under Directly-Observed Treatment Short Courses (WHO)

GOAL 7 - ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources

- 25. Forested land as percentage of land area (FAO)
- 26. Ratio of Area Protected to Maintain Biological Diversity to Surface Area (UNEP)
- 27. Energy supply (apparent consumption; Kg oil equivalent) per \$1,000 (PPP) GDP (World Bank)
- 28. Carbon Dioxide Emissions (per capita) and Consumption of Ozone-Depleting CFCs (ODP tons):

Target 10: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

- 30. Proportion of the Population with Sustainable Access to and Improved Water Source (WHO/UNICEF)
- 31. Proportion of the Population with Access to Improved Sanitation (WHO/UNICEF)

Target 11: Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

- 32. Slum population as percentage of urban population (secure tenure index)

GOAL 8 - DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Target 12. 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

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.

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Official development assistance

32. Net ODA as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national product (targets of 0.7% in total and 0.15% for LDCs)

33. Proportion of ODA to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)

34. Proportion of ODA that is untied

35. Proportion of ODA for environment in small island developing States

36. Proportion of ODA for transport sector in landlocked countries

Market access

37. Proportion of exports (by value and excluding arms) admitted free of duties and quotas

38. Average tariffs and quotas on agricultural products and textiles and clothing

39. Domestic and export agricultural subsidies in OECD countries

40. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

Debt sustainability

41. Proportion of official bilateral HIPC debt cancelled

42. Total Number of Countries that Have Reached their HIPC Decision Points and Number that Have Reached their Completion Points (Cumulative) (HIPC) (World Bank-IMF)

- 43. Debt Service as a Percentage of Exports of Goods and Services (World Bank)
- 44. Debt Relief Committed Under HIPC Initiative (HIPC) (World Bank-IMF)
- 45. Unemployment of 15-24 year-olds, Each Sex and Total (ILO)
- 46. Proportion of Population with Access to Affordable, Essential Drugs on a Sustainable Basis (WHO)
- 47. Telephone Lines and Cellular Subscribers per 100 Population (ITU)
- 48. Personal Computers in Use and Internet Users per 100 Population (ITU)