

# Preface

## Lord Mark Malloch-Brown

Welcome to this issue of the *IDS Bulletin* on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The articles review the MDG experience to date and ask what can we do to accelerate MDG progress in the years 2010–15 and beyond. The authors include both ‘MDG architects’ and UN ‘insiders’, as well as former ‘insiders’ and a range of researchers.

These debates take on increased significance as we enter 2010 and the discussions leading up to and beyond the UN MDG review. The global economic crisis has changed the context within which MDG debates will happen. Not surprisingly, there have been numerous calls for a new development narrative/paradigm from developing countries, international civil society organisations and development agencies. This changing context will affect the debate on the MDGs, past and future, in ways that perhaps are only now starting to become clear.

The Washington Consensus has been declared dead (again) but the nature of the shift to a new model and the nature of policy space is, as yet, unclear. Certainly, the discussion is opening up to a wider range of policy instruments for development.

There are immediate concerns for policymakers over the next few years, and the impact of the crisis is likely to still frame debates over the next five years, and will be critical in determining the economic and social environment.

It’s not clear when growth rates in the poorest countries will start to pick up, and whether the poorest people will benefit in time to prevent permanent damage to livelihoods and erosion of assets. Economic uncertainty in donor countries is also leading to declining public support for aid budgets.

In short, circumstances now are different from the time of the Millennium Declaration and MDG inception. The late 1990s and 2000 were a relatively benign period for international development of relatively buoyant aid budgets and strong commitments to public expenditure on social sectors, reasonable economic growth in many developing countries, relative stability and a consensus on what we are trying to achieve – the MDGs.

The next five to ten years is likely to be far less certain as developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, face multiple and interconnected crises of which climate change is a central issue. Such uncertainties not only have the potential to impact adversely on levels of poverty, but also change the context for achieving the MDGs.

I look forward to the 2010 MDG review and hope the articles in this *IDS Bulletin* contribute to a fruitful discussion on maintaining MDG momentum as we move to 2015 and beyond, and in time, ending global poverty.

---

### **What are the Millennium Development Goals?**

**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

---