



Poverty has many dimensions. The poor lack material goods, education, medical care, and information. They also lack security and the means to protect their families. And they suffer the indignity of being displaced and dispossessed even in their own communities. So we cannot measure poverty by just one indicator. We must look at a range of indicators—of people's income, the food they can afford to consume, their human and physical capital, and a host of other things. Nor can we look for one solution to poverty.

Economic growth is essential in reducing poverty, but it is not sufficient. Services to the poor—financial, medical, educational—and access to safe water, sanitation, and transportation are also necessary. That is why in 1996 the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) selected seven goals from the resolutions of the United Nations development conferences held throughout the decade. In 1998 a joint meeting of the United Nations, the OECD, and the World Bank proposed 21 indicators to track progress toward those international development goals.

Since then the *World Development Indicators* has reported on the international development goals. In this year's edition the *World View* section tells us that progress in reducing poverty rates stalled, especially in Asia, as a consequence of the financial crisis. The goal of reducing poverty rates to half of their 1990 levels can still be achieved in most regions, if we can sustain equitable growth.

The international development goals also call for achieving universal primary education, reaching equal enrollments of girls and boys in primary and secondary school, and cutting infant and child mortality rates by two-thirds. And they call for cutting maternal mortality ratios by three-fourths, providing access to reproductive health care to all who require it, and taking steps to reverse degradation of the environment. Challenging goals, but attainable, if we work with a common purpose.

We continue to be grateful for the support and cooperation of our many partners—the international organizations, statistical offices, nongovernmental organizations, and private firms that have provided their data and contributed to this product. We also appreciate the comments and responses from users—helping us measure how we are doing in continuing to make the *World Development Indicators* a useful tool. So please write to us at info@worldbank.org. And for more information on the World Bank's statistical publications, please visit our website at www.worldbank.org and select data from the menu.

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