A civil society review of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in Commonwealth countries

National Report:

Pakistan
This project aims to encourage and articulate civil society analysis of: progress towards the MDGs; the usefulness of the MDG framework for civil society; the contribution of civil society to the attainment of the MDGs; issues for a post-2015 agenda to consider.

This report documents the outputs of a two-stage process: desk research to review UN, government, civil society and other multilateral reports on national progress towards achieving the MDGs; and a national consultation workshop with civil society, which tested the findings of the desk research and enabled a deeper discussion on MDG progress, utility and post-2015 agenda setting.

This project was undertaken as part of a programme with the UN Millennium Campaign (UNMC), which supported country-level research by civil society organisations in 20 countries.

The Commonwealth Foundation led this process for the following 14 countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Grenada, Jamaica, Malawi, New Zealand, Pakistan, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Zambia. The UNMC led in the following six countries: India, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines and The Gambia.
Commonwealth Foundation

The Commonwealth Foundation is a development organisation with an international remit and reach, uniquely situated at the interface between government and civil society. We develop the capacity of civil society to act together and learn from each other to engage with the institutions that shape people’s lives. We strive for more effective, responsive and accountable governance with civil society participation, which contributes to improved development outcomes.

UN Millennium Campaign

The UN Millennium Campaign was established by the UN Secretary General in 2002. The Campaign supports citizens’ efforts to hold their governments to account for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals were adopted by 189 world leaders from rich and poor countries, as part of the Millennium Declaration which was signed in 2000. These leaders agreed to achieve the Goals by 2015. Our premise is simple: we are the first generation that can end poverty and we refuse to miss this opportunity.
Executive Summary

Project rationale and process

This summary presents perspectives from civil society in Pakistan on progress made and challenges experienced in relation to the national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the extent to which MDG processes have provided opportunities to enhance participatory governance and civil society relations with government. Based on their reflections, Pakistani civil society organisations (CSOs) made a number of recommendations to accelerate progress on the MDGs and improve future development frameworks.

This process began with a desk review of government, UN agency and donor MDG progress reports, and consultations with development professionals, conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute in the first half of 2012. The Pakistan NGOs Forum and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation then convened a national consultation in December 2012 to verify and expand on the research findings and make additional recommendations.

Civil society review of the MDGs in Pakistan

CSOs in this review agreed that it is not possible to achieve the MDGs in Pakistan by 2015. Pakistan has committed to apply 37 out of 48 available MDG indicators, but this review assesses that only four of these are on track. There are some improvements in poverty reduction and access to improved sources of water, but CSOs consider that even these are at risk. CSOs see some progress on Goals 5, 6, 7, although lack of data makes assessment of Goal 7 challenging. There are mixed results on Goal 4 and more limited progress on Goal 3, but these are still off track. Goal 1 is considered unlikely to be met, Goal 8 off track, and CSOs believe there has been regression on Goal 2.

After recording some initial successes in the early days of the MDGs, during a period of relative economic and political stability, CSOs assess Pakistan’s progress as having halted in recent years. Events have shown the capacity of external shocks, including food and fuel crises, natural disasters and the human, economic, social and political costs of the campaign against militancy, to derail national development efforts and push vulnerable groups into poverty. In the opinion of CSOs, these external setbacks have underlined enduring challenges of governance, corruption and a difficult environment for civil society.

Conditions have remained challenging and sometimes dangerous for CSO workers, with recent violent attacks on CSO personnel involved in service
delivery. Relations with government tend to be volatile, and many in civil society feel that they have worsened. Typically, CSOs believe government has been content for CSOs to help deliver services, but is suspicious of CSO advocacy. The new NGO Law allows the government to oversee foreign funding received by CSOs.

While the attainment of the MDGs was declared as a national objective, CSOs believe that they were not embedded in a sufficiently robust institutional framework or strong enough institutions. CSOs assess the MDG secretariat in the Planning Commission as not sufficiently high powered. Attainment of the MDGs is not specifically monitored by Cabinet or a parliamentary committee, suggesting a broader lack of political will. CSOs express doubts about the quality of data produced on the MDGs, and see few attempts to promote ownership of the MDGs among the public and CSOs, which has fed a lack of engagement.

CSOs suggest that another constraining factor is the new approach of the Planning Commission towards growth, which appears to treat poverty and vulnerability as residual challenges, making an apparent assumption that they will be addressed by a concerted push towards headline growth. CSOs also suggest that the granting of greater autonomy to provincial governments offers a further short-term setback to the MDGs. CSOs feel that provisional governments lack the capacity and capability to handle public service delivery, given that federal government has historically played this role. All recent provincial government reports state that they are off track on the MDGs.

CSOs believe that an imprecise definition of Goal 8 limits the accountability of donor countries. They have observed a lack of co-ordination among donors and an absence of accountability mechanisms for their interventions. Donor focus on the MDGs has helped some CSOs access funding, but CSOs assess that little has been done to help develop their limited capacity for advocacy. CSOs feel that they tend to be treated as service gap fillers.

Prominent issues identified in this review as being inadequately covered by the MDGs include energy access and costs, food security, sexual and reproductive health rights and unemployment, particularly youth unemployment and other livelihood and security challenges faced by young people. CSOs believe that future goals need to be shaped by an understanding of Pakistan’s political infrastructure, the new context of devolution, the impact of natural disasters, the ‘war on terror’, and law and order problems. CSOs state that the MDGs were never adequately localised and should have been revisited after 9/11, when developed countries’ engagement with Pakistan changed.
Recommendations

Recommendations made by CSOs to improve the participation of civil society include:

- A more enabling environment is needed so that CSOs can more easily undertake advocacy and lobbying. This needs to enable the enjoyment of human rights, such as freedom of expression and association.

Recommendations made by CSOs for a new development framework include:

- Intensive co-ordination is needed between government, civil society and the private sector, overseen by a more effective MDG secretariat, including a more efficient system for monitoring and reviewing progress. Overall, weak governance mechanisms need to be strengthened.

- There should be provision for broad-based localisation of the goals to drive greater local ownership and achievement, and closer connection with national development needs and plans.

- Youth groups should be targeted for involvement in planning and monitoring to ensure that goals better serve them and, in particular, stimulate youth employment.

- Adequate provincial systems for development should be put in place in the wake of the recent devolution of powers.

- Goals should be accompanied by financing and taxation reforms to improve the availability of funding to meet goals and reduce reliance on international donors.
This summary presents perspectives from civil society in Pakistan on progress made and challenges experienced with the MDGs, and the extent to which MDG processes have provided opportunities to enhance participatory governance and civil society relations with government. This process began with a desk review of government, UN agency and donor MDG progress reports, and consultations with development professionals, conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute in the first half of 2012. The Pakistan NGOs Forum and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation then convened a national consultation in December 2012 to verify and expand on the research findings and make additional recommendations.

Pakistan is adrift on most of its MDG commitments. After beginning to record some initial successes in the early days of the MDGs, during a period of relative economic and political stability, Pakistan’s progress has become uneven and has halted over the past few years, due to a combination of adverse external and internal developments. In the opinion of CSOs consulted in this review, this has underlined enduring challenges of bad governance, corruption and a disenabling environment for civil society.

In the second half of the last decade Pakistan appeared to be well on its way to achieving its poverty reduction goal, with poverty rates, using the national poverty line measurement, falling from 30.6 per cent in 1999 to 22.3 per cent between 2000 and 2009. However, since then global food and fuel price shocks have combined with the global financial crisis to exact a heavy toll. Since 2008, inflation in Pakistan has surged to high levels, rising from 7.7 per cent in 2007 to almost 12 per cent in 2011, settling at 10 per cent in 2012. Food inflation remained below 10 per cent in 2003/04, but then started to rise sharply, increasing to 26.6 per cent in 2007/09. The food, fuel and financial crisis is estimated to have cost 3 to 4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) each year since 2008, with GDP growth, which stood at almost 6.8 per cent in 2006/07, quickly shrinking to 1.4 per cent by 2009. It is estimated that up to 7.5 per cent of the labour force experienced the impact of this, either through lost jobs or depressed incomes. Further, the welfare of vulnerable groups is very sensitive to food inflation; such a dramatic increase in food prices is more than likely to have increased food insecurity and undernourishment, particularly for younger children, and to have led to a decline in school enrolment, with more children driven into work. The poorest households are recorded as spending 70 per cent or more of their income on food, giving very little room for manoeuvre in meeting other essential needs, such as health and education, when food prices increase.

The government cites several reasons for increasing economic problems and lack of development progress over the last few years, including the deteriorating law and order situation, the domestic cost of fighting militancy and the rising numbers of displaced people, which all create pressures on strained government finances. The fight against Taliban insurgent groups and international terrorist networks in the ‘war on terror’ has also cost Pakistan dearly, not only in economic terms, but also in human, infrastructural and social terms, particularly in the

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2 United Nations Human Development Index 2011
5 Muhammad Abdullah and Rukhsana Kalim, Determinants of Food Price Inflation in Pakistan, National College of Business Administration and Economics, University of Management and Technology, 2005
8 Sakib Sherani, op. cit
10 Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, op. cit
Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The cost to the economy in lost output, foregone fixed investment, cancelled export orders, weak revenue collection and diversion of budgetary resources from social spending to security expenditures is immense: an official estimate places this in the vicinity of US$70 billion in the ten-year period from 2001, a lost potential vast reservoir of development funding. Again, the most vulnerable people have been the most affected, and there are large numbers of internally displaced people, who have limited access to basic services.

To compound these profound problems, Pakistan has experienced three catastrophic natural disasters in less than a decade. A devastating earthquake in north-western Pakistan in October 2005 caused the deaths of over 70,000 people and injured over 200,000, and left an estimated 2 million people homeless. According to World Bank estimates at the time, the relief work would cost approximately US$2 billion, while a further US$3.5 billion was needed for reconstruction and rehabilitation. More recently, Pakistan has been hit by devastating ‘once-in-a-century’ floods in two consecutive years, 2010 and 2011, causing the destruction of infrastructure and the livelihoods of already vulnerable communities, and further setting back the fight against poverty, disease and illiteracy in large parts of rural Pakistan.

CSOs saw some of the influx of international funding in response to these disasters siphoned off by corruption. Other issues of concern identified by CSOs include high levels of debt, increasing lapses in the rule of law and rising crime. Given the above, it is hard to be optimistic that major progress will be made by 2015.

2. Civil society perspectives on progress towards the MDGs

CSOs state that realistically it is not possible to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Out of the total of 48 indicators for the MDGs, Pakistan committed to implement 37. Of these, Pakistan has either achieved, or is on track to achieve, only four. Assessments of poor progress seem to be shared across the government and civil society.

The exceptions to the uneven and incomplete progress are some improvements in poverty reduction and access to improved sources of water. Unfortunately, for reasons discussed further below, even this limited progress is at risk.

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11 Pakistan is divided into the federal capital territory, four provinces, two autonomous territories and FATA.
15 Flooding affected an estimated 21 million people in 2010. More than 1,700 people died, with nearly two million houses damaged or destroyed Source: Oxfam Fact Sheet: Pakistan Floods, Oxfam America, September 2010.
16 In 2011, recurrent flooding affected over six million people, destroyed over a million houses and flooded over 4.5 million acres of land. Source: Pakistan Floods 2011, ActionAid International, 2011.
17 As of 2012, debt was registered to be 50.4 per cent of Pakistan’s GDP. The government spent US$3 billion in foreign debt payments in 2010, which constituted 12 per cent of government revenue. Pakistan also borrowed almost US$8 billion from the International Monetary Fund between 2008 and 2010, with payments expected equal US$2.3 billion in 2012 and US$3.8 billion in 2013 (Pakistan, op. cit.)
18 5,450 incidents of crimes against persons were reported in 2010, but this figure rose to 6,257 in 2011, a 14.8 per cent increase. Source: The Pakistan 2012 OSAC Crime and Safety Report: Lahore, United States Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, April 2012. https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=12368
A civil society review of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in Commonwealth countries

Table 1: Civil society assessment of progress towards the MDGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals, targets and indicators</th>
<th>Civil society assessment of progress</th>
<th>Government assessment of progress</th>
<th>Civil society perspectives on challenges</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1a. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $1.25 a day</td>
<td>Significant progress has been made, but the target is unlikely to be achieved</td>
<td>Progress is lagging and has worsened since 2006</td>
<td>According to the last official national poverty survey, for 2007/08, the poverty headcount ratio had declined to 17.2 per cent, from 34.5 per cent in 2000/01. However, given the eruption of food and fuel crises since then, and their effects on the import-dependent economy of Pakistan, CSOs see strong indications that progress in reducing poverty is being reversed. Potentially offsetting developments here could be an improvement in the agriculture-dependent rural economy, and an estimated ten-fold increase of remittances, from US$1 billion in 2001 to US$12 billion in 2011. There may also be positive benefits from the Benazir Income Support Programme, a government cash transfer scheme that is targeting three million rural householders.</td>
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<td>1b. Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</td>
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<td>1c. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</td>
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<td>Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education:</td>
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<td>2a. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling</td>
<td>There has been regression. There is no possibility of MDG achievement.</td>
<td>Progress is lagging</td>
<td>Pakistan has made poor progress on its literacy targets, particularly for primary school-age children. While the government’s progress report shows some improvement in the literacy rate, from 35 per cent in 1990/91 to 58 per cent in 2008/09, this is far short of the MDG target of 88 per cent by 2015. Gender disparity in literacy remains high, with female literacy reported at only 45 per cent, compared to the male literacy rate of 69 per cent. The net enrolment rate for primary education is another area of concern, with a low figure of 57 per cent (2008/09, although the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) survey 2010/11 shows an increase to 68 per cent enrolment). Female net enrolment is only 53 per cent. A CSO consultation held in Lahore in January 2013 criticised the curriculum for being too male-oriented and insufficiently secular.</td>
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19 Unless otherwise stated, government assessments, targets, indicators and quantitative data in this table are drawn from the Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, op cit. Unless otherwise stated, the deadline for goals to be achieved is 2015.
21 Pending the results of the next National Poverty Survey, this seems to be borne out by the UN Inter-Agency Assessment, 2010 and the National Nutrition Survey, 2011.
### Goals, targets and indicators

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women: 3a. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015</th>
<th>Civil society assessment of progress</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited progress. Not on track for achievement.</td>
<td>Overall progress is slow, except in terms of the numbers of women in parliament</td>
<td>The Gender Parity Index for primary and secondary education stands at 0.84 and 0.80 respectively, showing little change from rates of 0.82 and 0.75 in 2001/02. At the current pace Pakistan will fall well short of achieving gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015. The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector also shows slow progress, with the last reported data putting this at 10.64 per cent in 2008/09, only a marginal rise from 9.65 per cent in 2001/02. However, on one score relating to the empowerment of women, Pakistan has achieved progress: in the lower house of parliament of the current national assembly, women account for 22.5 per cent of total seats following the 2008 elections. This has risen from 21.1 per cent in the 2002 elections.</td>
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| Goal 4. Reduce child mortality: 4a. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate | Mixed results, but not on track for achievement | Very mixed progress rates for the different targets within this goal. The under fives mortality rate and the proportion of fully immunised children between 12 to 23 months are lagging, and infant mortality is off track. However the proportion of under one year old children immunised against measles is on track. | The under fives mortality rate has declined from 124 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990, to an estimated 87 deaths per 1,000 live births as of 2010. The infant mortality rate has also declined, albeit slowly, from 96 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to an estimated 70 deaths per 1,000 live births as of 2010. According to the government’s progress report, the proportion of one-year-old children immunised against measles shows improvement, with the figure increasing to 79 per cent in 2008/09, compared to 57 per cent in 2001/02, but most of that progress came before 2005. |

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### Goals, targets and indicators

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<td><strong>Goal 5. Improve maternal health:</strong></td>
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<td>5a. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio</td>
<td>Some progress, but not sufficient</td>
<td>Progress is lagging</td>
<td>While the maternal mortality ratio has continued to decline, falling from 535 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990/91 to 260 in 2010, it is still substantially higher than the target. In addition, the already low proportion of deliveries attended by skilled health personnel has declined, from 48 per cent in 2004/05 to 41 per cent in 2008/09, the most recent year for which data is available.</td>
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<td>5b. Achieve universal access to reproductive health</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases:</strong></td>
<td>Limited progress</td>
<td>On HIV, progress is ahead of target, while progress on other diseases is lagging</td>
<td>Pakistan is classified as a low prevalence country for HIV/AIDS. There has been increase among some at risk groups, such as injecting drug users (IDUs) and sex workers. IDUs’ infection rates have doubled, from 10.8 per cent in 2005/06 to 20.8 per cent in 2008/09. In 2009, Pakistan had the eighth highest TB incidence in the world. The government has increased the proportion of cases cured through the Directly Observed Treatment System (DOTS) from 79 per cent in 2001/02 to 85 per cent in 2008/09, but incidences of TB do not show any improvement, stagnating at 181 per 100,000 of the population since 2001/02. Malaria was nearly eliminated in Pakistan during the 1960s, but it is now the second most prevalent disease. In 2006, there were an estimated 1.5 million malaria cases and 1,400 deaths; over 40 per cent of the cases and 47 per cent of deaths occurred in children under the age of five. In general, Pakistan has very low per capita spending on health, and spending has fallen sharply from 0.54 per cent of GDP in 2009/10 to 0.23 per cent of GDP in 2010/11. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), in 2012 only three countries, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria, remained polio endemic.</td>
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<td>6a. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>6b. Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it</td>
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<td>6c. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</td>
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27 Pakistan MDG Progress Report, 2010, op. cit
28 Pakistan, CIA, op. cit
29 Country Profile: Pakistan, Friends of the Global Fight against HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria, July 2009
30 Country Profile: Pakistan, Friends of the Global Fight against HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria 2009, op. cit
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| **Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability**  
7a. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources  
7b. Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss  
7c. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation  
7d. Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers | Lack of data makes analysis difficult, but there has been some progress | Generally progress is lagging or slow | There is conflicting data on whether forest cover is increasing or decreasing. The government’s progress report states that forest cover has increased from 4.8 per cent in 2001/02 to 5.02 per cent in 2008/09. However, other sources state that less than 2.5 per cent of land is forested, and that the proportion is decreasing rapidly because of an annual deforestation rate of over 2 per cent, one of the highest in the world.  
The latest estimate of the proportion of the population with sustained access to an improved water source was 65 per cent in 2008/09, up from 53 per cent in 1990, but this remains far short of the MDG target of 93 per cent. According to the government’s progress report, Pakistan still lags far behind in the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation. |

| **Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development**  
8a. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system  
8b. Address the special needs of least developed countries  
8c. Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states  
8d. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries  
8e. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries  
8f. In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications | Not on track for achievement | Limited comment is made on progress. Pakistan needs greater market access, development assistance and greater connectivity | Aid to Pakistan rose particularly sharply, up by 126 per cent to US$1.4 billion in 2010, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Aid flows are, however, volatile from one year to the next, and CSOs assess that aid commitments have not always been met by the international donor community. Rising debt repayments, as outlined above, mean that net transfers to Pakistan have in recent years been quite low by historical standards. In addition to volatile aid flows, Pakistan continues to face discriminatory tariffs in major markets such as the USA on its biggest exports of textiles and clothing. According to the government progress report, Pakistan’s share in the global market has declined by more than a third to 0.13 per cent in 2009, from 0.21 per cent in 1999. Mobile phone usage, which had a density of only 12 per cent in 2004, grew to 70 per cent in 2010. |

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32 Pakistan, Illegal Logging, http://www.illegal logging.info/regions/pakistan; the UN MDG database suggests that forest cover has declined from 3.3 per cent in 1990 to 2.2 per cent in 2010, moving away from the MDG target of 6 per cent forest cover

A major change in the context, which could offer a further challenge in the short term to the accomplishment of the MDGs, has come in the 18th constitutional amendment, passed in 2010, which among other measures transferred responsibility for areas such as education, health and other basic public services from national government to the provinces. Two provincial reports published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2011 for Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa indicate that these provinces will fail to meet the MDG targets. The Balochistan report states that, ‘As available data shows, at the current rate of progress, no MDG can be achieved in entirety in the province’. In the view of CSOs consulted, provincial governments lack the capacity and capability to handle public service delivery, given that the federal government has historically played this role. While provincial governments can be considered adequately funded after the recent Seventh National Finance Commission Award, building local capacity and co-ordination for national goals will take time.

For a full list of the MDGs, along with the targets and indicators, see: http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/host.aspx?Content=indicators/officiallist.htm

3. Usefulness and challenges of the MDG framework to civil society

CSOs involved in this review consider that while the attainment of the MDGs was declared as a national objective, they were not embedded in a sufficiently robust institutional framework that could support policy co-ordination among various stakeholders. The MDG secretariat in the Planning Commission was not sufficiently high powered. The paramount constraining factor has been that the attainment of the MDGs is not anchored in public policy discourse or policy formulation, nor is it specifically monitored by Cabinet or parliament, suggesting a broader lack of political will. As part of this, CSOs feel that little effort was made by the government to develop greater ownership of the MDGs, either among civil society or the private sector. This had fed a lack of awareness of the MDGs, observed anecdotally even among mid-level development workers.

Another constraining factor is the new approach of the Planning Commission to growth. In the opinion of some CSOs consulted, the approach, as articulated in the Commission’s New Growth Framework, shuns notions such as sustainability and inclusiveness almost entirely. It appears to treat poverty and vulnerability in residual terms, with an apparent assumption that they can be taken care of by a concerted push towards headline growth.

CSOs consulted also believe that their engagement with the MDGs has been further hampered by a lack of co-ordination among international organisations and donors, and an absence of accountability mechanisms for donor interventions.

CSOs believe that the MDGs have been useful for improving access to funding from global sources, both for government initiatives and for civil society. However, given the context outlined above, CSOs feel that the MDGs should have...
been revisited after 9/11, which was a game changer for developed countries’ engagement with Pakistan. They also stated that the MDGs were never adequately localised.

Participants in this review expressed doubts about the quality of data produced on the MDGs; while the MDG team sits in the Planning Commission, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper secretariat is based in the Ministry of Finance, further implying a lack of co-ordination. In addition, the latter uses a very broad definition to capture public spending on poverty reduction, including spending on security and the judicial system.

While many CSOs have been active in working towards the MDGs through service provision, particularly in health and education, this is largely due to their longstanding work in these areas, rather than because they have explicitly oriented their work around the MDGs.

CSOs assess civil society capacity for advocacy as very low, leading to a concern expressed in this review that civil society is concentrating on substituting for the job of government in service delivery and alleviating its failures, rather than working on an agenda that pushes forward, complements and challenges that of government. There is also a critique that donors have done little to support the advocacy role of CSOs, tending also to treat them as gap fillers in service provision, and that relief and recovery work in response to disasters has prevented CSOs from adequately developing a perspective on the MDGs.

It should be understood that civil society in Pakistan makes clear that it works under very difficult conditions. Even as this report was being prepared, six prominent civil society activists were arrested for carrying out direct service delivery work on health care and education.40 In January 2013, global civil society network CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation called attention to a spate of violent attacks on CSO workers, many of them engaged in direct basic service delivery, as the latest in a long line of challenges to legitimate civil society operations.41

An NGO Bill was brought forward in 1996, but it was not passed until 2012.42 While this is seen to formally recognise that CSOs have a legitimate role to play in development, a cause for concern is that it also allows the government to oversee foreign funding received by CSOs.43 CSOs express the concern that the government opposes them and sees them as a competitor for development funding.44
4. Contribution of CSOs to the MDGs and their delivery

In examining how CSOs in Pakistan have contributed towards the MDGs, it must be borne in mind that their potential to contribute effectively has been limited, given that civil society has often faced opposition from state actors, particularly the military governments which have ruled for long periods since independence. The attitudes of different governments towards civil society have been volatile. Many in civil society believe there has been a significant worsening of relations over the past decade, and that government has increasingly attempted to hinder CSO operations. Typically, CSOs believe government is happy when civil society plays a service delivery or charitable role, but is unsupportive when it moves into advocacy.  

A rise in CSO activity and prominence was seen after the earthquake in 2005. In the wake of the earthquake a great deal of funding started to come into Pakistan for reconstruction and development work, and since the government had low credibility because of some prominent corruption scandals, non-governmental channels were also sought. In any case, the government did not have the capacity to deal with a disaster of the scale of the earthquake, and so it needed civil society to play its part.

The review process generated examples of CSOs that do work with the government as implementation partners in service delivery programmes, including the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, the Mother and Child Health Programme, the National AIDS Control Programme, the Benazir Income Support Programme and the National and Provincial Rural Support Programme.

In an example of a broad-based collaboration, the UNDP came together with the Centre for Poverty Reduction Research and the Social Policy Department, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour, the World Conservation Union, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy and the Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment to start a new initiative, the MDG-Driven Poverty Policy Package. Several CSOs have also reported that they engage with the United Nations Global Compact, a policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

Even when CSOs believe they have advocacy capacity, they have reported that they are hindered by the disenabling environment for civil society, as outlined above. However, examples of successful campaigns suggested include advocacy for the passing of bills for women’s empowerment and against gender-based violence; collaboration with the Ministry of Human Rights, established in 2008; and work to secure and promote article 25-A of the constitution, passed in 2010, which enshrines the right to universal free education.
5. Lessons learned and recommendations

Key recommendations to realise development goals better in future that have emerged from this review include:

- Closer alignment between the MDGs/future goals and national development plans
- Intensive co-ordination between government, civil society and the private sector, overseen by a more effective MDG secretariat
- An efficient system to monitor and review progress
- Development of a more enabling environment, including promotion of the rule of law and more institutionalised constitutionalism, so that CSOs can more easily undertake advocacy and lobbying
- Development of adequate provincial systems in the wake of the recent devolution
- Provision for broad-based localisation to drive greater local ownership and achievement
- Involvement of youth groups in planning and monitoring

There is much that the MDGs do not cover but should, identified by this process as including issues of energy, food security, funding issues, governance, the taxation system, unemployment and the difficulties young people face. CSOs put forward the view that future goals also need to be shaped by an understanding of the weakness of Pakistan’s political infrastructure, the new context of devolution and the impacts of natural disasters, the ‘war on terror’, and law and order problems.

CSOs believe that Goal 8 on strengthening global partnerships has not been defined as precisely as it should have been, which has resulted in limited accountability on the part of the richest countries for their commitments on international assistance and support. According to the UN’s latest assessment of progress towards achieving the MDGs, global net aid disbursements amounted to US$133 billion or 0.31 per cent of their combined national income. This was a 2.7 per cent drop in real terms from 2010, well short of the target of 0.7 per cent by 2015. Insufficient access to predictable development finance, export markets, technologies and medicines were identified as important constraints to improving progress on the MDGs.

CSOs also discussed the need to be more active in calling on the private sector, particularly large corporations, to play a stronger development role, including pushing for the implementation of laws which mandate compulsory corporate social responsibility.

CSO representatives at a further consultation on the MDGs, organised by the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) and UNDP in Lahore in January 2013, also criticised the non-binding nature of the MDG framework and the weak oversight exercised by the UN and donors on compliance. In addition,
this consultation drew attention to the lack of human security goals in the MDGs and called for annual target setting, periodic review through independent monitoring mechanisms, and an expanded definition of poverty and inequality in any new framework.\textsuperscript{50}

6. Post-2015 development framework

In the opinion of CSOs consulted, in order to make achievements in key areas such as education, health and gender equality, the following underpinning components should form part of the post-2015 framework in Pakistan:

– Strengthening of governance mechanisms: there was consensus that weak governance has been one of the major reasons for the non-achievement of many of the MDGs in Pakistan. Therefore, improvement in governance systems and structures should be one of the top priorities of the post-2015 framework.

– Youth engagement: Pakistan has a large cohort of young people. It is estimated that 63 per cent (103.69 million) of the population is under 25 years old.\textsuperscript{51} This means that engaging young people, and providing job creation strategies directly geared towards them that provide an alternative to extremism, is critical. Given this, it must be a cause for concern that there is very little mention of young people in the most recent government MDG progress report, even though there is an indicator under Goal 8.\textsuperscript{52} Youth participation should be mainstreamed.

– Human rights: Along with basic needs such as health and education, the realisation of fundamental human rights, such as freedom of expression and association, freedom from persecution and violence, and the right of access to information are key needs for the enabling of human potential and therefore in the development of communities. However, the MDGs did not include human rights as part of the framework. The post-2015 framework should remedy this and make it mandatory for countries to improve their human rights situation. In Pakistan, examples such as Article 25-A of the Constitution, mentioned above, could be used to help develop a rights-based approach to development.

– Sexual and reproductive health rights: As stated above, Pakistan has a large cohort of young people, and their reproductive and sexual health needs and rights remain unfulfilled. The post 2015 framework should focus on these and make it compulsory for countries, including Pakistan, to respect and protect these rights.

– Financing and taxation reforms: Achievement of the MDGs is very much dependent on the availability of sufficient resources. However, weak tax collection systems mean that Pakistan is not able to generate enough resources at the local level and is reliant on international donors. Taxation reform is therefore needed.

\textsuperscript{50} Draft Report of a Consultation on Post 2015 Development Agenda with CSOs, Lahore, 7 January 2013 (ibid)


\textsuperscript{52} The indicators for MDG 8 are listed in the Pakistan Progress Report 2010, but no data or comment are provided on youth employment.
7. Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, Pakistan is falling very short of almost all its targets. A combination of institutional weaknesses in its response to the MDGs, financing shortfalls, arising from domestic reasons and the international community’s failure to fulfil its commitments under Goal 8, the impact of the global financial crisis, protracted internal conflict and devastating natural calamities have put back whatever initial progress was made. Financing constraints have been compounded by policy apathy.

Strengthening the institutional framework for the MDGs and future development goals, in particular in policy planning, implementation and co-ordination between the various tiers of government, and with other actors, will be crucial to closing the gaps. Equally important, Pakistan will have to establish new internal resource mobilisation efforts and divert additional resources to meeting MDG targets, even after the deadline of 2015 has passed. These efforts must be complemented by the international community stepping up to deliver on what it has promised in terms of enhanced assistance and market access.

Development as it has been practised in Pakistan has been largely supply side development, determined by those who deliver it; a step change is needed to make development something determined by citizens. Pakistan’s MDG experience has showed what happens when attempts are made to achieve development without effective governance, participation and accountability.
Participating organisations

Original research partner:
– Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Consultation partners:
– Pakistan NGOs Forum
– CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Consultation participants:
– Acid Survivors Foundation, Pakistan (ASF)
– Cavish Development Foundation
– CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
– Community Motivation and Development Organisation
– De Laas Gul Welfare Program (DLG)
– HARDWO
– Human Capital Management Institute (HCMI)
– Interact
– MCG Private Ltd
– NCCWD NDHR
– Organisation for Social Development (OSD)
– Pakistan Institute of Environment Development Action Resource (PIEDAR)
– Pakistan NGO Forum
– Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF)
– Plan International
– RISE Pakistan
– Rutgers WPF
– Sahil
– Society for Sustainable Development (SSD)
– Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC)
– Sungi Development Foundation
– The Society for the Advancement of Community, Health, Education and Training (SACHET)
– United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
– United Global Organisation of Development (UGOOD)
– We Can