

# Seal a **JUST** Deal

The MDG Path to a  
Climate Change Solution



**For the majority of the world's population and most developing countries, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the eradication of poverty remain their highest priority.**

**The impacts of climate change threaten the achievement of the MDGs, but also create opportunities for further efforts to achieve these development imperatives.**

**The Millennium Development Goals represent an essential step in tackling the climate change challenge in developing countries.**

**MDG 7 is precisely about linking environmental protection to poverty reduction through sustainable development.**

**Moreover, on the international level, a global deal on climate change can only be achieved if it has at its center a focus on linkages between poverty, MDGs and climate change.**

**An international deal which combines measures to achieve the MDGs with those for adaptation and mitigation would be a win-win solution for both climate change and development.**



# Introduction

## Introduction

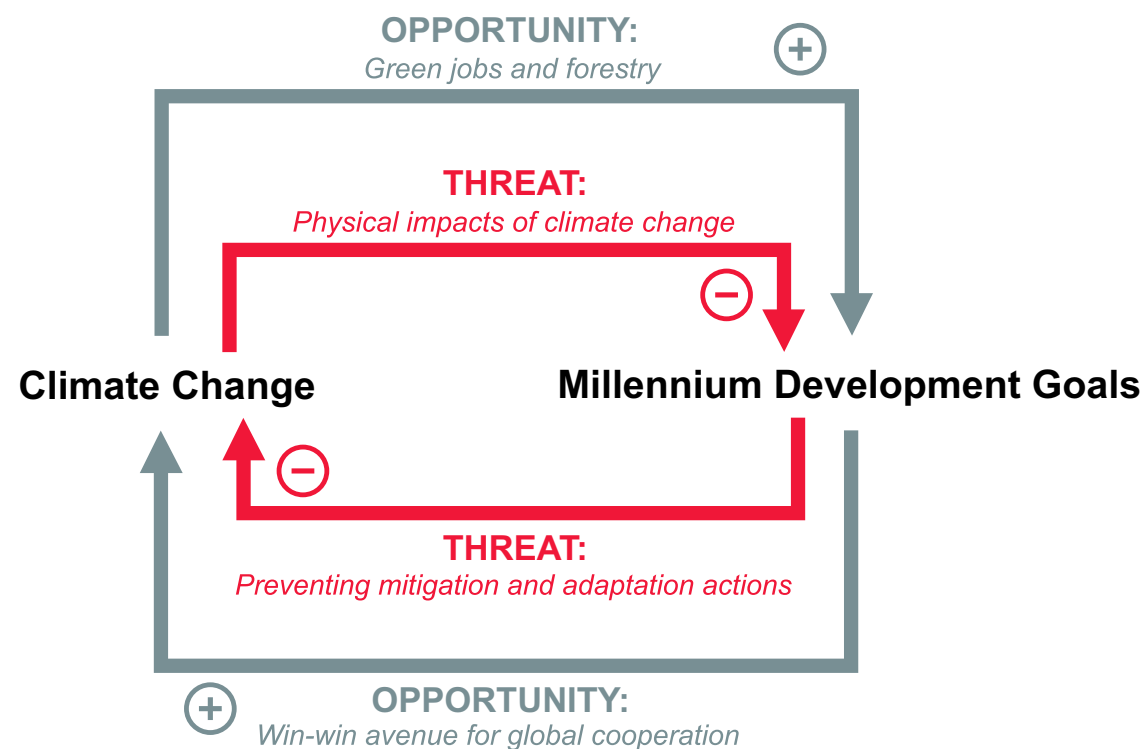
Climate change is a pressing global challenge that requires global cooperation at unprecedented scale and speed. However, at the core of this relatively new area of focus lies the long-standing imperative of global poverty. Not only will climate change impact poverty and threaten the achievement of the MDGs, but addressing poverty, MDGs and development inequalities represent an essential step in tackling the impacts of climate change.

Moreover, it is hard to conceive of a global agreement on climate change which does not have MDGs and poverty reduction at its core. Inequalities in the levels of development across and within nations and the need for broad-based growth to realize the rights of the poor remain imperatives of developing and developed countries alike. Unless these long-standing commitments are adequately addressed, an agreement on tackling the new and pressing challenge of climate change will remain elusive. Furthermore, if a global agreement on climate change is not reached, there would be a significant erosion of trust between developed and developing countries.

# Relationship

## Relationship between the MDGs & Climate Change

The relationship between climate change and the Millennium Development Goals works in both directions, with each impacting the other in positive and negative ways, as illustrated in the diagram below:



# Impact

## Impact of Climate Change on the MDGs:

### Climate change as a threat to the MDGs

It is now well understood that the physical impacts of climate change will have significant consequences on poverty and the achievement of the MDGs. According to recent analysis released by the Global Humanitarian Forum, hundreds of thousands of people already die every year from climate change, a figure they expect to rise to up to half a million in twenty years. The physical impacts of climate change ranging from decreased water availability and agricultural productivity to increased drought and frequency of extreme weather events will also have their own social and political consequences. These consequences of consequences are poised to instigate significant migration, political instability, and conflicts over scarce resources especially in countries with low levels of development.

### Climate change as an opportunity for the MDGs

At the same time, the actions being designed to tackle climate change can create opportunities for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. If policies are designed correctly, efforts aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions can create jobs and new employment opportunities for the poor. Small-scale clean energy initiatives in rural areas can not only generate new sources of income but also for example, reduce the substantial time currently allocated by the poor for firewood collection for energy provision. In addition, as forest preservation and enhancement become part of a global climate solution, indigenous populations in these areas can access new financial flows and alternate income-generating activities through a global climate regime. Over a billion people, including many indigenous groups, depend on forests for their livelihood and more than half of them live in extreme poverty.

The table on the right details the threats and opportunities for each of the MDGs caused by climate change.

Threat caused by climate change	MDGs
<p>Changes in natural systems such as increased water scarcity and decreased agricultural productivity as a result of climate change will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the livelihood assets of poor people;</li> <li>• Diminish their food security;</li> <li>• Alter the path and rate of national economic growth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GOAL 1</b> Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty</p>
<p>Climate change could lead to a reduction in the ability of children to participate in full-time education by causing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of livelihoods assets which increase the need for children to engage in income-generating activities;</li> <li>• Displacement and migration of families;</li> <li>• Loss of infrastructure such as schools as a result of extreme weather events.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GOAL 2</b> Achieve universal primary education</p>
<p>Depletion of natural resources, decreased availability of potable water, reduced agricultural productivity and increased climate-related disasters could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place additional burdens on women's health;</li> <li>• Increase women's workload;</li> <li>• Reduce the livelihood assets of women;</li> <li>• Limit women's time to participate in decision-making &amp; income-generating activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GOAL 3</b> Promote gender equality</p>
<p>Increased child mortality, reduced maternal health, increased prevalence of malaria, and the undermining of the nutritional health needed by individuals to combat HIV are expected to occur as a result of climate change-induced changes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat-related mortality;</li> <li>• Declining food security;</li> <li>• Decreased availability of potable water;</li> <li>• Increased prevalence of certain vector-borne diseases such as malaria;</li> <li>• Extreme weather events.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GOAL 4</b> Reduce child mortality</p> <p><b>GOAL 5</b> Improve maternal health</p> <p><b>GOAL 6</b> Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria/other diseases</p>
<p>Climate change will have a direct impact on environmental sustainability by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamentally altering ecosystem relationships;</li> <li>• Changing the quality and quantity of natural resources and biodiversity;</li> <li>• Reducing ecosystem productivity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GOAL 7</b> Ensure environmental sustainability</p>
<p>Climate change could have significant impacts on global cooperation and partnership, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased resource conflicts directly undermining the prospects of global cooperation;</li> <li>• Altered international trade and economic growth patterns as a result of a loss in natural resources, diminished agricultural productivity in certain areas, and an increased frequency of extreme weather events;</li> <li>• Increased adaptation and mitigation costs expanding the debt burden of developing countries;</li> <li>• Potential for the diversion of funds away from development objectives to efforts focused on climate change.</li> </ul> <p>If an equitable and ambitious global agreement on climate change is not reached, there would be a significant erosion of trust between developed and developing countries.</p>	<p><b>GOAL 8</b> Develop a global partnership for development</p>

## Opportunity created by climate change

Actions taken to prevent dangerous climate change such as clean energy projects and forest enhancement could result in:

- Employment opportunities in small-scale clean energy projects;
- Additional income-generating opportunities for forest dwellers;
- Increased energy available for use by local enterprises and improved local economic growth.

Efforts to prevent dangerous climate change could support an increase in the ability of children to participate in full-time education by:

- Reducing the time spent by children for energy provision (e.g., collecting firewood);
- Enabling the provision of inexpensive solar lighting for educational activities, allowing children to study in the evening.

Actions taken to prevent dangerous climate change could promote gender equality by:

- Reducing the time spent by women on energy provision (e.g., collecting firewood);
- Creating additional employment and income-generating activities for women.

Actions taken to prevent dangerous climate change could support efforts to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat HIV, malaria and other diseases by:

- Reducing air pollution from traditional fuels and cooking methods;
- Providing a sustainable energy supply for rural health clinics;
- Enabling the cooling of vaccines and medicines in rural environments.

Efforts to prevent dangerous climate change could support strengthened environmental sustainability by:

- Maintaining and enhancing forests;
- Protecting the biodiversity found in forests;
- Substituting the use of non-renewable fuel sources with renewables.

Actions to prevent dangerous climate change could improve global partnership through:

- Increased flows of finance from developed to developing countries to fund required adaptation and mitigation measures;
- Deepened cooperation for research, development, and transfer of clean energy technologies;
- Improved collaborative efforts to maintain and enhance forests;
- Institutions and market mechanisms designed to facilitate international exchange and cooperation.

If an equitable and ambitious global agreement on climate change can be reached, there would be renewed confidence in global cooperation and strengthen the trust between developed and developing countries.



# Impact

## Impact of the MDGs on Climate Change

### MDGs as a threat to climate change

On the other hand, global poverty and inequalities in the levels of development across nations are a threat to mitigation efforts to prevent dangerous climate change. The priorities of developing countries remain the eradication of poverty and the MDGs for which economic growth is a pre-requisite. Such growth may be constrained by efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Developed countries have a responsibility to support developing nations in their efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change through the provision of adequate financial resources and access to relevant technologies. If these responsibilities are not met, developing countries will not be able to adapt to climate change or take on their responsibilities in reducing their own emissions as required in any long-term climate change solution. Thus, unless MDG considerations and objectives are at the core of an agreement on climate change, there can not be a solution for this global challenge.

### MDGs as an opportunity for climate change

At the same time, these same MDG objectives can serve as the foundations for an equitable and ambitious deal on climate change. Realizing the rights of the poor through the achievement of the MDGs will necessarily form the foundation upon which both adaptation and mitigation measures are built. As such, an international deal which combines measures to achieve these objectives with those for climate change adaptation and mitigation would be a win-win solution for both the MDGs and climate change. Moreover, after years of unmet commitments for development assistance, an equitable and ambitious agreement on climate change with development at its core could overcome low levels of trust between the developed and developing world and inaugurate a new era of global cooperation.

# Recommendations

## Recommendations: Addressing the Threat to MDG Achievement

### Adaptation

Adaptation is defined by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as any adjustments in behaviours or economic structures that reduce the vulnerability of society to changes in the climate system. For example, adaptation measures include improved irrigation to deal with decreased water availability and strengthened building standards for coastal housing to build resiliency to the increasing frequency of extreme weather events.

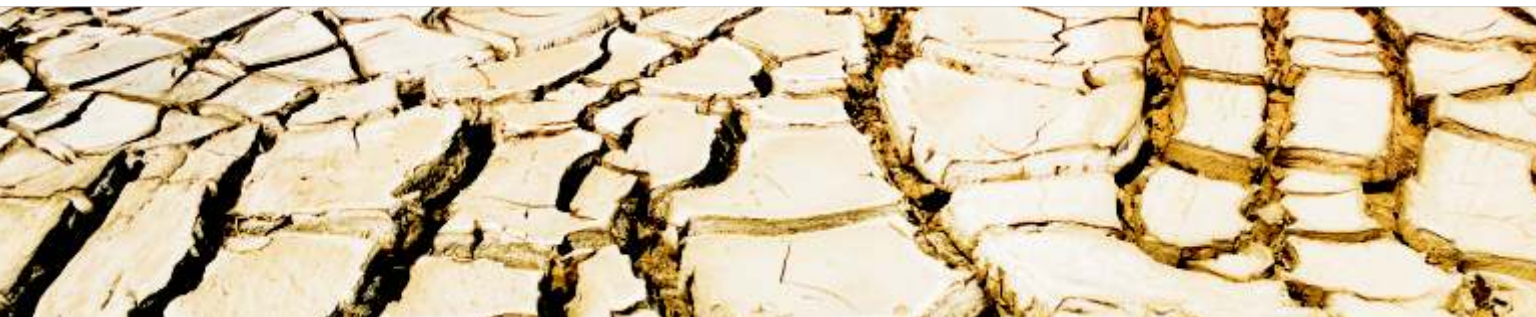
These adaptation measures will need to be undertaken at an unprecedented scale and speed to support poor communities affected by climate change worldwide. However, most of these measures are not stand-alone interventions only specific to climate risk, but are actions that should have been taken to achieve existing development objectives or marginal changes to such development activities. For example, water scarcity is already a significant global challenge which climate change will only exacerbate. Adaptation efforts to deal with this scarcity will thus fundamentally be development interventions with a slight augmentation to account for the increased scarcity caused by climate change.

As such, adaptation measures will require as a foundation the achievement of basic standards of development, and at minimum the achievement of the MDGs.

### Recommendation 1

**As a first step for adaptation, developing and developed nations must prioritize efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.** Specifically, developed nations must meet their aid commitments to reach 0.7% of GNI consistent with the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness.

Furthermore, in order to ensure that poor communities are adequately supported in addressing this threat to development, there are a number of key principles that must inform international adaptation policies.



## Recommendation 2

**Within an agreement on climate change, adaptation policies must adhere to the following principles:**

- **Additionality of financing:** All funding for climate change adaptation estimated at a minimum of \$67 billion per year by 2030 must be new funding and not detract from governments' existing commitments to the MDGs and other development objectives.
- **Predictable funding:** Financing for adaptation must be predictable and sustainable. Taking into account the experience of previous ODA commitments, the case for generating this funding through automatic mechanisms is a strong one.
- **Accountability:** Building on lessons learned from development financing, adaptation actions and funds must be made much more transparent and accountable, particularly to the poor in developing countries.
- **Realizing the rights of the poor:** Adaptation efforts must be designed to be effective in realizing the rights of the poor. Hard lessons on aid and development effectiveness have been learned over the past three decades. We have learned that the right to information and access to justice for the poor are essential components in the process to realize the rights of the poor and achieve the MDGs. This experience must be integrated into the design of the institutions and programmes for adaptation given the significant overlap between the MDGs and adaptation.
- **Empowering the poor:** Effective adaptation will require not only technical “fixes” such as sea walls or irrigation systems, but a whole process of societal change as people, particularly the poor, cope with the physical impacts of climate change. As with the MDGs, adaptation measures will need to be designed to enable this process of change by empowering the poor by strengthening their capacity.
- **Adaptability:** Adaptation institutions, mechanisms and projects will need to be adaptive themselves, allowing for learning and innovation as knowledge on climate change impacts is expanded. The constellation or multiplicity of funding resources that will eventually exist for adaptation should be designed in such a way as to incentivize innovation, share learnings across entities, and be able to adapt their strategies as more is learned about the physical impacts of climate change and how best to adapt to these changes.

In addition, within the context of the negotiations, the Adaptation Fund exists as a potentially innovative example that integrates most of the principles we have outlined for adaptation policy. This funding mechanism is innovative in two ways. Firstly, financing for the Adaptation Fund is generated through a levy on the carbon markets and thus is additional and non-discretionary in nature. Secondly, the governance of the fund is more equitable in that developing countries, the recipients of financing from the Fund, have the majority of the seats in the Fund Board and thus a larger voice and share in decision making.

## Recommendation 3

**The UNFCCC Adaptation Fund should be designated as the central global institution for adaptation through which the majority of financing for adaptation actions must be channelled.** In addition to the above principles, the only other condition that should be placed upon the activities of this Fund are that actions supported by the fund must prioritize support to the poor and most vulnerable communities, particularly women, who are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.



# Mitigation

## Mitigation: Creating a win-win solution for Climate Change and the MDGs

In order to create a win-win solution for climate change and the MDGs, the policies for mitigation will need to be designed with development aims and objectives at their core.

### Recommendation 4

**Developed countries with historically high emissions must take on ambitious targets for emissions reductions** in the short, medium and long-term in line with IPCC recommendations to reach a 2°C target.

### Recommendation 5

**Mitigation policies for clean energy development and the maintenance and enhancements of forests must be designed to support the achievement of the MDGs** in developing countries. To this end, particularly for least developed countries and other countries with low levels of MDG achievement, principles with these aims in mind should be integrated into international mitigation policies such as improvements in the procedures and modalities of financing mechanisms, access for small-scale projects, support for capacity building, local ownership and engagement and the like.

“We face a global economic slowdown and a food security crisis, both of uncertain magnitude and duration. Global warming has become more apparent. These developments will directly affect our efforts to reduce poverty: the economic slowdown will diminish the incomes of the poor; the food crisis will raise the number of hungry people in the world and push millions more into poverty; climate change will have a disproportionate impact on the poor. The need to address these concerns, pressing as they are, must not be allowed to detract from our long-term efforts to achieve the MDGs. On the contrary, our strategy must be to keep the focus on the MDGs as we confront these new challenges.”

**Ban Ki-moon**  
UN Secretary-General

“The effects of pollution driven by economic growth in some parts of the world are now driving millions of people into poverty elsewhere. At the same time, decades-old aid pledges continue to go unmet. The Millennium Development Goals are endangered. And the poor lack capacity to make their voices heard in international arenas, or attract public and private investment. For those living on the brink of survival, climate change is a very real and dangerous hazard. For many, it is a final step of deprivation.”

**Kofi Annan**  
Former UN Secretary-General

“We have to make sure that decisions on climate change are in the interest of the most vulnerable, supporting their social protection, health, livelihood and therefore they go hand in hand with the MDGs.”

**Bert Koenders**  
Minister for Development Cooperation  
The Government of Netherlands

“Climate change mitigation and adaptation are not just about technology or infrastructure, it's about people's resilience and increased capacity to help themselves, it's about the achievement of the MDGs.”

**Erna Witoelar**  
UN Special Ambassador for MDGs in Asia  
and the Pacific 2003-2007

“Adapting to the impacts of climate change will impose massive additional costs on Africa: Africa is the continent least responsible for climate change, but is acutely vulnerable to its effects on economic growth, poverty reduction, and the prospects for achieving the MDGs... New, additional, more predictable and sustainable resources need to be provided - in support of both adaptation and mitigation; this will require the development of new financing sources and effective mechanisms, including the new climate change funding initiatives currently under discussion, as an integral part of the Copenhagen agreement.”

**Africa Partnership Forum**



### The UN Millennium Campaign

The UN Millennium Campaign was established by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan 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 the north and south, 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 to do so.



[www.endpoverty2015.org](http://www.endpoverty2015.org)

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