Millennium Development Goals

1. What were the Millennium Development Goals?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a series of **8 targets** - created by the **United Nations in 2000** - for addressing **extreme poverty** in its many forms: *poverty, hunger, disease, a lack of shelter*, whilst promoting *gender equality, education and environmental sustainability*.
Each goal has **specific targets** and **dates** for achieving them.
E.g Goal 2 aims to ensure children - including both boys and girls will be able to complete a full course of primary education by 2015



To accelerate the process, the G8 ministers agreed in 2005 to provide funds to the World Bank, the IMF and the African Development Bank in order to **cancel $40-$55bn in debt** to allow HIPCs (*Heavily indebted poor countries*) to focus on achieving the goals.

2. Why are they so significant in the global effort to reduce the development gap?

- According to the UN, the Millennium Development Goals are the most broadly supported, comprehensive, and specific goals to reduce global poverty that have **ever been established**.
- In terms of international politics, they are used to **base development policy**.
- The goals are also significant, because if they were successfully implemented: **500m fewer people would be living in extreme poverty**, **300m fewer would be hungry, millions of lives would be saved**. The Millennium Development Goals are a politically and economically affordable solution.
- Whatever a nation's motivation for achieving the crisis of poverty, **the end goal is the same - the MDGs provide a common goal**
- Success of the goals can be easily monitored as they are all **quantified targets**
- **"*The MDGs are too important to fail - It is time to put them on the fast-track they require and deserve*" - UN**
- **"*For everyone on Earth, they are a linchpin to the quest for a more secure and peaceful world*" - UN**

3. Millennium Development Goals - An Evaluation

Since the target date of 2015 ('*The Year of Evaluation*') has now passed, the success of the Millennium Development Goals can be measured.

Achievements:

- UNDP not only created goals, but also designed and rolled out a large **set of comprehensive tools** which supported MDG planning
- UNDP reports **successfully measured** progress
- MDGs have **improved** the **flow** of **aid** and other **investments**
- With UNDP support, most countries have incorporated MDGs in their development plans
- There was **support** from **financial institutions** and donors - This was critical for MDG success, especially in the poorest countries
- The **UNDP** has had a positive impact by **engaging with countries** and helping to understand MDGs and track their achievement
- **Goal 1 Extreme Poverty**: The number of people living on $1.25/day has been (almost) halved
- **Goal 2 Primary Education**: Within 10 years, >30m more are attending school
- **Goal 4 Reducing child mortality**: Child mortality rate has been reduced by over half
- **Goal 5 Maternal Mortality**: Mortality ratio has fallen nearly by half
- **Goal 6 Combat Deadly Disease**: Number of HIV infections fell 40% between '00 and '13
- **Goal 7 Environmental Sustainability**: Half of those suffering from unclean drinking water no longer suffer
- **Goal 8 Global Partnership**: Overseas development assistance from MEDCs to LEDCs increased 66% and reached record figure of £80.3bn in 2013

However:

- Implementation of MDGs at country level varied due to a lack of leadership by UNDP on national levels
- Not all **MDGs were given equal attention**. *E.g Gender equality targets were applied less often*
- Many **MDG planning** initiatives were **not adequately funded** - hence impacting their success
- Initially, there was resistance to the MDGs. *(However, today they have become key to measuring development*)
- The goals were not necessarily adapted to different countries with varying existing development - meaning that higher income countries tended to focus on localised areas of development whilst lower income, less developed countries had a greater task of eliminating national poverty.
- The degree of success has been **uneven**: with **inequalities between** and **within** nations
- It has been difficult to measure the effect of some MDG initiatives, as other independent initiatives have also occurred simultaneously - **Therefore some consider that the MDGs are reinforcing measures rather than driving measures to end poverty**

- Many well governed countries are too poor and face a poverty trap - This undermines their ability to work toward the MDGs
- **Goal 1 Extreme Poverty**: 1.2bn are still in extreme poverty and 99m children under 5 have inadequate food
- **Goal 2 Primary Education**: Not ‘all’ children are offered primary education (58m still missing education). Often schools have few teachers.
- **Goal 3 Gender Equality**: Many people still believe girls should not have an education *e.g Pakistan*
- **Goal 4 Reducing child mortality**: The MDG target of 2/3rds fall has not been met
- **Goal 5 Maternal Mortality**: Mortality ratio has not met the MDG target of 2/3rds reduction
- **Goal 6 Combat Deadly Disease**: Target not met, with much work still to be done
- **Goal 8 Global Partnership**: Progress in different countries has been uneven