

Human Development Report and Millennium Development Goal Report Synergies

Although related and complementary, HDRs and MDGRs have different functions and respond to different development needs (see [NHDR/MDGR: Mutually Supportive Exercises](#)).

MDGRs are designed primarily to raise awareness and report progress on nationally tailored MDGs and targets. HDRs can be used for this same purpose, but ideally are used to meet a larger and different set of development needs for: data, analysis, policy debate, and advocacy for the MDGs, as well as a range of other nationally relevant HD challenges.

With some exceptions, the different needs addressed by both Report processes exist in most countries – accordingly, most countries are supporting both Report processes.

There are many ways to achieve the objectives of both Reports, while building on their complementary nature in terms of: **common conceptual underpinnings; preparation; data; communications and advocacy;** and other **ongoing and post-launch follow-up activities**.

Taking advantage of these synergies can help Report teams deal with the practical challenges of limited resources (financial, human, institutional) and other constraints, while increasing the effectiveness of development partnerships and opportunities for stronger policy impact.

Every country is different - examples of some synergies for country teams to consider follow.

HD Concept:

Both Reports are rooted in and should reflect in their process and contents the Human Development concept. The HD concept is captured well by the Millennium Declaration with its recognition of the importance of a people-centered multidisciplinary approach; the role of pro-poor growth and efficiency; a focus on inequality, women and marginalized groups; and social, political and civil empowerment in support of human dignity and freedom.

The global MDGs and targets, and suggested indicators represent only one part of the Millennium Declaration - a minimum set of HD goals for tailoring in each country. There are of course many other potential locally defined HD goals and targets.

The HD approach - which involves and empowers women and other potentially socially excluded groups to help themselves - can be used to achieve the MDGs and other HD goals through the HDRs and MDGRs, and the broader work of UNDP and its partners.

Both Reports can be used to promote and institutionalize the HD concept and approach through: internal and external trainings and orientations, work with schools, universities, and other partners in introducing HD into standard curricula, and ongoing advocacy.

It is the use of this HD approach that differentiates the HDR and MDGR processes from many other development reports, particularly in terms of their potential impact on those marginalized groups most in need of targeted support and empowerment.

Process:

The impact of both Reports is largely related to the quality of the Reports' process (not just their contents), from the planning stage, continuing long after their launches. There are many ways to make these processes more complementary in terms of: report sequencing and timing; themes; links to other country reports; teams and partners; training and tools; and financing.

- ***Sequencing and timing***

Country teams can take advantage of various HDR/MDGR synergies depending on the timing and sequencing of Report processes.

During the planning stage of each report and later stages of drafting, consultation, launching and follow-up, issues of sequencing and timing of key events (workshops, trainings, meetings, launches, media and other outreach events, launches, etc.) should be considered.

Some MDGR and HDR processes may be easier to manage and possibly more strategic if done, for example, in alternating years.

For example, an HDR process can precede an MDGR, and used to assess national priorities for tailored MDGs, with results feeding into an initial baseline or subsequent MDGR. Alternatively, an HDR process can be used to fill data, needs assessments, policy dialog, costing, and other capacity gaps already identified by and following up on a previous MDGR.

At the same time, some countries have produced an NHDR and MDGR through a more overlapping or combined sequencing, especially if their themes are closely related.

- ***Theme selection***

Given the diversity of national development contexts and the variety of development challenges that may be targeted by an HDR, it is perhaps not surprising that HDR teams have taken as their focus a great variety of development topics and themes.

These HDR themes do not necessarily correspond exactly with one or more MDG theme (although hopefully they all target issues related to broader issues of poverty and inequality).

Some countries, however, have found it useful for various strategic reasons to more closely and explicitly match the theme and structure of an HDR with the MDGs.

Some HDRs have been used to address all of a country's MDGs at once, providing data, analysis and policy options for nationally adapted goals, targets and indicators. In some of these cases, such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, because the HDR already meets national MDG reporting needs, there may be no need to produce a separate MDGR at the same time.

Some HDRs have been used to follow up on one or a few MDG themes – many reports have looked at HIV/AIDS, for example, or explicitly at the gender dimensions of the MDGs.

Still other HDRs have been used to focus on cross-cutting themes essential for the achievement of many MDGs (human security, migration, globalisation, decentralisation, etc.)

- ***Other reports/processes***

HDR and MDGR processes should be made an integral part of the other ongoing work of UNDP and UN country team in support of national partners, not a separate process.

Depending on country-specific development cycles, HDRs and MDGRs can be used to feed in to other country reporting and planning processes, including the CCA, the UNDAF, the PRS reports, as well as other national and donor reports (see [HDR Toolkit](#)).

Alternatively, some HDR and MDGR processes have drawn on other ongoing national and donor reports, and helped address some of the data gaps identified by these reports.

Regional HDRs and MDGRs can offer powerful data, analysis, and advocacy; yet, they cannot replace the role of national HDRs and MDGRs in addressing specific country needs.

Regional report processes can sometimes be more challenging with respect to applying an HD approach, national ownership, and achieving direct impact at the national level. Nonetheless, they can support common national capacity building, reporting, and awareness raising activities undertaken by national HDRs and MDGRs, and related cross-border challenges.

- ***Teams and partnerships***

There are many ways to take advantage of the similar nature of HDR and MDGR teams and the broader, longer-term partnerships they are designed to support.

Although somewhat dependent on the theme of an HDR, many of the experts responsible for research, analysis, and writing may be the same as those involved in MDGR processes.

In the same way, efforts of both HDR and MDGR processes to develop long-term partnerships with various development stakeholders can be combined and made re-enforcing.

These can involve efforts to build partnerships with individual experts and institutions at national and local levels, including: senior policy-makers and politicians, political parties, civil servants and government ministries and other specialized agencies, national statistical offices, Parliaments/Congresses, universities, schools, think-tanks, NGOs, CBOs, and other civil society groups and associations, the media, other regional and internal development actors, including bilateral and multilateral donors, and other UN agencies.

HDR and MDGR processes can also take advantage of common or similar participatory mechanisms to bring these experts and institutional partners together through existing and/or new steering committees, advisory panels, and related consultation and peer review processes.

Within UNDP, there are opportunities to involve the same staff directly in both HDR and MDGR processes, through common project and programme portfolios, as well as efforts to bring in all other relevant UNDP units and staff working on related issues.

Some UNDP regions have funded regional or sub-regional advisors to support both MDG and HDR processes – this, too, has led to additional report synergies of process.

Teams may also consider contracting the same translators, interpreters, and publishers.

- ***Training and tools:***

HDR and MDGR efforts to empower and build capacity of national partners can be made more complementary through the use of common trainings and tools.

Depending on the sequencing, themes, and team composition of the Reports (discussed above), the same or similar training and orientation events can be organized; common trainers and experts hired; and training materials and resources shared across both Report processes.

Detailed guidelines have been prepared for the preparation of HDRs (the Corporate Policy, HDR Toolkit, Time-line). These can also be adapted to support similar MDGR processes. Several HDR and MDG cases studies are available for use by both Report teams.

HDR and MDGR teams can take advantage of and contribute to the same UNDP global, regional and country knowledge sharing networks, e.g. HDR, HDR-Stats, MDG, Poverty.

- ***Financing:***

From the beginning, HDR and MDGR processes must include careful budget planning and mobilization of adequate financing, if they are to achieve their maximum policy impact.

Aside from taking advantage of synergies described above, HDR and MDGR report teams can look to common resource mobilization efforts and some complementary funding sources.

In addition to the use of UNDP core funds, Report teams can also consider other funding sources for different budget items, including: national government partners, bilateral and multilateral donors, and other UN agencies.

Report processes can sometimes be funded as part of larger UNDP capacity building programmes and projects in support of poverty reduction, governance reform, etc.

Much participatory work and consultation common to both Reports can be done at low cost. Similarly, much expertise is available at no cost through UNDP knowledge networks.

HDR and MDGR teams can take advantage of in-kind contributions, e.g. use of government and UN facilities for conferences, seconded experts, and already commissioned research.

Data

Both reports rely on a range of common data, face similar data collection and use challenges, and can support similar capacity building of national statistical offices and other partners.

As noted above, HDRs can include government-approved statistical data required for the MDGRs, as well as other quantitative and qualitative HD data, from a variety of sources.

Some of this HDR data can be produced through specially commissioned work. As such, HDRs can help support data gaps identified by MDGRs and other country reports.

Most HDRs also calculate a range of HD indices, including the HDI, HPI, GDI, and GEM. These indices and other data, including MDG indicators, can be adapted to national contexts and where possible disaggregated by sex, region, and other parameters of marginalization.

Such disaggregated data has in some countries led to direct policy impact, e.g. new public spending allocations made based on disparities identified by the indices in different regions.

Many countries, of course, face the challenge of reliable data. Although there are no easy solutions, some HDRs have been able to fill some gaps through specialized surveys. More detailed ways of dealing with data challenges are described in the HDR Toolkit.

Both HDRs and MDGRs also face the challenges of the sensitive political nature of data. Given in part the long-term nature of many reforms, the HDI is not to be used for annual, cross-country comparisons. Any country encountering questions from national counterparts on the use of the HDI and its calculation, are encouraged to contact the HDRO directly.

Both HDR and MDGR processes can also come together in capacity building for national statistics offices and related partners. This includes support for the use of such tools as Dev-Info, cooperation on household surveys, and work bringing data collectors and users together.

Communications and advocacy:

HDRs and MDGRs share communications and advocacy objectives to: increase public awareness; influence debates leading to policy change; and build strategic partner alliances.

To achieve the greatest results, these communication and advocacy activities must be planned and adequately funded and staffed, from the initial stages of both HDR and MDGR processes, and continuing throughout, including the launch of both reports and their follow-up.

Although different targeted strategies may be necessary depending on the specific theme of an HDR, in general both Reports can take advantage of some common activities and audiences. For example, both Reports processes may include a common gender equality campaign.

As in other areas of the HDR and MDGR processes, there are also many opportunities to take advantage of HDR and MDGR synergies in terms of teams, partners, tools, and resources.

Some areas where HDR and MDGR teams can cooperate include: combined web-sites, or linked sites; media programs/interviews on related HD/MDG topics; complementary advocacy materials, and/or distribution of HDR and MDGR materials at the same events; common training/orientations for key partners, including Report spokespeople and media; similar incentive systems, e.g. journalism awards; youth contests; common promotion of HD.

The [MDG Bluebook](#) and [HDR Toolkit](#) have many suggestions for use by both teams.

Other ongoing and follow-up activities:

In addition to ongoing advocacy work, HDR and MDGR follow-up can include many common activities and initiatives, including additional data collection and analysis.

Beyond ongoing advocacy and data initiatives, there are several other ways for national governments, UNDP and their partners to help translate Reports into policy impact, including support for policy costing, financing, resource mobilization and capacity building.

These follow-up activities should build on the momentum of HDR and MDGR processes, as well as the partnerships and other participatory mechanisms and tools they support.

- ***Costing, financing, resource mobilization:***

One important follow-up activity involves costing the MDGs and/or other HD goals. There are many ways to cost these goals, each with its own strengths and limitations (see <http://www.undp.org/poverty/costing> Username: costing Password: costing123).

Costing exercises can help generate public debate on which policy priorities to finance at what time, in what amount, and through what possible sources of financing.

As such, they can also lead to more specific debates over policies related to taxation, deficit spending, resource allocation across sub-national regions, and decentralization.

Sometimes, as in Indonesia, an HDR process can itself be used to conduct costing and initiate public debates on ways to finance a country's development goals.

A closely related follow-up activity for both HDR and MDGR processes includes ongoing support for resource mobilization (government, private sector, community-level, and donors), as well as more specific support for improved national aid coordination and management.

- ***Capacity building programmes/projects:***

Some of the many additional possible entry-points for HDR/MDGR follow-up and direct policy influence include capacity building projects designed to support:

- multi-stakeholder dialogue and debate;
- national, long-term visioning process;
- integration of HD/MDGs into national and sub-national strategies;
- policy formulation, implementation and budget management for sector and cross-cutting policies (e.g. gender mainstreaming, integrated water resource management; migration);
- legislation and judicial administration;
- civil service management.

HDR/MDGR processes themselves can of course be used to support such capacity building.

Although challenging, efforts should be made to track the Reports' impact.

Additional tools that can support HDR and MDGR teams in this follow-up work include: the [MDG How-to-Guide](#) and [Integrated Services for MDG-based National Strategies](#), and the new [Capacity Development](#) and [Capacity Assessment Practice Notes](#).