



## Sustainable Development Goals for Monitoring Action to Improve Global Health

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According to the World Health Organization (WHO; 2016), women and children compose the largest segment of the more than 1 billion people worldwide who are unable to access needed health care services because of inaccessibility, unavailability, unaffordability, and substandard quality of available care. Globally, these inequities continue to grow, with approximately 100 million people being forced into poverty each

year because of out-of-pocket expenses related to health care. Health disparities can be found not only between high- and low-resourced nations but within individual countries as well.

The United Nations (UN) has brought together world leaders to address growing health inequities, first by establishing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the years 2000 through 2015 (see Box 1) and recently by

**Abstract** Women and children compose the largest segment of the more than 1 billion people worldwide who are unable to access needed health care services. To address this and other global health issues, the United Nations brought together world leaders to address growing health inequities, first by establishing the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and more recently establishing Sustainable Development Goals, which are an intergovernmental set of 17 goals consisting of 169 targets with 304 indicators to measure compliance; they were designed to be applicable to all countries. Goal number 3, “Good Health and Well-Being: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages,” includes targets to improve the health of women and newborns. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nwh.2016.06.001>

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establishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; see Box 2). The impetus for developing these goals acknowledges that an investment in

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health is also an investment in prosperity, social and financial protection, and national security.

### Millennium Development Goals

The UN Millennium Declaration was conceived and adopted at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. This historic gathering established global partnerships between countries and funding agencies committed to achieving eight voluntary development goals by the targeted date of 2015. Global leaders committed their nations to unprecedented partnerships to reduce poverty and improve health. Dedicated governmental and nongovernmental resources supported a wide variety of MDG-related global and national initiatives. Nation leaders convened on a regular basis to assess progress

Box 1.

### Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015)

**Goal 1:** Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty

**Goal 2:** Achieve Universal Primary Education

**Goal 3:** Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Goal 4:** Reduce Child Mortality

**Goal 5:** Improve Maternal Health

**Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases

**Goal 7:** Ensure Environmental Sustainability

**Goal 8:** Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Source: United Nations (2015).

toward goal achievement by measuring the 60 key indicators established to monitor the eight MDGs and their 21 targets. Important new dialogue regarding major global issues such as gender equality, education, poverty, food insecurity, literacy, and violence was initiated.

The MDGs were effective in improving global health in general, but progress was insufficient and not uniform across the globe. Huge

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