



Millennium Development Goals – 2008



Bulgaria



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Sofia, 2008

Partnership for the report

This report materialized from the collaborative effort of a broad range of institutions and experts who discussed the draft report in six thematic discussions and one general meeting in the course of nearly six months. The report would have been impossible without the valuable inputs and participation of the following institutions and their representatives:

GOAL 1 – Income and unemployment

Antoaneta Gancheva (National Social Security Institute), Vasil Tzanov (Economic Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), Desislava Stoyanova (Employment Agency), Zina Andreeva (Employment Agency), Lena Russinova (Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria), Lyubomir Dimitrov (Agency for Economic Analyses and Forecasts), Margarita Shivergeva (New Bulgarian University), Maria Metodieva (Open Society), Nachko Radev (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy), Neli Shtonova (Balkan Institute for Labor and Social Policy), Rady Futekov (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy), Sergei Tzvetarski (National Statistical Institute)

GOAL 2 – Education

Dimitar Denkov (Sofia University St. Kliment Okhridski), Maria Donkova (Paideia Foundation), Milka Kodzhabasheva (Ministry of Education and Science), Neda Kristanova (Center for Control and Assessment of the Quality of Education)

GOAL 3 – Gender equality

Zoya Slavova (National Social Security Institute), Krasimira Daskalova (Sofia University St. Kliment Okhridski, Bulgarian Association of Academic Women), Stefka Blazheva (National Statistical Institute), Lili Abadzheva (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy), Mariana Bancheva (Ministry of Education and Science), Sergei Magdichev (Ministry of Education and Science), Ophelia Krumova (Ministry of Education and Science)

GOAL 4 – 5 – Child mortality and maternal health

Bozhidar Tulevski (National Public Health Center), Glinka Komitov (National Health Insurance Fund), Elena Shipkovenska (Sofia Medical University), Ivan Bukarev (Ministry of Health), Miroslav Popov (International Healthcare and Health Insurance Institute), Svetla Spassova (Ministry of Health), Tatyana Cholakova (National Health Information Center), Tzekomir Vodenicharov (Sofia Medical University)

GOAL 6 – HIV/AIDS

Hristo Taskov (National Center for Infectious and Parasitic Diseases), Donka Stefanova (Expert Council on Pulmonary Diseases and Tuberculosis at the Ministry of Health), Vladimir Milanov (Ministry of Health), Nikolai Tzankov (Sofia Medical University), Tonka Vurleva (Ministry of Health)

GOAL 7 – Environment

Gerasim Gerasimov (Swiss Development and Cooperation Office), Velislava Abadzheva (Small Grants Program, Global Environmental Facility/UNDP), Rossen Vasilev (Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation), Boryana Kamenova (Ministry of Environment and Waters), Assya Dobrudzhaliyeva (Kurdzhali Municipality), Georgi Kostov (Sofia Forestry Technical University), Nikolai Yonov (National Forestry Management Office)

GOAL 8 – Partnership for development

Stefan Sotirov (Ministry of Finance), Zakhari Radukov (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Maria Stefanova (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Yuliana Nikolova (European Institute)

UN Agencies

1. Henry Jackelen, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative,
2. Lene Jespersen, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative,
3. Florian Fichtl, Resident Representative, the World Bank,
4. Maria Zlatareva, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP,
5. Andrey Ivanov, Adviser, UNDP Regional Center – Bratislava,
6. Maya Nyagolova, Public Advocacy Officer, UNDP,
7. Octavian Bivol, Representative, UNICEF,
8. Elena Yanakieva, Programme Specialist, UNICEF,
9. Diana Vakarelska, Programme Analyst, UNICEF,
10. Catherine Hamon Sharpe, Representative, UN High Commissioner for the Refugees,
11. Tanya Vulchanova, Programme and Administration Coordinator, UN High Commissioner for the Refugees,
12. Manoela Grozdanova, Programme Analyst, UNAIDS,
13. Marta Dyavolova, Assistant Resident Representative, UNFPA,
14. Emilia Toncheva, Head of Office, World Health Organization,
15. Emiliana Zhivkova, Programme Analyst, UNDP,
16. Plamenka Markova, Correspondent, International Labor Organization,
17. Carla Chiavarella, Regional Coordinator, UNDCA,
18. Galina Samaras, Programme Specialist, UNDCA

Team of authors

Docho Mikhailov (team leader), Chapter 1 (Lyuben Tomev), Chapter 2 (Petya Kabakchieva), Chapter 3 (Zhivka Marinova), Chapter 4 (Nikola Vasilev), Chapter 5 (Nikola Vasilev), Chapter 6 (Tzvetana Yakimova, Hristo Taskov), Chapter 7 (Atanaska Nikolova), Chapter 8 (Borislav Mavrov, Yuliana Nikolova, Docho Mikhailov), Conclusion (Docho Mikhailov), Box 2.1, Chapter 2 (Maria Donkova), Box 2.3, Chapter 2 (Neda Kristanova), Box 8.2, Chapter 8 (Maya Nyagolova)

Statistical team, National Statistical Institute: Sergei Tzvetarski (leader), Bogdan Bogdanov, Stefan Tzonev

UNDP: Maya Nyagolova, Svetla Panova

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INTRODUCTION

by President Georgi Parvanov

Millennium Development Goals Report – Bulgaria 2008

Bulgaria's second Millennium Development Goals Report – 2008 accurately and justly reflects the contribution of the Republic of Bulgaria towards global development goals. The report outlines our country's achievements for raising the living standards of Bulgarian people, for education and healthcare, for protecting the environment, for strengthening democracy and building a more effective international system of development assistance. The analyses of progress against the specific targets and indicators under each of the eight global goals formulated in 2003 in the country's National Millennium Development Goals Report, give grounds for judging the practical actions of several Bulgarian governments in the respective areas on their merits, for getting a clear picture about the extent of cooperation and interaction between the Bulgarian state and the UN agencies operating in the country as well as the quality of dialogue and partnership with business, trade unions, local governments and non-governmental organizations.

The Republic of Bulgaria successfully completed transition to democracy and a market economy and gained full membership in the European Union, while the process of reform became a powerful factor for achieving the global Millennium Development Goals. The country reports a steady and high pace of economic growth; it is becoming an auspicious place for investment, living and tourism as incomes are growing fast and unemployment is rapidly decreasing.

In this report Bulgaria sets itself more ambitious goals comparable to those in the other European Union member states. The country's transformation from a beneficiary into a donor of international aid will make our contribution to the international system of development assistance all the more significant. Furthermore, Bulgaria is ready to share its experience from the transition to democracy and a market economy, from building democratic institutions and establishing civil society and market structures with other countries in Southeast Europe as well as other regions, thereby enabling faster achievement of the global Millennium Development Goals.

The policies, approaches and measures proposed in the country's Millennium Development Goals Report – 2008 provide a good basis for accelerated implementation of the planned targets by 2015, for ensuring higher living standards and quality of life, for more competitive education and more effective healthcare, for a sustainable environment and for a greater contribution of the Republic of Bulgaria towards the global goals of international development assistance.

Our joint effort, will and action can create a better life for all!



Georgi Parvanov
President of the Republic of Bulgaria

FOREWARD

Heads of state and government of the UN member states will come together at a high-level event in New York in September 2008 to review the status of the Millennium Development Goals. On the brink of the summit – and in preparation for it – the Bulgarian Government and the UN agencies in Bulgaria have put together this report in collaboration with civil society organizations, members of the academia and business.

For the world the year 2008 is a midway point in the global effort to reach the Millennium Development Goals. For Bulgaria this report is the last that covers its achievement prior to joining the European Union. As such it is a social baseline in the universal language of MDGs which celebrates the significant accomplishments of the country. In the future, Bulgaria's progress will be assessed in a different way according to its status of a EU member state. Accordingly, the country will have the potential to participate in shaping the EU common development policy and to contribute to the achievement of the Global Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goals – 2008 is the second report Bulgaria has produced to honor the country's commitment as a signatory of the **Millennium Declaration**, whereby all UN member states pledged to make global efforts until 2015 to reduce poverty, respect human rights, promote peace, strengthen democracy, and ensure environmental sustainability. In addition, Bulgaria offers this report as a new donor of development assistance who can share with other regions of the world a wealth of experience the country has gained during the transition to market economy and democratic institutions. Now Bulgaria is willing to contribute even more actively to the achievement of the global development agenda.

Bulgaria's first report on the Millennium Development Goals was published in March 2003. The report adapted the eight global goals to the country's development levels at the time of preparation for accession to the European Union and formulated progress monitoring indicators and targets corresponding to the respective development levels in the EU member states. This report reviews progress made against the goals defined in 2003 in the context of Bulgaria's membership in the European Union and redefines some national goals and indicators.

New progress monitoring indicators have been introduced to track Bulgaria's progress under Goal 8: *Develop a Global Partnership for Development*. Whereas in 2003 that goal was interpreted from Bulgaria's position as a beneficiary of international aid, the current report looks at it from the position of a donor country. Therefore new targets have been formulated under this goal: 1) Complete the transition from a recipient of international aid to a donor of official development assistance (ODA); and 2) Ensure Bulgaria's active and effective participation in the common EU development cooperation policy. Bulgaria has already elaborated its national policy and will soon have in place institutions and rules for provision of official development assistance. Along with the other new EU members, Bulgaria has set itself the ambitious aim to be part of EU development policies by contributing ODA funds at 0.17% of GNI (gross national income) until 2010 and 0.33% of GNI until 2015.

Today, Bulgaria can be optimistic about its efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The country is on track to achieve a number of Millennium Development Goals targets, or even deliver better than expected results on some of them. For instance, Bulgaria aspired to reach average monthly income levels of 280 euros in 2015 compared to a 91 euro benchmark in 2001. The average monthly income in the country in 2007 was already gaining on 165 euros. The planned target for long-term unemployment by 2015 was 7 per cent, but

unemployment levels fell down to 3.9 per cent already in June 2007. The numbers of long-term unemployed people halved from 513,700 in December 2001 to 208,200 in June 2007.

While most of the indicators for education and unemployment are close to the EU average, other indicators are significantly lower. Such are the indicators for average and minimum monthly income, child mortality, maternal mortality, incidence of tuberculosis and syphilis. At the same time Bulgaria continues to set a successful example for effective government policies and efficient measures at the national and the local level to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. In June 2008 it received excellent appraisal for the implementation of the National Program for Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and was able to secure continued financing of 32.4 million euros for 2009 - 2014 from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Although the indicators under the educational targets are comparable to the EU levels, the report notes that the quality of education is declining and urgent reforms are needed to support the adjustment of the educational system in an economy that must be innovative and competitive within the EU single market. Major issues are still persistent in the healthcare sector where the management, efficiency and effectiveness of health services fail to meet the needs and expectations of the people. Access to healthcare is not universal and - when coupled with poor income and educational levels among some groups of the population - it leads to social, regional and ethnic disparities.

By highlighting certain drawbacks of the implemented approaches and institutional solutions, and by recognizing accomplishments in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, the report identifies policies and measures that can accelerate Bulgaria's progress and can bring the country closer to its targets for 2015. Furthermore, with this report Bulgaria declares its firm commitment to undertake its new responsibility: to help overcome global poverty and contrasts in the world by acting as a 'creative donor' of development assistance.

Although there has been progress against poverty, illiteracy, epidemics, disease and malnourishment in many regions of the world, development challenges will remain intractable without joint efforts and partnership between national governments, business, the non-governmental sector and international organizations. These challenges can now be met with the participation of Bulgaria and with the remarkable resources available through the EU membership.

I hope the report will incite stronger public interest in Bulgaria towards the global development agenda, and will encourage civic action and institutional commitments to participate more actively and more productively in the joint effort to create a better world for all.



Henry R. Jackelen
UN Resident Coordinator
UNDP Resident Representative

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| ERADICATE POVERTY | 9 |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | 10 |
| 2. STATUS AND TRENDS | 10 |
| 3. DOMESTIC DISPARITIES | 12 |
| 4. INTERNATIONAL DISPARITIES | 13 |
| 5. GOAL ACHIEVEMENT POLICIES | 15 |
| IMPROVE EDUCATION | 17 |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | 18 |
| 2. STATUS AND TRENDS | 18 |
| 3. DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DISPARITIES | 21 |
| 4. GOAL ACHIEVEMENT POLICIES | 24 |
| PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN | 29 |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | 30 |
| 2. STATUS AND TRENDS | 31 |
| 3. DOMESTIC DISPARITIES – REGIONAL DISPARITIES AND DISPARITIES BY ECONOMIC SECTOR | 32 |
| 4. INTERNATIONAL DISPARITIES | 32 |
| 5. GOAL ACHIEVEMENT POLICIES | 34 |
| REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY | 37 |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | 38 |
| 2. STATUS AND TRENDS | 38 |
| 3. DOMESTIC DISPARITIES | 39 |
| 4. INTERNATIONAL DISPARITIES | 40 |
| 5. GOAL ACHIEVEMENT POLICIES | 41 |
| IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH | 43 |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | 44 |
| 2. STATUS AND TRENDS | 45 |
| 3. DOMESTIC DISPARITIES | 46 |
| 4. INTERNATIONAL DISPARITIES | 46 |
| 5. GOAL ACHIEVEMENT POLICIES | 47 |
| LIMIT THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS, SYPHILIS AND TUBERCULOSIS | 49 |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | 50 |
| 2. STATUS AND TRENDS, DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DISPARITIES | 50 |
| 3. GOAL ACHIEVEMENT POLICIES | 53 |
| ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY | 57 |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | 58 |
| 2. STATUS AND TRENDS | 58 |
| 3. DOMESTIC DISPARITIES | 59 |
| 4. INTERNATIONAL DISPARITIES | 60 |
| 5. GOAL ACHIEVEMENT POLICIES | 61 |
| INCLUDE BULGARIA IN THE SYSTEM OF OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE | 63 |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | 64 |
| 2. INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK | 66 |
| 3. PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GOAL ACHIEVEMENT | 67 |
| CONCLUSION | 71 |
| ANNEX: TABLES | 75 |

FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|--|
| CM | - Council of Ministers |
| EU | - European Union |
| FDP | - Fine dust particles |
| GDP | - Gross domestic product |
| GNI | - Gross national income |
| GSS | - General secondary school |
| ILO | - International Labor Organization |
| MDGs | - Millennium Development Goals |
| MES | - Ministry of Education and Science |
| MH | - Ministry of Health |
| MLSP | - Ministry of Labor and Social Policy |
| MoFA | - Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| NA | - National Assembly |
| NGOs | - Non-governmental organizations |
| NHIC | - National Health Information Center |
| NSI | - National Statistical Institute |
| ODA | - Official development assistance |
| PEA | - Popular Education Act |
| PPP | - Purchasing power parity |
| RES | - Renewable energy sources |
| SEN | - Special educational needs |
| STI | - Sexually transmitted infections |
| UNDP | - United Nations Development Programme |
| WHO | - World Health Organization |
| WWTF | - Waste water treatment facilities |