MDG SECTOR-SPECIFIC SPENDING

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

MDG target 1.C aims to halve extreme hunger by the end of 2015. According to the latest figures, there are 805 million chronically undernourished people in the world, about one in nine of the global population. This is down by more than 200 million since the start of the MDGs. However, overall hunger levels have fallen only from 23% to 13.5% in developing countries, narrowly missing the MDG target of halving hunger, while one in four children around the world remains stunted due to chronic malnourishment in the first two years of their lives.

Are countries meeting their agriculture spending targets?

GSW tracks agriculture spending to map government efforts to meet MDG 1.C, as this tends to be the most direct budgetary commitment and has proven capabilities in reducing hunger.

In 2003, African governments meeting in Maputo committed themselves to spend at least 10% of their budgets on agriculture within five years. Figure 2.9 shows how the 31 African countries for which data are available performed in 2014. Five countries met the target (Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Mali and Niger), but this was down from six (including Burkina Faso) in 2013 and nine in 2012. Malawi is the star performer, with an average of 15% over the past five years. On the other hand, Angola, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia and Nigeria spend 2% or less of their budgets, and need to enhance efforts considerably.

Though there is no formal target for other regions, GSW also assesses the performance of non-African countries against a 10% target, given that the World Bank has found this level essential for countries to transform their agricultural sectors. Figure 2.10 shows that, of 26 non-African countries, only three (Bhutan, India and Nepal) are reaching 10%. Colombia, Ecuador and Jordan spend 1% or less. This means that across all 57 countries for which data are available only eight, or 14%, are meeting the target.

Average spending on agriculture in Africa is 5% – half the amount needed to meet the 10% CAADP spending target.

Figure 2.9. Agriculture spending as percentage of total spending: sub-Saharan Africa

16. Financing the Sustainable Development Goals: Lessons from Government Spending on the MDGs
What are the recent trends in agriculture and food spending?

In 2013, the GSW report showed that after a small increase in the aftermath of the food price crisis of 2008–09, agriculture spending fell slightly in 2010–12. This has continued since 2012, with only 48% of countries increasing spending as a percentage of GDP, and 41% as a proportion of total spending. Average spending is only 5% of the budget (half the amount needed to meet the 10% target).

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17. Financing the Sustainable Development Goals: Lessons from Government Spending on the MDGs
The SDGs require doubled spending and closer monitoring

The new hunger-related SDGs go way beyond the current targets: they commit not only to ending hunger everywhere by 2030, but also to improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. Against a backdrop of several interlocking crises – including changing climate, increasing resource constraints and population growth – reaching zero hunger levels, sustainably, will require much higher spending on nutrition and sustainable farming. Additional public spending needs are estimated at US$61 billion a year (US$46 billion for zero hunger and US$15 billion for sustainable agriculture).

They will also entail reinforced commitment to track spending more closely: by separating out programmes which address hunger and nutrition and by analysing whether agriculture spending is promoting sustainability. The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement is leading efforts to improve the tracking of spending on nutrition, and GSW will work closely with them in future.

MDG target 2.A commits that, by 2015, children everywhere will complete a full course of primary schooling. In 2000, the Dakar Framework for Education For All (EFA) also set out six goals, and a broad commitment to ensuring quality education for all. Progress has been patchy. There have been huge strides in getting children into primary school; some improvements in youth literacy; a narrowing of gender gaps; and more children than ever completing basic education. But 58 million children are still missing out on primary school, expansion of access to primary education has been slowing, the global primary leaving rate (25%) is the same as in 2000 and (due to insufficient focus on quality) many children end basic education without basic literacy and numeracy.

Are countries meeting their education spending targets?

There are two international benchmarks for spending on education: governments should spend 6% of gross national product (GNP) and 20% of their overall budgets on education. Hence, GSW tracks total education spending as a percentage of both overall spending and gross domestic product (GDP). The 2014 data show that only 11 of 59 countries with data available for 2014 met the percentage of GDP target: Cape Verde, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Niger, Samoa, Senegal, Solomon Islands and Zimbabwe. A similar number, 13, met the percentage of spending target: Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Madagascar, Mali, Nicaragua, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe – although the two groups contain different countries due to different government spending/GDP levels. Across both targets, spending is nowhere near the levels needed for the MDGs.