

STRENGTHENING THE POVERTY DATA
CAPACITY IN ASIAN-PACIFIC DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES

Yun-Hwan Kim
Assistant Chief Economist
Economics and Research Department
Asian Development Bank
(email: yhkim@adb.org)

19 –21 November 2003
21st Population Census Conference
Kyoto, Japan

I. POVERTY REDUCTION - AN INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

1. As a part of the 2000 Millennium Declaration, the UN proposed the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs). In March 2002, the MDGs were endorsed by the international community.

2. The MDGs :

- 8 Goals
- 18 Targets
- 48 Indicators

(See Box 1.)

Goal 1: “Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.”

Target 1 : “Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Target 2: “Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.”

3. In April 2002, ADB formally adopted the MDGS in its operations.

- In 1999, ADB set *Poverty Reduction* in the Asian-Pacific region as its overarching goal.
- To measure and address poverty in its low-income developing member countries, ADB has signed the poverty partnership agreement (PPA) in most of them.
- The PPA outlines a long-term set of goals, policies, and programs for poverty reduction in the concerned country.

Box 1: Millennium Development Goals and Targets

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education *Target 3:* Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality.

Target 5: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health.

Target 6: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.

Target 7: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Target 8: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

Target 10: Halve by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system. Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction - both nationally and internationally.

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least-developed countries (LDC)

Includes: tariff and quota-free access for LDC exports; enhanced program of debt relief for high-income poverty countries and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous overseas development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction.

Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through Barbados Programme and 22nd General Assembly provisions).

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries.

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

Source: United Nations. 2001. *Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals at the Country Level: Guidance Note*. October.

II. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS WITH POVERTY DATA

4. Sound poverty data is critical for successful accomplishment of the goal “poverty reduction in the Asian-Pacific region.”

5. Differences in Poverty Numbers – A global issue

- Since 1990, the traditional source of the global poverty data has been the WB. Recently, many non-WB estimations have been presented.
- Large differences between the WB and the non-WB estimations.

	WB World Development Report 2000	X. Sala-i-Martin	S. Bhalla
No. of poor (world)	1.17 billion	352 million	650 million
Method	Survey	Nat'l account	Nat'l account

- Main source of the difference : computation methods

6. Issues at the national-level

- Insufficient investment in statistical and economic study and statistical capacity building.
- Use of income vs consumption as the welfare indicator?
- What is adequate consumption? It may be different. depending on age, gender, size, activity level, and nutrition history.
- Food consumption data for the average population or a reference poor population?
- Derived menus vs actual food consumption?
- Inconsistencies between various poverty data.
- Failure to reflect the changing food and non-food baskets over time.
- Inability to consider intra-household differences in needs.

III. Recommendations

- Spend more in building statistical capacity (Korea's large efforts to strengthen statistical capacity throughout the process of development efforts).
- Support by policymakers.
- Regular population census and household income and expenditure survey.
- Comprehensive study of poverty and related issues at the national level.
- Importance of poverty mapping.