

Development Assistance

Development assistance plays a critical role in the fight against extreme poverty and disease. In signing on to the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, developed countries acknowledged that progress towards achieving the first seven goals would depend largely on leadership by developing countries themselves. However, by committing themselves to Goal Eight, which calls on countries to build a global partnership for development, the international community clearly affirmed the importance of external support for international development. This imperative was reflected again at the 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, where eight of the world's wealthiest nations agreed to a new partnership with the developing world, committing to deliver an additional \$50 billion in development assistance around the world by 2010, half of which (an additional \$25 billion) would be designated for Africa.



Evidence for Action

Across the world, there is evidence that investments in development are working, producing real results and improving the lives of millions of people.

- In 2002, only 50,000 HIV positive Africans had access to life-saving antiretroviral medicines. Today, 2.1 million people in Africa are receiving treatment thanks to development assistance delivered through programs like the Global Fund and PEPFAR.
- Debt relief and targeted aid for education helped send 29 million African children to school for the first time between 1999 and 2005.
- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria has delivered 46 million nets since 2002, helping to substantially reduce malaria deaths in countries like Ethiopia, Rwanda and Kenya.^{jm}

Moving Forward

Achieving the large-scale results that are possible with development assistance requires that donor governments follow through on their commitments to scale-up aid to the world's poorest nations. As detailed in the 2008 DATA Report, the G8 is currently off track in its promise to double aid to Africa by 2010.

Just as important as delivering on the promises to increase the quantity of development assistance, the quality of development assistance must improve as well. For development assistance to be effective, it has to be spent well and used wisely. Development assistance works best where it is driven by local activities and initiative, is delivered promptly and predictably, and above all where there is local accountability for its use. Spending and plans for disbursements should be transparently reported so that donors and recipients can plan and monitor effectively, should use national systems for delivery whenever possible and should be open to local competition for procurement so as to help build local capacity and reduce the costs of goods and services the development assistance is buying.

It is crucial that development assistance strengthen - and never undermine - domestic democratic accountability. Therefore overall increased resources for fueling economic growth and fighting poverty should be targeted to countries that are putting citizens in the driving seat of development, by improving democracy, accountability and transparency, and fighting corruption. Where countries are not doing well by these objective measures but basic needs continue to exist, increased development assistance should instead be targeted through more trusted delivery mechanisms such as non-governmental organizations, international institutions, and faith groups.

Every dollar counts in the fight against extreme poverty. Donors and developing country governments have an obligation -- to taxpayers in wealthy countries and poor people in the developing world -- to ensure development assistance is used efficiently and sustainably and achieves its intended results.