

Assessing the Global Development Agenda (Goal 1) in Uganda:

The Progress Made and the Challenges that Persist

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Abstract

The international development agenda (2000-2015) that was hailed in Uganda was unsuccessful and powerless in elevating individuals and groups to a place of comfort through the achievement of the MDGs. Hence, according to a survey of the Directorate of Social Protection in 2012, 67% of citizens of Uganda are either highly vulnerable to remaining in poverty or being poor.

This study therefore assesses the gains of the global development agenda (2000 – 2015) in Uganda. The study relies heavily on review papers, secondary dataset and material, and quasi-quantitative method in analyzing the research aim. Results show that ambiguous and unrealistic targets of the MDGs did not take into cognizance the structures, institutions, and interaction of systems and governance issues in Uganda. Despite these, the gains were also shortchanged as a result of drought, flood,

and high prices of commodities, due to low farm production in most (rural) areas in Uganda. In addition to the drought and the negative effects of climate change, other challenges include deficient access to markets and market place, lack of motorized and non-motorized load-carrying wheel vehicles, lack of capacity and infrastructure, lack of mechanized farming implements, and the lack of access to credit reduced the potency of the achievement of most of its goals. However, significant strides were attempted and the country was able to achieve several targets, which are worth celebrating. The study contends that the realization of the SDGs will only be wishful thinking, if challenges of rural poverty, governance and institution are not put in check. Shared progress and prosperity as acclaimed by the World Bank will never be visible in Uganda.

Keywords: Global Development Agenda, MDGs, SDGs, Poverty, Uganda, Shared Progress and Prosperity, Farmers.

Introduction

Awakening the millennium was the adoption of a universal goal of the UN in addressing global issues on eight major indicators (ref.), consequently agreed by 189 countries including Uganda in the UN Summit of September 2000 (Kiyimba, Alowo, & Abaliwano, 2011:1). The focus of the eight goals was to accelerate development of the world's poor (Amin, 2006). This paper inclines (intends) to analyse the eight goals of the MDGs in relation to its benefits to Uganda and the reasons it failed in achieving other goals. In so doing, the study is broken into two sections; the first setting the scene through the metamorphical or the background of the initiative. Furthermore conceptual reviews where highlighted for major terms used in the study as poverty, poverty gap among others. The second section houses the foundation of the investigation for the study, where the eight goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators were analysed in order to prove, or ascertain the progress and the reason behind the unfulfilled targets therefore elucidating the challenges that ravish the under-achievement of the developmental objectives of the UN development agenda 2000 – 2015.

The Backdrop and Metamorphosis to MDGs

The downturn of non-implementable and unrealistic neoliberal economic policies that dominated international debates in the 1990s was reconsidered.¹ And a more encompassing viewpoint to the understanding of development and poverty in developing countries was the inclusion of the developing nations in formulating policies that concern them (Peeters, 2010). As a result of the failures of the Stabilisation and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) (which made Uganda sell 80% of its industries to Asians)² introduced by both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Decker 2003: 488; Betz 2003: 456). Hence, for the first time unprecedented UN conferences were held, aimed at "building consensus" for the development agenda in the 21st century. Such conferences as, 1994 Cairo conference on population and 1995 Beijing conference on women in particular were some of the conferences that fashioned the priorities of the MDGs in 2000.

¹ http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/SYB2013/CH-45-MILLENIUM%20DEVELOPMENT%20GOAL/CHAPTER%2045.pdf

² <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/Insight/688338-1222302-ij2ihg/index.html>

At the state of global distraction and uncertainties of the global development agenda (McArthur, 2014: 5), leaders of 189 countries in the UN were cajoled to sign a historic commitment that aims to eradicate extreme poverty, improve welfarism, better and accessible health care and education of the world's poorest people within a stipulated time frame of 15 years in September 2000 (2000-2015) (Mitchell, nd). The commitment adopted at the summit set forth the UN Millennium Declaration, which stated the visions of the MDGs in eight priority areas (Mitchel, nd; United Nations, 2008; United Nation. 2016). This was premised on the need at the time and most importantly in halving poverty at 2015.

Poverty

Poverty in its nature is a dynamic concept, multifaceted, adapting and changing, which is premised on consumption patterns of an individual or household. In general, poverty is the lack/scarcity of basic needs that encapsulates the entirety of human existence. Hence, it is both a state (destitution) and a process (temporary) of lack in material wellbeing or possession, which is in consonance with deprivation, dearth, powerlessness, hunger, poor Medicare and general discomfort (UNESCO 2016; Sabates, 2008; Lok-Dessallien, 2000).³

Poverty levels are divided between relative and extreme poverty thresholds. The latter can be referred to as the state of vulnerability and destitution used in mainly developing countries. Hence, at a UN Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, the concept was described as "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services."⁴ According to Robert McNamara, absolute or extreme poverty is a condition characterised by illiteracy, malnourishment, squalor, high infant mortality, lowered/ lowering life expectancy syndromes of human decency, and malnutrition (World Bank 2010; Sachs, 2005: 20). The former, relative poverty is used mainly in the developed countries in comparing standards of living within various developed nations in social context (Raphael, 2009). One of the foremost accounts given to relative poverty can be traced to Adam Smith's book, *The Wealth of Nations*, where he argued poverty is not limited to, "not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life but whatever the custom of the

³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/poverty>

⁴ UN declaration at World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995

country renders it indecent for creditable people, even of the lowest order, to be without" (Smith, 1776; Adamson, 2012). This tends to show that poverty also depends on the social class of an individual or household. Hence, the succinct summary of relative poverty by the sociologist Peter Townsend that, "individuals [...] can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong" (Townsend, 1979: 31).

Poverty Threshold

The most consistent way for measuring poverty over the years has been through setting monthly average of income, which a family can survive with is called the Poverty Line (Odekon, 2006). The ideology that gained momentum in the World Poverty measurement standard tend to estimate those who are poor and who are not, by stipulating a mark or what might be referred to as a goal post in measuring the state of poverty per time. According to Anguyo (2013), the poverty line used in achieving the 67% of the poor in Uganda by the Directorate of Social Protection was 1.20 (about sh3, 170) per day and those below 2.40 (about sh6, 340) per day. .

Poverty Gap

This is the disparity between the real income of households and the stipulated poverty line countrywide. In other words, poverty gap is the needed amount of funds that will uplift the entire population from below the poverty line to the poverty line of the country (Odekon, 2006), which can be understood both from real income of household to that of a single individual.

Basis for Analysis

By the year 2000, the United Nations established a set of development indicators for developing countries. This segment probed the data to underline the progress made and the challenges that remained in the developmental struggle of developing countries. Based on this discourse Uganda, a nation in sub-Saharan Africa, is analysed.

To assess adequately the progress made it is imperative to state that, while the goals of the MDGs are eight, it has further eighteen targets and forty-eight indicators for assessing progress made (see Table 1).

Table 1

Goals	Targets	Progress Indicator
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day⁵ 2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty] 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
	Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education 7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 10. Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year-olds 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

⁵ For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available.

<p>Goal 4: Reduce child mortality</p>	<p>Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate</p>	<p>13. Under-five mortality rate 14. Infant mortality rate 15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles</p>
<p>Goal 5: Improve maternal health</p>	<p>Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio</p>	<p>16. Maternal mortality ratio 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel</p>
<p>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</p>	<p>Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</p>	<p>18. HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women 19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate⁶</p>
	<p>Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</p>	<p>20. Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS⁷ 21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria 22. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures⁸</p>

⁶ Amongst contraceptive methods, only condoms are effective in preventing HIV transmission. The contraceptive prevalence rate is useful in tracking progress in other health, gender and poverty goals. Because the condom use rate is only measured amongst women in union, it will be supplemented by an indicator on condom use in high risk situations. These indicators will be augmented with an indicator of knowledge and misconceptions regarding HIV/AIDS by 15-24 year-olds (UNICEF –WHO).

⁷ To be measured by the ratio of proportion of orphans to non-orphans aged 10-14 who are attending school.

⁸ Prevention to be measured by the % of under-5s sleeping under insecticide treated bed nets; treatment to be measured by % of under-5s who are appropriately treated.

<p>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</p>		<p>23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis</p> <p>24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)</p>
	<p>Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</p>	<p>25. Proportion of land area covered by forest</p> <p>26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area</p> <p>27. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)</p> <p>28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons)</p> <p>29. Proportion of population using solid fuels</p>
	<p>Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water</p>	<p>30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural</p> <p>31. Proportion of urban population with access to improved sanitation</p>
	<p>Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 Million slum dwellers</p>	<p>32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure (owned or rented)</p>

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally

Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked countries and small island developing States.

Official development assistance

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes: tariff and quota free access for least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

33. Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income

34. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)

35. Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied

36. ODA received in landlocked countries as proportion of their GNIs

37. ODA received in small island developing States as proportion of their GNIs

Market access

38. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and

	<p>Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)</p>	<p>LDCs, admitted free of duties</p> <p>39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries</p> <p>40. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP</p> <p>41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity⁹</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p><u>Debt sustainability</u></p> <p>42. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)</p> <p>43. Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative, US\$</p> <p>44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services</p> <p>45. Unemployment rate of 15-24 year-olds, each sex and total</p>
	<p>Target 16: In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and</p>	

⁹ OECD and WTO are collecting data that will be available for 2001 onwards.

	productive work for youth	
	Target 17: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries	46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
	Target 18: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population
		48. Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population

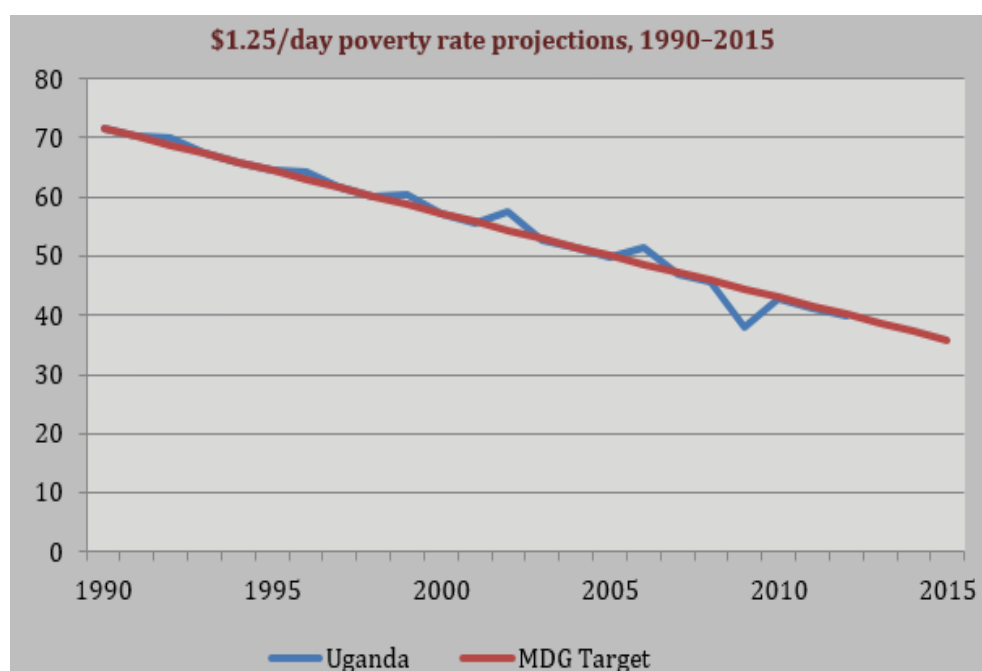
Source: Millennium Declaration (2000).¹⁰

The progress made on Goal 1

Uganda like most developing regions was applauded for its significant strides in achieving certain targets of the MDGs before its abolishment and replacement in September 2015 (United Nations, 2013). One of such is halving the poverty rate before 2015 (see figure 2).

¹⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/2754929.pdf>

Figure 2: Uganda \$1.25/day poverty rate projections compared to Millennium Development Goals target, 1990–2015

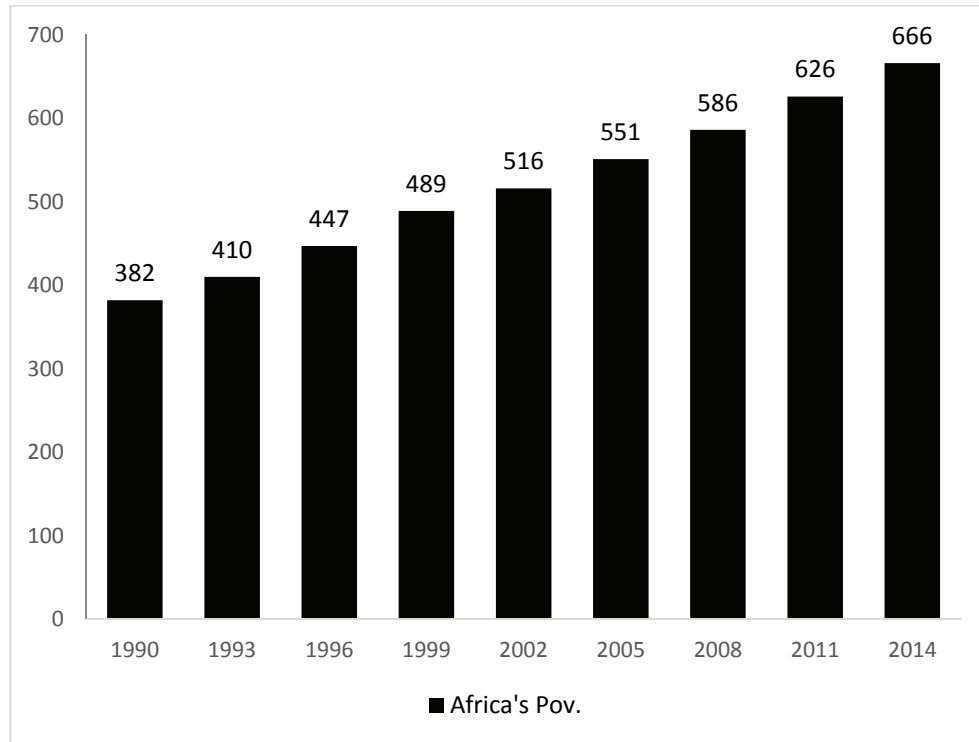


Source: ReSAKSS, based on World Bank 2014.

Uganda's poverty threshold has continued to decline since 1990 from over 70% of citizens living below the poverty line of \$1 per day to almost 35% within 15 years. The decline could be as a result of two factors: increasing number of donor presence in the country, and government realistic commitment in ending the scourge of poverty in the country. Decline in poverty came at a time when the Africa's poverty was soaring high (see figure 3). While the rate of those in poverty was increasing in the continent in Uganda the scourge of the disease was declining. Though Africa's increase in poverty have been attributed to increase in population, in addition to depleting service or infrastructural provision that is not upgraded (see figure 3). Uganda's progress in halving poverty shows government's commitment and continued political will in ensuring a safe and sustainable society, which can only be realized through the achievement of the MDGs. Therefore, the MDGs are

significant stepping stones towards the realization of the broader Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Figure 3: Poverty in Africa (1990 - 2014)



Source: Authors adjustment from UN Africa Renewal (2005), from data in UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: The Inequality Predicament (1990 – 2001).¹¹

Despite the high prevalence of the rate of poverty in the continent and the scale at which inequalities rise in the continent (see figure 4); Uganda achieved 5 other targets. These include: "Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those

¹¹The Author's adjusted net poverty in Africa is derived by taking an average of the rise in poverty, expressed as a percentage in the population growth in the region. While the average of 35 million was used between 2005, 2011 – 2012, 40 million was the average for 2008 due to the global recession between 2007/08, which for instance in only South Africa 1 million jobs were lost.

who need it. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries. And in cooperation with private sector, make available the benefits of technologies, especially information and communication" (Report for Uganda, 2015).¹²

However, 3 targets were narrowly missed, "Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger." 3 other targets had "No Targets," by implication these 3 were not in the programme of action for the realization of the MDGs for Uganda. Arguably, failing on 5 targets of the 18 targets as stated in the UN Millennium Declaration, which rolled out the Millennium Development Goals. Nonetheless, the country fell back on 5 targets, due to the significance of those targets, at a stakeholder's meeting in Kampala, the government has co-opted the unachieved goals into the National Development Plan (NDP) of the country.

Reasons for failed/unfulfilled targets and the challenges that remains

Several scenarios exist why none of the Millennium Development Goals of the year 2000 was achieved in most African countries likewise Uganda. It must be stated clearly that sequel to the introduction of the MDGs, most African countries suffered from, "military dictatorships, corruption, civil unrest and war, underdevelopment and deep poverty" (Paul, 2016), decay in the health sector, high mortality rate of the vulnerable, weakened civil society and action group, human right abuse, weak security and intelligence, gender inequalities, and an embarrassing failed neoliberal policies, which rather than provide solutions to these problems exacerbated them (SAP, Keynesian model)¹³, to weak financial strength, delayed implementation of the MDGs, and the non-consultation of these goals

¹² MDGs outcomes are projected based on the most up-to-date evidence available in September 2015.

¹³ Uganda on sell <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/Insight/688338-1222302-ij2ihg/index.html>

with the African community (Paul, 2016; Hickel, 2012; Obeng-Odoom, 2013: 151; Olamosu and Wynne, 2015; Akude, 2007).¹⁴ Since the MDGs was meant for the world poor as Jeffrey Sach puts it, then the voices of the poor should have been heard rather than the thoughts of what others want Africa to become.¹⁵

In as much as the targets for the realization of the MDGs are laudable (Desai & Potter, 2014: 71).² UN efforts in extending assistance at meeting these targets and goals were not forthcoming until the Gleneagles Conference in 2005 in Scotland where world leaders decided to uphold their path with a condition of trade liberalization (another trend of exploitation). As argued by Odekon, "The financial resources needed for these ambitious goals, however, proved to be enormous and industrial countries as a whole failed to allocate the funds required for the project. Five years later, at the 2005 G-8 Summit in Gleneagles in Scotland, leaders renewed their commitment to fight extreme poverty in Africa with a promise of debt relief and economic and humanitarian assistance. The fine print, however, includes conditions for such assistance, with an emphasis on trade liberalization" (Odekon, 2006: x). Hence, from 2000-2005 the continent had little or no support from world leaders to realize the goals of the MDGs.

Another clear difficulty is the ambiguous, frivolous and what one may call insensitivity of the developers of the eight goals. In apportioning clear responsibilities to stakeholders in the development agenda, goals meant to be achieved by the independent states and that meant for the UN and world leaders to achieve were not clearly elucidated. Hence, with the nature of weak institutions, structures, system and capacity in Africa, it would have been wise for the developers of this noble initiative to clearly posit in fairness what roles the supra-government was meant to handle viz-a-viz independent states. This bias is increased by the progress report apportioning no blames to world leaders and the UN. Rather the UN continued to receive the entire accolade, while apportioning the independent countries with the blames for the non-realization of the MDGs that were not met.

¹⁴ In affirming failure of neoliberal policies, Akude (2007) argues that "Neoliberal policies were forced on the Nigerian state by international multilateral creditors as a condition for further maintenance of credit lines."

¹⁵ You cannot shave a man's hair in his absence. So also, the problems of Africa cannot be resolved without the consultation and implementation of Africa's voices

More so, the 2007/08 economic collapses had several effects on global economy, which resulted in shortages of government expenditure globally, resulting in several job losses all over the world including Uganda, with also some negative impact for private sector investment in the country, as that was a major target of the MDGs.

Conclusion

The gains of the Millennium Development Goals in Uganda cannot be overemphasized. Taking into cognizance the trajectory of poverty in Uganda before the implementation of MDGs, halving poverty before 2010 shows the commitment and political will of the government of Uganda in ensuring the advancement in the standard of living for her citizens. Though, unfair maybe,¹⁶ the timing of MDGs and its gestation period for a region (Africa) oppressed and exploited for over 300 years of slavery, apartheid, colonialism, soaring inequality, deprivation, exploitation, political instability, corruption, political and social violence, ineffectual provision of service, conditional aid and development assistance, marginalization and poverty all over Africa. There is also the poor take off process, as a result of the incapability of the region to fund such course as stipulated in the UN Millennium Declaration of 2000. However, it must be emphasized that Uganda made giant strides in achieving 6 targets, while by a margin not able to achieve 5 others, which currently have been submerged into the National Development Plan 2020. Moving forward, it is imperative that African countries take similar steps as Uganda, by first fulfilling the MDGs before being carried away by the euphoria of Sustainable Development Goals. In my opinion, this is not the best of moves (SDGs) considering lessons learnt from MDGs, based on ownership and consultation, awareness and participation. For development to occur and be sustained in Africa, Africans must be part of the developmental process in specifying goals, targets, and indicators. More so, localization of development agenda will further strengthen and accommodate enhancement of lives in the region. Hence the suggestion that Localising Development Goals should be rather championed to Sustainable Development Goals. This is arguably the reason behind the BREXIT, which favours the concept of Local Development Goals (LDGs) (localization to globalization). Moreover, the idea of localization is based on the ability for the country in particular to stipulate development target, which it could achieve. This as well is based on the UN Peacekeeping

¹⁶ Easterly's argument on the unfairness of the MDGs to Africa; a continent ravaged by a multitude of quagmires and deficiencies on all front.

modus for financing peace missions called *ability to pay*. Hence, independent nations should be given the opportunity to state the development agenda they can fulfil in developing their state based on their ability to fulfil such tasks.

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Appendix

Draft figure: Progress chart by region 2011

Goals and targets	Number of regions in each category (out of 9 world regions)			
	Target met or expected to be met by 2015	Progress insufficient to reach the target if prevailing trends persist	No progress or deterioration in trends	Missing or insufficient data
North Africa	11	5	1	0
Sub-Saharan Africa	2	14	1	0
East Asia	14	2	1	0
Southeast Asia	7	9	1	0
South Asia	6	9	2	0
West Asia	4	10	3	0
Oceania	2	4	7	4
Latin America and Caribbean	7	10	0	0
Caucasus and Central Asia	6	7	3	1
Total (2011)	59	70	19	5

Source: Desai, V. and Potter, R. (2014).

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