

TAXONOMIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR GHANA: FIRST WORKSHOP

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDG's)

The Millennium Development Goals were adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development of the UN in Johannesburg, September 2000, to help Third World countries construct a dyke wall against the flood of rising impoverishment. Ghana subscribed voluntarily to the MDGs at the UN as a member of the general comity of nations.

The MDGs span the critical development issues of poverty and hunger, health (especially child and maternal mortality), gender equity and women's empowerment, environmental sustainability and global partnership for development. Target were set, which are to be achieved with a 15 year period (i.e. by 2015). For Ghana to be able to achieve these goals, an amount of ¢19 trillion is needed. This challenge has been reduced by the U.S, who is giving Ghana a grant named the "Millennium Challenge Account".

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – Ghana's major program for reaching this is the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2002-2005 (GPRS I), which has now been changed to Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2006-2009 (GPRS II). This latter program can also be said to be the main vehicle for achieving the targets of the MDGs. By this program, many farmers and small scale businesses are being supported by the government.

Goal 2: Achieving Universal Basic Education – In the broad education sector, a holistic package of interventions has been identified as priorities for attaining this. The strategy begins with early childhood development (0-8 yrs), where the critical foundations are being laid for psycho-social, emotional and intellectual development. For the formal education sector, the Educational Reform Policy, is aimed at addressing the weakness of the current educational system, with a view to making it more responsive to current challenges.

Goal 3: Promote gender equity and empower women – Bridging gender gap to education: There has been provision of incentives/scholarship schemes to increase girls enrolment, retention and completion, particularly in the deprived areas; and the sensitization of parents and communities on the importance of girls' education.

Goals (4-6): Health (Reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) – The 'cash and carry system' of paying for health care at the point of service was a key financial barrier to health care access. This has gradually been removed since the government initiated the 'National Health Insurance Scheme' in 2001. Currently a minimum benefit package covers about 95% of diseases in Ghana. Some of the diseases covered are malaria, diarrhea, upper respiratory tract infections, skin diseases, tuberculosis, asthma and hypertension.

The Ministry of Health produced a Roll Back Malaria (RBM) strategic plan in 2000 with the over all goal of facilitating human resource development by reducing the malaria disease burden.

Strategies have been adopted to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in order to keep the prevalence rate below 5%. These are: reduce new HIV/STI transmission (widespread availability of condoms); reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS related vulnerability (stigmatization), morbidity and mortality; enhance the management of the national HIV/AIDS response (i.e. strengthen Ghana AIDS commission).

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability - The major draw back is the lack of adequate laws to protect the environment and also the lack of human resource and logistics to enforce the already existing laws. The government seeks to promote the use of environmentally friendly technologies and practices, and integrated ecosystem management as well as human centered conservation initiatives.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development – One target is to deal comprehensively with debt and make debt sustainable in the long term.

Under the HIPC this MDG was transformed into the mandatory framework of domestic economic policy in return for the grant of debt relief.

Ghana began the monitoring of progress towards achieving the MDGs from 2002. The initial findings were that though some progress had been made, achieving the goals of the MDGs by 2015 would require additional external capitalization.

MDGs, CBD and the GTI in Ghana

CBD Responded to the MDGs particularly Goals 1, 2, 3, 4-6 and 7 by developing targets:

- 2010 Biodiversity target to halve the loss of terrestrial biodiversity.
- 2012 to halve the loss of aquatic biodiversity

GTI becomes a vehicle to enable quick actions to identify, describe and communicate about a large number of organisms which remain unknown and get destroyed /lost before they become know.

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the CBD has GTI in mind and had developed a 16- point action-oriented targets, when these are used along with the other thematic work programmes of the CBD including Forest biological diversity, Inland water biological diversity, Agricultural biological diversity, Marine and coastal biological diversity, Dry and sub-humid lands, Ecosystems approach etc. and using the GTI, the different hurdles towards the global targets of 2010, 2012 and 2015 can be removed and the overall objectives of CBD achieved.