

**Statistical Bulletin**

**Malawi: Education**

David Hemson

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***Measuring Service Delivery in Southern Africa Project***

***Study 3: Developing measures and methods for measuring progress towards service delivery targets***

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## Progress towards education goals

Key targets and indicators from the MDG (which are also contained in the RISDP) have been clustered to review progress in the education sector in the four countries included in the study: Tanzania, Botswana, Malawi and South Africa.

The following Goals from the MDG are included in reviews of the education sector which focus on:

- Target 2a: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling; male and female primary completion rate
- Net enrolment ratio in primary education
- Literacy rate (male and female) 15 and above
- Gender Parity Index (GPI)

In addition another important indicator, the school life expectancy data are presented.

The progress against targets has been measured and a weighting system linked to the colour coding (See appendix). Table 1 below, illustrates the progress made towards goals related to the education sector drawn from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

**Table 1. Malawi Education MDGs**

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</b>       | Target 2.1 Male and female primary completion rate      |  |
|  | Indicator 2.2 Net enrolment ratio in primary education  |  |
|  | Target 2.3 Literacy rate (male and female) 15 and above |  |
| <b>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</b> | Target 3.1 Gender Parity Index                          |  |

| KEY       |   |
|-----------|---|
| <b>0</b>  | No Progress in meeting target (0/10)              |
| <b>5</b>  | Some progress but will not meet MDG target (5/10) |
| <b>10</b> | Target will be met in 2015(10/10)                 |

Projections from the data available on achieving universal primary education, the literacy rate target shows some progress but will not meet the target. The data indicates that in two of the three indicators (the male and female completion rate and net enrolment ratio in primary education) there has been no progress towards meeting the MDG targets. In relation to the adult literacy rate there has been progress but not at a sufficient rate to meet the MDG target. There has also been some progress in the Gender Parity Index in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of girls at school, but not at a sufficient pace to meet the MDG target.

In summary, on the basis of the projections of present trends, the education sector does not appear geared to reaching the MDG. There are, however, indications that all is not well with the education system despite hopes focused on its contribution to development. The quality of learning for the majority is now doubted and becoming a focus of concern.

## ***Country political and socio-economic context***

### **Political and economic conditions**

Malawi gained her political independence in 1964 and has been ruled by a one party system of government for 30 years up to 1994. One of the aims of the country at independence was to expand education so that it covered most of the Malawi population and also to make it more relevant to the needs of the society.

Malawi changed her political system of government from one party to a multi-party system in May 1994. Following the one-party government period, free primary education was introduced in the 1994/95 academic year. This was the fulfillment of one of the promises the new government had made to its electorate. This was also presented as a poverty alleviation measure through sustained economic growth through investment in education.

More than a million additional pupils entered the primary education system during the first year of the policy change. This resulted in the deterioration of education because of rampant overcrowding of pupils in most schools with few extra resources for increased pupil numbers. The introduction of free primary education thus put enormous pressure on the school system and is regarded by some commentators as having created a crisis.

### **Political will to achieve goals**

The Malawian government has adopted the following strategies to achieve MDGs in education:

- Constructing boarding facilities in secondary schools in order to reduce distance to schools
- Expansion of girls boarding facilities in teacher training institutions in order to increase female teachers, who will become role models
- Adoption of equitable selection policy at secondary schools for both girls and boys.

The Malawi government envisages education as a catalyst for socio-economic development and industrial growth. The strategic priority has been to ensure access to basic education of improved quality and relevance is equitable. In order to achieve these strategic goals, a National Action Plan has been developed in collaboration with stakeholders and line ministries. This has adopted the following:

- Doubling enrolment of secondary students and retaining girls in secondary schools
- Expanding access to technical and vocational education

- Doubling enrolment in public Universities.

### **Public participation, budgetary monitoring, civil society engagement**

Private sector participation in the provision of primary education was limited in Malawi before the advent of multiparty politics. All schools were regulated by the government. The privately-owned primary schools is assessed as charging fees that are often very exorbitant, providing sub-standard education in facilities that are not of good quality and employing teachers that may not be properly trained. Private schools in Malawi are now regulated by the Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM), which is aimed at providing a voice and policy forum for all registered private schools. The trend towards private schooling appears to have been accelerated by free primary education.

In Malawi, the education sector receives support from the donor community in three forms. These forms include:

- Budgetary support for recurrent expenditure from multilateral and bilateral donors;
- Budgetary support for capital expenditure;
- External funding.

In Malawi, the education sector budget tracking is undertaken by the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE). The aim of the tracking is to establish whether resources are sufficient to achieve measurable change in equitable access, quality and relevance of basic education. CSCQBE ensures that government is held accountable in term of national budget implementation.

### ***Education and human development***

Education, and particularly the education of women and girls, is widely identified as a critical element in human development. The MDG and other international programmes target the improvement of education in developing countries as an essential aspect of poverty reduction. Debates over fees and the need for more open access to schools and higher levels of education have led to policies of reduced or no fee schools. International finance institutions which had previously espoused fees are now ambiguous about their application which are regarded as hampering improved access.

It is in this context that the MDGs are regarded as including objectives in schooling and education as central to reducing poverty and other key objectives.

While water and sanitation are essentially household services, access to education and health need to be assessed at the individual level. The statistics set out here are derived from governments and international agencies rather than extracted from national statistics.

Supplementary data collection (in addition to the educational series) was made from educational sources as well as sources from the UNESCO website. This data is set at the national level and there are limitations in terms of disaggregation at different levels e.g. urban/rural, at district levels, etc.

There are two MDG goals in the field of education; firstly the completion of primary education and secondly, the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education. In addition there is the question of progress in towards universal adult literacy.

### MDG associated with education

| Selected MDG and RISDP Goals and Indicators   |
|---|
| Goal 2: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary school by 2015.                            |
| Goal 3: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015 |

### Completing primary school

The completion of primary schooling in the MDG Goal 2 includes a gender dimension, that all boys and girls should complete a full course of primary school by 2015.

Figure 1. Malawi: Primary Completion Rate, 1999-2015

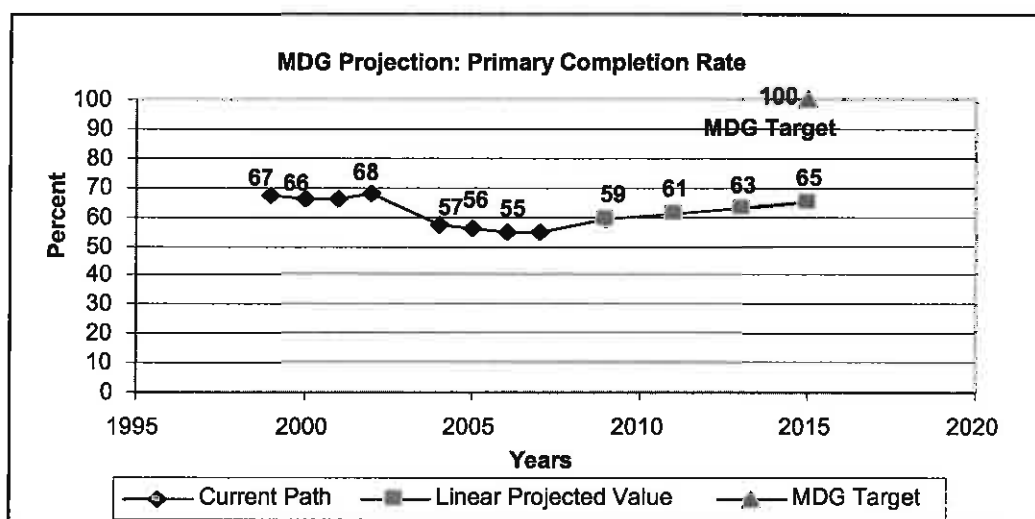


Table 2. Malawi: Primary Completion Rate

|  | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

|                                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Primary completion rate, both sexes | 67 | 66 | 66 | 68 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 55 |
| Primary completion rate, boys       | 72 | 70 | 68 | 71 | 58 | 57 | 55 | 55 |
| Primary completion rate, girls      | 63 | 62 | 64 | 65 | 56 | 55 | 55 | 56 |

Source: Malawi Census and UNESCO Institute of Estimates

URL: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>

Data on the primary completion rate in Malawi is presented in Figure 1 above. The completion rate has remained in the high 60 percentages since 1999 but has declined since 2004. This decline has been most marked among boys as indicated in Table 3 above, as the proportion completing at this level has declined since 1999 from 72 to 55 percent in 2007. The decline among girls has not been so marked until 2004 when there was a sudden decline.

*Analysis and comment:*

The elimination of school fees and the rapid increase in the numbers of children in schools has been associated with declining quality; one of the indicators of which is a declining completion rate. This decline has been apparent since 1999 but now appears to be leveling out and not declining further.

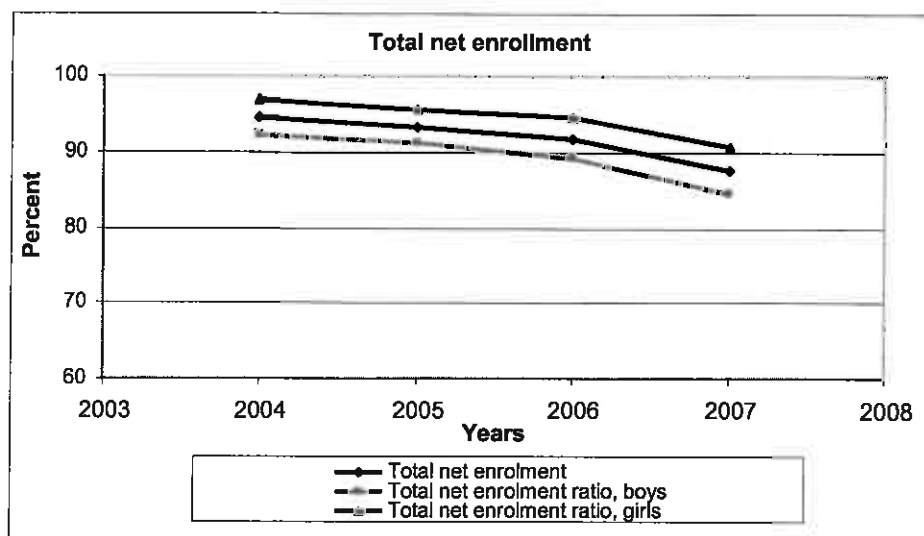
The data indicates that just over half the pupils entering primary school are completing which is due to the considerable loss of resources. The conclusion is that the MDG in the primary school completion rate will not be met; indeed the trend has been in the opposite direction.

### ***Achieving gender equity***

Greater equality among girls and boys in terms of access to education is a necessary precursor to girls obtaining the full benefit from education. There are three indicators of gender equity reviewed here; the net enrolment ratio in primary school, school life expectancy from primary to secondary school, and Gender Parity Index in secondary schooling.

The Gender Parity Index is the indicator of progress towards Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. The other indicators are presented to provide supporting data for trends identified in the elimination of gender disparities.

**Figure 2. Total Net Enrolment Ratio**



**Table 3. Total Net Enrolment ratio**

| Total Net Enrolment           | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Primary education, both sexes | 95   | 93   | 92   | 88   |
| Primary education, boys       | 92   | 91   | 89   | 85   |
| Primary education, girls      | 97   | 96   | 95   | 91   |

Source: Malawi Census and UNESCO Institute of Estimates

URL: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>

*Analysis and comment:*

The initial high level of net enrolment in primary education has declined over the period 2004 to 2007. The level among girls has declined from 97 to 91 percent in the period 2004 to 2007; the level among boys declined from 92 to 85 percent over the same period.

This decline appears to contradict the effect of “no fee” policies which could be assumed to have increased enrolment.

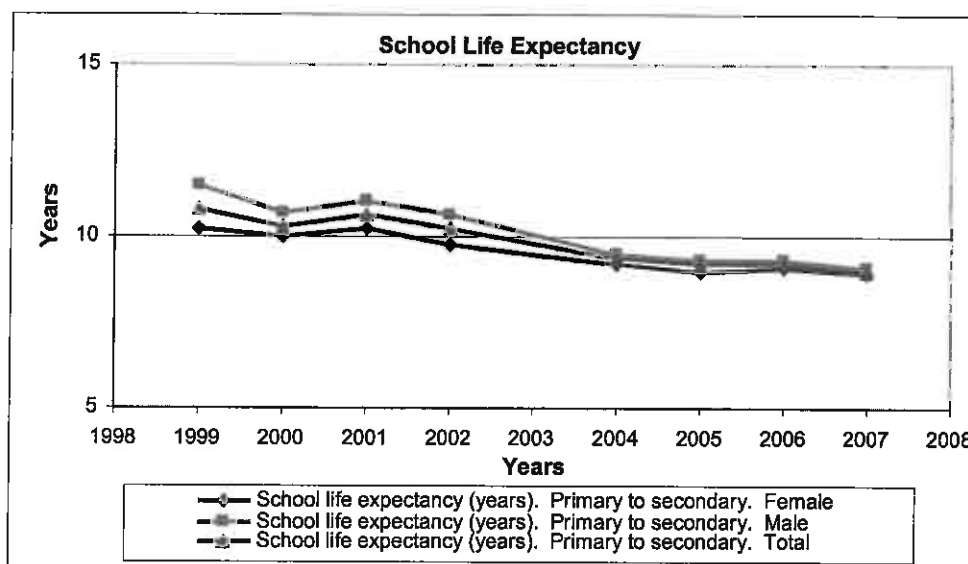
The trend of the enrolment ratio has declined, it has been explained, due to demand and supply side factors. On the demand side it shows that the costs of schooling (both the direct and indirect costs of schooling), illness of family members, and lack of interest in school are reasons for primary school drop-out. On the supply side, the main constraints to quality education are insufficient teachers and teaching materials, poor sanitation, poor teaching and inadequate classrooms.

The conclusion is that the trend in net enrolment is in the wrong direction and that the MDG goal of meeting 100% net enrolment will not be met in 2015.

The two other indicators which reflect on gender equity are; school life expectancy and gender parity. These are presented next.

### **School life expectancy**

**Figure 3. School Life Expectancy**



**Table 4. School Life Expectancy**

| School life expectancy (years). | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Primary to secondary. Female    | 10.2 | 10.0 | 10.2 | 9.8  | 9.2  | 9.0  | 9.1  | 8.9  |
| Primary to secondary. Male      | 11.5 | 10.7 | 11.0 | 10.6 | 9.5  | 9.3  | 9.3  | 9.1  |
| S Primary to secondary. Total   | 10.8 | 10.3 | 10.6 | 10.2 | 9.4  | 9.2  | 9.2  | 9.0  |

School life expectancy, which refers to the total number of years schooling a child of a certain age can expect to receive in the future, assists in illustrating the likelihood of children completing secondary education.

*Analysis and comment:*

The data shows a tendency to decline from 1999. The downward trend has been most marked among males with the number of years from 11.5 to 9.1 years over the period 1999 to 2007. Among females the decline is less steep but shows a similar pattern in a downward trend from 10.8 years to 9.0 years over the same period.



There is thus a declining expectation for more than 10 years education among those starting school. This decline indicates the loss of resources in primary education that is resulting in a high level of turnover or “churn” illustrated by pupils entering the system but failing to complete schooling.

## Gender parity index

Figure 4. MDG Projection: Gender parity index in secondary school

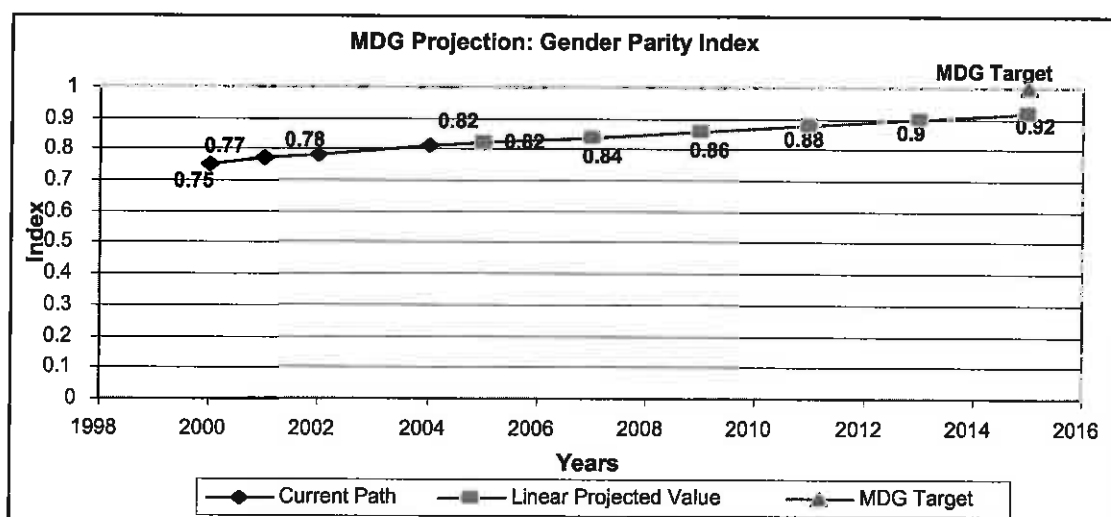


Table 5. Gender Parity Index in Secondary Level

|                 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Secondary Level | 0.7  | 0.75 | 0.77 | 0.78 | 0.81 | 0.82 | 0.84 | 0.83 |

Source: UNESCO Institute of Estimates

URL: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>

### Analysis and comment:

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) provides an indication of the level of girls participation in relation to boys; the number of 1 would show that there is complete equality in participation between males and females.

A GPI of less than 1 indicates that there are fewer females than males in the formal education system in proportion to the appropriate school-age population. A GPI of more than 1 means that there are proportionately more girls than boys attending school. A score of 1 reflects equal enrolment rates for boys and girls. The index shows that for the period 2001-2007, there have been more boys than girls.

The index has shown a steady increase from 0.7 to 0.83 over the period 1999 to 2007 which indicates the rising proportion of girls in school.

A linear projection of the rate shows that the gradual increase continues but is just short of the target of 1 (which represents full gender equality) in 2015. The trend indicates that there is growing participation of girls in school but that gender parity has some way to go.

The conclusion is that the trend in the GPI is in the right direction but that the MDG indicator of 1, signifying gender equality, will not be met in 2015.

## Adult literacy

Figure 5: Adult Literacy

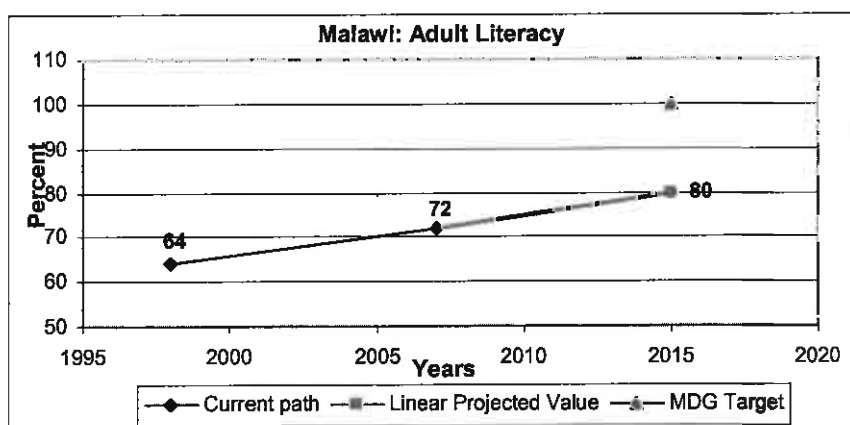


Table 6. Adult literacy, percent

| Year                           | 1998 | 2007 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Adult literacy rate (%). Total | 64   | 72   |

### Analysis and comment:

Adult literacy is an indicator of the progressive improvement in the educational system over a period of time. In Malawi the figures on adult literacy have risen from 64% in 1998 to 72% in 2007. A forward projection of this trend indicates that adult literacy will reach 80% by 2015 and not the target of 100%.

## Appendix 1

### MDG targets related to education reviewed

| Indicator | Education  | Potential | Additional indicator   |
|-----------|--|-----------|------------------------|
| 1         | Target 2a: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling; male and female primary completion rate | 10        | School life expectancy |
| 2         | Indicator 2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education   | 10        |                        |
| 3         | Indicator 2.3 Literacy rate (male and female) 15 and above   | 10        |                        |
| 4         | Indicator 3.1 Gender Parity Index  | 10        |                        |

#### Definitions:

##### **1. Total net enrolment ratio in primary education, both sexes**

Net primary enrolment rate in primary education is the number of children of official primary school age (according to ISCED971) who are enrolled in primary education as a percentage of the total children of the official school age population. Total net primary enrolment rate also includes children of primary school age enrolled in secondary education. Where more than one system of primary education exists within the country the most widespread or common structure is used for determining the official school age group.

**Source:** *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 97)*. Primary education is defined by ISCED97 as programmes normally designed on a unit or project basis to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other subjects such as history, geography, natural science, social science, art and music.

##### **2. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary**

The proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary education, known as the Survival Rate to last Grade of primary, is the percentage of a cohort of pupils enrolled in grade 1 of the primary level of education in a given school year who are expected to reach the last grade of primary school, regardless of repetition. Primary education is defined by International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED97) as programmes normally designed on a unit or project basis to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other subjects such as history, geography, natural science, social science, art and music.

**Source:** *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 97)*. Primary education is defined by ISCED97 as programmes normally designed on a unit or project basis to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other subjects such as history, geography, natural science, social science, art and music.

### **3. Primary Completion Rate**

The primary completion rate is the ratio of the total number of students successfully completing (or graduating from) the last year of primary school in a given year to the total number of children of official graduation age in the population."

**Source:** United Nations Development Group. 2003. *Indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals: Definitions, rationale, concepts and sources*. New York: United Nations.

### **4. The Gender Parity Index (GPI)**

GPI reflects females' level of access to education compared to that of males' access. This is calculated for each school phase. A GPI of less than 1 indicates that there are fewer females, in proportion to the appropriate school-age population, than males in the formal education system

**Source:** United Nations Development Group. 2003. *Indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals: Definitions, rationale, concepts and sources*. New York: United Nations.

### **5. School life expectancy**

School life expectancy is defined as the total number of years of schooling which a child of a certain age can expect to receive in the future, assuming that the probability of his or her being enrolled in school at any particular age is equal to the current enrolment ratio for that age.

**Source:** United Nations Development Group. 2003. *Indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals: Definitions, rationale, concepts and sources*. New York: United Nations.

### **6. Adult literacy rate**

Adult literacy rate is defined as the percentage of population aged 15 years and over whom can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. Adult illiteracy is defined as the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who cannot both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on his/her everyday life.

**Source:** United Nations Development Group. 2003. *Indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals: Definitions, rationale, concepts and sources*. New York: United Nations.