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Fragile Progress

The Record of the Millennium Development Goals
in States Affected by Conflict, Fragility, and Crisis

By John Norris, Casey Dunning, and Annie Malknecht   June 2015

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Introduction and summary

"Peace is the greatest weapon for development that any person can have."

– Nelson Mandela

The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, are a set of voluntary global goals designed to accelerate progress over a 15-year span in key areas, such as health, education, and the environment. Since they were launched in 2000, the MDGs have helped secure historic achievements. For example:

- The number of people living in extreme poverty has been reduced by 700 million people.

- An estimated 3.3 million deaths from malaria have been averted.

- By 2012, all developing regions had achieved, or had nearly achieved, gender parity in primary education.[1]

These and other areas of progress represent an extremely valuable advancement of the basic human condition around the globe. The MDGs's eight development goals and 21 targets—which range from halving the rate of extreme poverty to reducing the mortality rate by two-thirds for children younger than age 5—have formed a blueprint to help the world's poorest people.[2] As the MDGs have been sufficiently successful, U.N. member states are currently negotiating a successor set of global development goals and targets that would run from 2016 to 2030, most often referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs.

Yet, the enthusiasm surrounding the MDGs faced a sharp challenge with the release of the World Bank's "2011 World Development Report," which focused on the nexus of conflict, security, and development. The World Bank found:

No low-income fragile or conflict-affected country has yet achieved a single MDG. People in fragile and conflict-affected states are more than twice as likely to be undernourished as those in other developing countries, more than three times as likely to be unable to send their children to school, twice as likely to see their children die before age five, and more than twice as likely to lack clean water. On average, a country that experienced major violence over the period from 1981 to 2005 has a poverty rate 21 percentage points higher than a country that saw no violence … The average cost of civil war is equivalent to more than 30 years of GDP growth for a medium-size developing country. Trade levels after major episodes of violence take 20 years to recover. In other words, a major episode of violence, unlike natural disasters or economic cycles, can wipe out an entire generation of economic progress.[3]

The World Bank's findings were nothing short of an alarm bell and suggested that the 1.5 billion people living in conflict-affected and fragile states, as well as countries suffering unusually high rates of violent crime, were at risk of being left behind in the global effort to end extreme poverty. The World Bank report also highlighted the fact that many of the countries in this cohort faced repeated cycles of violence and instability, noting that 90 percent of the prior decade's civil wars took place in countries that had already experienced a civil war in the previous 30 years.[4]

The report also represented a significant breakthrough in that the World Bank pinpointed the role of institutions and governance as a central determinant in whether or not countries veered toward conflict. The World Bank had traditionally viewed the role of governance and its links to economic growth largely as a matter of technocratic competence, and much of the organization's work prior to the "2011 World Development Report" made it seem as if sound economic policies were the strongest determinant of a country's relative progress. Tellingly, the World Bank often remained quiet in cases where mal-governance was likely to drive instability and eventual economic disruption. For example, the World Bank did not immediately suspend lending to Nepal when former King Gyanendra seized absolute authority and effectively outlawed political parties in 2005.[5]

Clearly, new approaches would be required if the benefits of global prosperity were to reach into conflict-affected and fragile states. Yet, the outlook was not completely bleak. By 2014, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, found that 35 countries considered fragile were likely to

achieve at least one of the MDG targets.[6] As discussed later in this report, there is no standard definition for country fragility. However, that OECD study used World Bank data, not U.N. data, which produced a lower number of countries meeting such targets, as discussed in more detail below.

On balance, addressing extreme poverty in conflict-affected and fragile states has only become more crucial as the locus of extreme poverty has shifted over time. In the 1970s, the largest concentration of individuals in extreme poverty, defined as those living on less than $1.25 a day, was found in stable, low-income countries.[7] But today, the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, estimates that roughly one-third of the world's extreme poor—about 400 million people—live in conflict-affected and fragile states, and that percentage will only rise as we move closer to 2030.[8] Indeed, with both China and India making rapid economic progress, it is clear that the final battle to end extreme poverty in the next 15 years will be carried out overwhelmingly in conflict-affected and fragile states.

This report consists of several elements: First, it discusses the process of determining how countries are designated as being affected by conflict, fragility, or crisis, and the lack of agreement surrounding that process. It analyzes the cohort of conflict-affected and fragile states during the 2000–2015 period with an eye to exploring how the world tracks such countries and which of these countries made better or worse progress on the original MDGs.

Second, the report compares the progress of these different countries against data on a variety of other factors—such as socioeconomic conditions, corruption levels, trade volumes, resource flows, type of governance, and other data—to explore if certain broad conditions were more or less correlated with relative progress on the MDGs.

Third, to supplement this data-driven analysis of the MDGs in fragile states, the report's authors develop several practical case studies from countries that were relatively high performers on the goals to see if there are particular interventions, programs, or approaches that are effective in promoting development advances in settings of conflict and fragility.

Lastly, the report advances a series of policy recommendations based on the authors' findings to help shape the ongoing negotiations about the SDGs with the aim of making them more sensitive to the needs, capacities, and realities of fragile and conflict-affected states. The recommendations highlight how the global

community can best assist governments in fragile and conflict-affected states in building capacity and developing inclusive and transparent institutions as a useful bulwark against continued or renewed violence. These findings should also help inform the proceedings of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, where a new agenda for the future of humanitarian action will be agreed upon and where one of the primary topics will be how to best serve the needs of people in conflict. These findings can also help inform the World Health Organization, or WHO's, Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, which is currently being reformulated to include a specific focus on improving health for women and children in humanitarian settings.

A number of observations and conclusions were central to the findings of this report and include the following:

The process of establishing countries deemed to be affected by conflict, fragility, or crisis remains surprisingly ad hoc. Many countries are eager to be removed from such lists as quickly as possible—or avoid appearing there altogether—despite the fact that successfully emerging from the danger of conflict is a decidedly long-term venture.

The World Bank's Harmonized List of Fragile Situations is circumscribed in its formulation to such a degree that it excludes some obvious candidates and includes some counterintuitive entrants in its annual categorization of fragile states. This is a situation that is less than ideal given that the list is the closest thing the international community has right now to an official monitor of crisis-prone states.

It would be helpful to label conflict-affected and fragile states as *priority strategy countries*, signaling that an appearance on the World Bank's list is not pejorative, but rather a clarion call for concerted international action to collaboratively improve fundamental conditions within a country. While countries obviously wish to emerge from fragility, many countries currently believe being labeled as fragile results in less access to funding, not more.

There is strong agreement among all of the respective fragility and conflict lists about the most severe conflicts, such as Syria or the Central African Republic. The real challenge with the MDGs is to not only make progress in these incredibly difficult situations, but also to shore up and accelerate progress in more borderline cases so that the pool of protracted conflicts shrinks over time. Indeed, fragility is probably best viewed as a spectrum rather than a binary choice between fragile and stable.

States affected by conflict, fragility, or crisis have made distressingly little progress on the MDGs. Of the 55 states examined in this report, even the best-performing country, Nepal, met just slightly more than half the MDG targets. Cambodia, the second-highest performer, has currently met 8 of the 15 targets that applied to developing countries.

Thirty-seven countries achieved 2 or fewer of the 15 total targets or were so incomplete in official U.N. data that it was impossible to determine their progress. The average result across the 55 countries was to meet two targets, slightly better than 13 percent of the total.

The most commonly met targets, in order of likelihood of being met, were eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education; halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and reducing by two-thirds the mortality rate for children younger than age 5.

The least likely targets to be met were achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reversing the loss of environmental resources; and achieving by 2010 universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it. This suggests, looking forward to the next round of SDGs, that more sharply drawn, realistic, and measurable targets are far more likely to drive actual progress in fragile states where priority setting is essential, progress is difficult, and capacity is limited.

Interestingly, of the 23 lowest-performing countries or countries lacking data, 9 were least-developed countries and 14 were middle-income countries—underscoring the point that fragility and conflict are not purely a low-income country problem.[9]

In looking at which conditions and factors were associated with greater or lesser progress on the MDGs among the cohort of fragile states, some findings were intuitive while others were not. As numerous others have found, increased levels of corruption appeared likely to depress levels of development. Interestingly, a decline in population growth was associated with a general improvement in development outcomes and had a particularly significant relationship with extreme-poverty levels, the ratio of boys to girls in school, and child and maternal mortality rates. High levels of remittances—the transfer of money from foreign workers back to family and friends in migrants' countries of origin—showed a surprisingly

More sharply drawn, realistic, and measurable targets are far more likely to drive actual progress in fragile states.

strong relationship with poor development outcomes, suggesting that populations remain highly dependent on such remittances when political and development progress stalls. Looking at remittance levels, corruption indicators, and levels of population growth may show promise in offering a quick snapshot of the direction a fragile state is headed.

The case studies explored in this report were diverse and made clear the risks of over-generalizing the very specific contexts of fragile and conflict-affected situations. However, several themes stood out. First, even in countries that have shown some of the highest levels of progress based on report findings—such as Nepal, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and Cambodia—this progress remains brittle, and subject to rapid setbacks. In Sierra Leone, for example, the Ebola virus has undone years of rapid progress. In Nepal and Afghanistan, significant development gains have taken place, but the political situations remain deeply unresolved, albeit in very different ways. Cementing progress remains challenging, and development progress ultimately remains hostage to political and institutional stability.

The second notable trend from the case studies was the fact that rapid progress often seemed to occur when specific and appropriate interventions were targeted at traditionally underserved or vulnerable populations. For instance, lowering health fees, providing midwife services, or tailoring outreach to communities with low enrollment rates were types of services that tended to bode well for achieving progress.

In terms of implications for the future SDGs that would run from 2015 to 2030, it is clear that fragile and conflict-affected states are not in a position to manage a large and complex set of development goals. The United Nations is currently considering a list of 17 goals and 169 targets for the SDGs—a level of ambition that seems remarkably challenging for countries struggling to meet their citizens' most basic needs. Indeed, fragile states' performance on the existing goals and targets suggests that enormous work remains to be done in achieving the MDGs. In short, U.N. member states are at risk of designing an agenda that leaves behind a whole cohort of countries struggling with weak institutions, persistent threats of conflict, and significant lingering social tensions.

However, a focus on ending poverty remains the right top-line effort for the SDGs, and progress on reducing extreme income poverty is correlated with success in other areas, including reducing infant and maternal mortality and increasing access to clean water and sanitation.

The push to "leave no one behind"—the notion that the SDGs need to do far better than the MDGs in reaching traditionally marginalized populations—is also crucial.[10] These marginalized populations are particularly impacted when they live in conflict-affected and fragile states, where discrimination tends to be more extreme and even violent. More effectively connecting these populations to the social, economic, and political lives of their societies is the best means to help them climb out of extreme poverty and remain there. Moreover, doing so would be a boon for conflict-prevention efforts as well.

Bolstering the capability and effectiveness of institutions remains crucial to ending conflict and promoting durable stability. It is no accident that corruption and weak governance were some of the factors most heavily associated with the failure of fragile states to make progress against the specific targets examined in this report. Special attention needs also to be given to new democracies as they make their transition given that they are particularly vulnerable to slipping back toward conflict. Such an effort should entail more steadfast and predictable support from the international community and recognition that an enduring ability to govern and share power are the true hallmarks of democracy, rather than the ability to have just one successful election.

Clearly, the SDGs need to pay special attention to financing and the means of implementation in fragile states. There needs to be greater emphasis on inclusive growth and jobs in post-conflict settings. The time is ripe to consider if special mechanisms, such as risk insurance or first-loss guarantees, could be better utilized to help attract private investment in such states and bolster domestic markets and enterprises without diverting traditional support for such countries. In addition, there has been discussion of making a commitment within the SDGs to guarantee that a set percentage of Official Development Assistance is targeted at least-developed countries. While not all fragile states are in the least-developed country category and not all least-developed countries are fragile, this deserves consideration. This report's analysis also suggests that funding for fragile states needs to more predictable, maintained over a longer period of time, emphasize long-term structural reforms, and be more cognizant of the political climate, which ultimately aids or deters development progress. There also needs to be special emphasis on programs reaching children and youth, given that the OECD estimates that close to 40 percent of people living in fragile states are below age 15—while in states considered stable, this demographic makes up an average of 25 percent of a country's population.[11]

While many of the conversations around the SDGs have called for a data revolution to unleash the power of information on the development challenge—which is most certainly a laudable ambition—it is clear that the challenge in fragile states is really one of establishing some rudimentary benchmarks of social and economic progress. There should be a major push to ensure that the basic set of indicators from the original MDGs are measured in every country, everywhere.[12]

More on the global development agenda

This current report is one of a number of reports by both Save the Children and Center for American Progress focused on the Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals, and the future of the global development agenda. Select publications include:

"The Lottery of Birth: Giving all children an equal chance to survive," Save the Children (2015).

"Emerging Consensus: Building Agreement for the Post-2015 Agenda," Save the Children (2014).[13]

"Applying Universal Goals to the United States," Center for American Progress (2014).[14]

"Leaving No One Behind: Embedding equity in the post-2015 framework through stepping stone targets," Save the Children (2014).[15]

"Framework for the Future: Ending poverty in a generation," Save the Children (2014).[16]

"What the Millennium Development Goals Have Accomplished," Center for American Progress (2014).[17]

"Getting to Zero: How we can be the generation that ends poverty," Save the Children (2013).[18]

"Inclusive Economic Growth: Increasing Connectivity, Expanding Opportunity, and Reducing Vulnerability," Center for American Progress (2013).[19]

"The Right to Learn: Community participation in improving learning," Save the Children (2013).[20]

"The Role of the U.S. Government in Promoting Private-Sector Development Solutions," Center for American Progress (2013).[21]

"We can end poverty, but the methods might surprise you," Center for American Progress (2013)[22]

"The World in 2030," Center for American Progress (2013).[23]

"Youth Q&A on the U.N. High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Agenda Report," Center for American Progress (2013).[24]

"Ending Poverty in Our Generation: Save the Children's vision for a post-2015 framework," Save the Children (2012).[25]

Looking at the lists: Fragile and conflict-affected countries, 2000–2015

Efforts to systematically track fragile and conflict-affected states are a surprisingly recent endeavor. Although it is the official arbiter of data related to the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations does not track or organize a list of countries that it deems as fragile and conflict-affected. While it would seem a natural candidate to do so, political and diplomatic disagreements about which countries would appear on such a list and why have always prevented the United Nations from conducting such an exercise despite its obvious relevance to U.N. work in development, diplomacy, peacekeeping, and beyond. Indeed, the United Nations remains so squeamish about the topic that fragile and conflict-affected countries fall within the rather oblique categorization of "countries in special situations."[26]

The task of categorizing states as fragile and conflict-affected has fallen to the World Bank in its annual Harmonized List of Fragile Situations, as well as a number of outside, independent analysts. While policymakers and the media often refer to conflict-affected and fragile states as a clearly defined and identified group, they are, in reality, cobbled together from multiple competing lists trying to identify states through different criteria, definitions, and methodology. Although the overlap between these different lists is considerable, there are also important differences that affect how the international community approaches these countries.

It is worth briefly exploring the genesis of the World Bank's efforts in this regard.[27] The initial foray by the World Bank into this area began in 2001 when it established a task force to examine the challenges of weak institutions and governance in low-income countries. This translated into a formal list of 26 "low-Income under stress countries" in 2005.[28] By 2010, the World Bank had renamed this the "Fragile States List." Just a year later, following the release of the World Bank's "World Development Report on Conflict," it was again renamed to the "Harmonized List of Fragile Situations."[29] Development and management of this list is handled by the World Bank's Center on Conflict, Security and Development.[30] Countries are included on the list if they have low scores for the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment or have been home to a U.N. peacekeeping or peacebuilding mission in the previous three years.

Countries with a low Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, or CPIA score—a metric used by the World Bank to determine state fragility—are only included on the list if they are also eligible for International Development Association, or IDA, funding. IDA funding is directed to poorer and small island countries that traditionally lack the creditworthiness to borrow from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, or IBRD.[31] Countries that have hosted peacekeeping missions can be included on the list even if they are not IDA-eligible, resulting in some significant quirks in the list, which are discussed in more detail below.

It is important to note that the CPIA score is a measure that the World Bank feels is a reasonable proxy for fragility rather than an attempt to directly capture fragility. While the distinction might seem minor, it is not. As the World Bank notes, the CPIA "measures economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and governance."[32] Yet, it is far from clear that this accurately captures the fundamentals of why a country might be fragile. Other useful data—on violent crime, infant mortality, population growth, and conflict in neighboring countries—are not included, although most outside analysts routinely consider such factors when exploring fragility.

The World Bank's definition of fragility and fragile situations is very much linked to governance: "Periods when states or institutions lack the capacity, accountability, or legitimacy to mediate relations between citizen groups and between citizens and the state, making them vulnerable to violence."[33]

To get a better sense of the World Bank's approach to categorizing fragile and conflict-affected countries, we compared its lists since inception to the Fund for Peace Failed States Index and results from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, housed at Uppsala University in Sweden. The Failed States Index is compiled annually by the Fund for Peace and attempts to measure the vulnerability of states to collapse based on a series of political, social, and economic indicators, with scores measured against other historical examples to evaluate if a situation is improving, deteriorating, or staying the same. Countries are ranked on an escalating scale from "high warning to high alert."[34]

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program produces an annual list of countries in a state of ongoing armed conflicts, be they intrastate, interstate, or internationalized intrastate conflicts.[35] Data for this list are collected in four stages, largely from news sources, typically during November through May of each year.[36] The Uppsala list is as an ex post facto measure of conflict and fragility, accounting for violence that

has already taken place, while both the World Bank and Fund for Peace lists are designed to account both for ongoing violence and anticipate countries that might be headed for it.

The World Banks's list of fragile and conflict-affected states for 2005 to 2015 appears as Table 1, the Failed States Index for 2005 to 2014 appears as Table 2, and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program results for 2005 to 2013 appear as Table 3.

A number of observations stand out when comparing the three lists over this period of time, 2005 through 2015.

- **There is no shared definition of fragility.** Policymakers and the media typically talk about the list of fragile and conflict-affected states as if there is general agreement on what states constitute such a list and why countries appear or do not appear on the list. That is most certainly not the case, and although there is much agreement across these lists, there is also important variance.

- **Borderline fragile countries are often overlooked.** When many policymakers think of fragile and conflict-affected states, their minds often automatically go to the most profoundly affected countries, such as Afghanistan or Somalia. But the list is much larger than that; for example, this year, the OECD noted that of the 50 fragile states on its own current list of fragile states, "22 have seen few, if any, battle deaths over the past decade, while 31 have experienced fewer natural disasters than the OECD average."[37] Designing successful interventions in these cases of borderline or forgotten fragility is the great unfinished business of conflict prevention. These are countries that hang in the balance: They could emerge into lasting stability or they could just as easily regress to disorder. The international community has consistently done too little to tip the scale toward progress.

- **It is hard to ask for help.** Being seen as crisis-prone, fragile, or conflict-affected continues to be viewed as pejorative: Most leaders do not want to admit that their country is in less than ideal shape. Having a low CPIA score can often mean less funding for a country from the World Bank. Thus there is every incentive to get off the list while there is comparatively less perceived advantage in dealing with the underlying factors that result in fragility over the long term. Yet, it is these states that deserve the most attention and help, particularly if they can be reached and assisted with efforts to prevent them from slipping into more serious violence and conflict. It is essential to change the dynamic so that states are both more willing and better able to secure assistance at points of state fragility so they can achieve basic milestones in human development.

World Bank harmonized list of fragile states, 2005–2015

Low Income Under Stress

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Angola	Angola	Angola	Angola	Angola
Burundi	Burundi	Burundi	Burundi	Burundi
Cambodia	Cambodia	Cambodia	Cambodia	Central African Republic
Central African Republic	Central African Republic	Central African Republic	Central African Republic	Chad
Comoros	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Chad	Chad	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Republic of the Congo	Comoros	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Comoros
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Republic of the Congo	Comoros	Comoros	Republic of the Congo
Guinea-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	Republic of the Congo	Republic of the Congo	Côte d'Ivoire
Haiti	Haiti	Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire	Djibouti
Kosovo	Kosovo	Djibouti	Djibouti	Eritrea
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Eritrea	Eritrea	The Gambia
Liberia	Liberia	The Gambia	The Gambia	Guinea
Myanmar	Mynamar	Guinea	Guinea	Guinea-Bissau
Nigeria	Nigeria	Guinea-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	Haiti
Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea	Haiti	Haiti	Kosovo
São Tomé and Príncipe	São Tomé and Príncipe	Kosovo	Kosovo	Liberia
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Mynamar
Somalia	Somalia	Liberia	Liberia	Papua New Guinea
Tajikistan	Tajikistan	Mynamar	Mynamar	São Tomé and Príncipe
Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste	Nigeria	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
Togo	Togo	Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands
Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	São Tomé and Príncipe	São Tomé and Príncipe	Somalia
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	Tajikistan
Equatorial Guinea	Chad	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	Timor-Leste
Sudan	Côte d'Ivoire	Somalia	Somalia	Togo
	Djibouti	Tajikistan	Tajikistan	Tonga
	Eritrea	Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste	Vanuatu
	The Gambia	Togo	Togo	West Bank and Gaza
	Guinea	Tonga	Tonga	Zimbabwe
	Sierra Leone	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	Cambodia
	Tonga	Vanuatu	Vanuatu	Lao People's Democratic Republic
	Vanuatu	West Bank and Gaza	West Bank and Gaza	Nigeria
	West Bank and Gaza	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	Uzbekistan

Addition to list
Removed from list following year
Only appearance on list

Fragile Situations

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Angola	Angola	Angola	Burundi	Burundi	Burundi
Burundi	Burundi	Burundi	Central African Republic	Central African Republic	Central African Republic
Central African Republic	Central African Republic	Central African Republic	Comoros	Chad	Chad
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Comoros	Comoros	Republic of the Congo	Comoros	Comoros
Comoros	Demoratic Republic of the Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Republic of the Congo	Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire	Eritrea
Côte d'Ivoire	Republic of the Congo	Republic of the Congo	Eritrea	Eritrea	Côte d'Ivoire
Eritrea	Eritrea	Eritrea	Guinea Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau
Guinea	Guinea	Guinea	Haiti	Haiti	Haiti
Guinea-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	Kiribati	Kiribati	Kiribati
Haiti	Haiti	Haiti	Kosovo	Kosovo	Kosovo
Kosovo	Kosovo	Kiribati	Liberia	Liberia	Liberia
Liberia	Kiribati	Kosovo	Marshall Islands	Marshall Islands	Madagascar
Myanmar	Liberia	Liberia	Federated States of Micronesia	Federated States of Micronesia	Mali
São Tomé and Príncipe	Myanmar	Myanmar	Myanmar	Myanmar	Marshall Islands
Sierra Leone	Nepal	Nepal	Nepal	Sierra Leone	Federated States of Micronesia
Solomon Islands	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	Solomon Islands	Myanmar
Somalia	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	Somalia	Sierra Leone
Tajikistan	Somalia	Somalia	Somalia	South Sudan	Solomon Islands
Timor-Leste	Sudan	Sudan	Sudan	Sudan	Somalia
Togo	Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste	Togo	South Sudan
Zimbabwe	Togo	Togo	Togo	Tuvalu	Sudan
Cameroon	Yemen	Yemen	Yemen	Yemen	Togo
Chad	West Bank and Gaza	West Bank and Gaza	West Bank and Gaza	West Bank and Gaza	Tuvalu
Djibouti	Western Sahara	Bosnia and Herzgovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Yemen
The Gambia	Bosnia and Herzgovina	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	West Bank and Gaza
Papua New Guinea	Georgia	Iraq	Iraq	Iraq	Timor Leste
Tonga	Zimbabwe	Georgia	Angola	Libya	Zimbabwe
Kiribati	São Tomé and Príncipe	Western Sahara	Guinea	Syria	Bosnia and Herzgovina
Nepal	Tajikistan	Marshall Islands	Chad	Timor Leste	Iraq
Sudan	Iraq	Federated States of Micronesia	Libya	Malawi	Libya
Yemen			South Sudan	Republic of the Congo	Syria
Western Sahara			Tuvalu	Nepal	
Bosnia and Herzegovina				Madagascar	
Georgia				Mali	

Sources: The World Bank Group and the Independent Evaluation Group, "Engaging with Fragile States: An IEG Review of World Bank Support to Low-Income Countries Under Stress" (2006), available at http://ieg. worldbank.org/Data/reports/licus.pdf; The World Bank, "Evaulation of World Bank Support to Low-Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) An Approach Paper" (2005), available at http://ieg.worldbank.org/Data/reports/ licus_approach_paper.pdf; The World Bank, "Harmonized List of Fragile Situations FY10" (2010), available at http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLICUS/Resources/511777-1247506883703/Fragile_Situations_List_ FY10_Nov_17_2009_EXT.pdf.

TABLE 2

Fund for Peace Fragile States Index list: 2005–2014

Listed in order of rank from least stable to most stable, or high warning to high alert

Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Somalia										
South Sudan								○		
Sudan		○	○	○	○	○				
Democratic Republic of the Congo										
Chad	○						○			
Zimbabwe										
Côte d'Ivoire	○									
Central African Republic										
Afghanistan										
Haiti										
Iraq	○	○	○	○	○	○				
Guinea	○									○
Pakistan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Myanmar										
Yemen	○	○	○	○	○		○			
Liberia										
Burundi										
Nigeria	○					○	○		○	○
Sierra Leone	○									
Guinea-Bissau										
Bangladesh	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		○
Nepal	○	○	○	○						○
Kenya	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Timor-Leste										○
Eritrea	○									
Ethiopia	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Uganda	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Uzbekistan							○	○	○	○
Cameroon	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Sri Lanka		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Legend:
- ■ "Very high alert"
- ■ "High alert"
- ■ "Alert"
- ■ "Very high warning"
- □ Not on World Bank list, and ranked below "Very high warning" for Fund for Peace
- ○ Not included in World Bank list for that year

Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Republic of the Congo										
Niger		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Syria	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
Angola										○
Togo	○									
Lebanon	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Solomon Islands										
Rwanda	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Papua New Guinea							○	○	○	○
Georgia		○	○	○	○				○	○
Lao People's Democratic Republic	○	○				○	○	○	○	○
Burkina Faso		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Iran	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Colombia	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Equitorial Guinea		○		○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Malawi		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Tajikistan								○	○	○
Mauritania		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cambodia						○	○	○	○	○
Bhutan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Bosnia and Herzegovina	○	○	○		○					
Egypt	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
West Bank and Gaza/Israel										
Comoros										○
Guatemala	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	
Kyrgyzstan			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Tanzania	○				○	○	○	○	○	○
Zambia			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Djibouti			○		○		○	○	○	
Indonesia	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
Ecuador	○	○		○	○	○	○	○		○

■ "Very high alert"   ■ "Alert"   □ Not on World Bank list, and ranked below "Very high warning" for Fund for Peace   ○ Not included in World Bank list for that year
■ "High alert"   ■ "Very high warning"

Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Swaziland			○		○	○	○	○	○	
Philippines	○		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
China	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	
Turkmenistan		○	○	○	○					
Libya	○							○		○
Mozambique	○					○	○	○	○	○
Madagascar					○	○		○	○	
Lesotho			○	○	○	○	○			
Nicaragua		○		○	○	○	○			
Venezuela	○	○								
Azerbaijan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			
Algeria	○				○	○				
The Gambia	○					○	○	○	○	○
Belarus	○	○	○	○	○					
Moldova			○	○	○	○	○			
Fiji						○	○	○	○	
Cuba	○	○			○					
Cape Verde			○	○						
Maldives			○	○						○
Senegal									○	
Serbia and Montenegro		○		○						
Bahrain	○									
Brazil	○									
Mali									○	
Paraguay	○									
Peru	○									
Saudi Arabia	○									
Ukraine	○									
Vietnam	○									

Source: Fund for Peace, "Fragile States Index" (2005–2014), available at http://ffp.statesindex.org/; and The World Bank, "Fragility, Conflict and Violence Overview" (2005–2014), available at http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview.

Legend:
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- "High alert"
- "Alert"
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- ○ Not included in World Bank list for that year

TABLE 3

Uppsala database of ongoing conflict and violence

Countries that have experienced or participated in inter- or intrastate conflict, 2000–2013

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Algeria	Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia	Philippines
Bolivia	Papua New Guinea	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Algeria
Chad	Philippines	Algeria	Morocco	Algeria	Algeria	Chad
Colombia	Algeria	Chad	Algeria	Sudan	Chad	Sudan
Eritrea	Chad	Sudan	Sudan	Ethiopia	Sudan	Ethiopia
Ethiopia	Sudan	Ethiopia	Eritrea	Somalia	Ethiopia	Somalia
Indonesia	Ethiopia	Somalia	Ethiopia	Côte d'Ivoire	Somalia	Central African Republic
Iran	Somalia	Liberia	Somalia	Nigeria	Uganda	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Iraq	Senegal	Côte d'Ivoire	Senegal	Uganda	Burundi	Uganda
Iraq	Guinea	Central African Republic	Liberia	Burundi	United States of America	Burundi
Israel	Libera	Republic of the Congo	Côte d'Ivoire	Angola	Colombia	United States of America
Lebanon	Central African Republic	Angola	Uganda	United States of America	Brazil	Colombia
Philippines	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Uganda	Burundi	Colombia	Mexico	Afghanistan
Russia	Uganda	Rwanda	United States of America	Brazil	Guatemala	Pakistan
Somalia	Rwanda	Burundi	Colombia	Mexico	Haiti	India
Sudan	Burundi	United States of America	Brazil	Honduras	Afghanistan	Nepal
Turkey	Angola	Colombia	Ecuador	Haiti	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Uzbekistan	United States of America	Brazil	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	India	Bangladesh
Tajikistan	Colombia	Mexico	Pakistan	Pakistan	Nepal	Myanmar
Afghanistan	Brazil	Afghanistan	India	India	Sri Lanka	Thailand
Pakistan	Mexico	Pakistan	Nepal	Nepal	Bangladesh	Lao People's Democratic Republic
India	Jamaica	India	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Myanmar	Russia
Nepal	Tajikistan	Nepal	Russia	Uzbekistan	Thailand	Turkey
Sri Lanka	Afghanistan	Myanmar	Turkey	Thailand	Russia	Israel
Myanmar	Pakistan	Russia	Iraq	Spain	Azerbijan	Iraq
	India	Turkey	Israel	Russia	Turkey	Iran
	Nepal	Iraq		Georgia	Israel	
	Bangladesh	Israel		Turkey	Iraq	
	Myanmar			Iraq	Iran	
	Russia			Israel	Egypt	
	Macedonia			Egypt		
	Turkey			Yemen		
	Israel					
	Iran					

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines
Mali	Mali	Mali	Mauritania	Mauritania	Papua New Guinea	Malaysia
Algeria	Algeria	Algeria	Algeria	Algeria	Mali	Mali
Niger	Niger	Chad	Chad	Libya	Algeria	Algeria
Chad	Chad	Sudan	Sudan	Sudan	Libya	Sudan
Sudan	Sudan	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	South Sudan	Sudan	South Sudan
Ethiopia	Eritrea	Somalia	Somalia	Ethiopia	South Sudan	Ethiopia
Somalia	Ethiopia	Nigeria	Central African Republic	Somalia	Ethiopia	Somalia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Djibouti	Central African Republic	Uganda	Senegal	Somalia	Nigeria
Angola	Somalia	Uganda	Rwanda	Côte d'Ivoire	Nigeria	Central African Republic
Uganda	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Rwanda	United States of America	Nigeria	Central African Republic	Uganda
United States of America	Uganda	Angola	Colombia	Central African Republic	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Colombia	Burundi	United States of America	Peru	Uganda	Rwanda	Mozambique
Peru	United States of America	Colomiba	Mexico	Rwanda	United States of America	United States of America
Afghanistan	Colombia	Peru	Honduras	United States of America	Colombia	Colombia
Pakistan	Peru	Brazil	Afghanistan	Colombia	Mexico	Mexico
India	Guyana	Mexico	Pakistan	Brazil	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Nepal	Mexico	Afghanistan	India	Mexico	Pakistan	Pakistan
Sri Lanka	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Afghanistan	India	India
Myanmar	Pakistan	India	Kyrgyzstan	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Bangladesh
Thailand	India	Sri Lanka	Tajikistan	India	Myanmar	Myanmar
Russia	Sri Lanka	Myanmar	Myanmar	Tajikistan	Thailand	Thailand
Turkey	Myanmar	Thailand	Thailand	Myanmar	China	Russia
Israel	Thailand	Russia	Russia	Thailand	Russia	Syria
Iraq	China	Turkey	Turkey	Cambodia	Azerbaijan	Lebanon
Iran	Russia	Israel	Israel	Russia	Turkey	Egypt
	Georgia	Iraq	Iraq	Turkey	Israel	Iraq
	Turkey	Iran	Iran	Israel	Iraq	Yemen
	Israel	Yemen	Yemen	Iraq	Yemen	
	Iraq			Iran	Egypt	
	Iran			Yemen	Syria	
	Lebanon			Egypt		
				Syria		

- **Rebranding would be useful.** Instead of fragile and conflict-affected states, it might be more helpful for the international community to label these states as *priority strategy countries* or *strategic priority countries*. This would be both more palatable politically for leaders in these countries while at the same time making clear that significant resources would need to be brought to bear if a country is to change course.

- **There are quirks in the World Bank list.** The World Bank uses very specific methodology that makes for a less representative list than would be ideal, considering that it is the closest thing the international community currently has to an official monitor of fragile and conflict-affected states. For example, the World Bank list is weighted to disproportionately include small island nations, and these nations appear on the list in far larger numbers compared to what would seem to be their genuine vulnerability to conflict. In 2014, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Tuvalu, and Kiribati all appeared on the World Bank's list of 36 fragile countries, but they did not appear on the far more voluminous Fund for Peace Fragile States Index.[38] That is significant in that these countries make up more than 10 percent of the World Bank's total fragile states list for 2014 despite not fitting the profile most would associate with vulnerability to conflict. There is no clear reason why small island nations appear to be overrepresented, and it likely traces back to some peculiarity in the formulation of CPIA scores that needs to be more deeply explored.

- **There are gaps in the World Bank list.** This same methodology causes some head-scratching omissions from the World Bank list that call into question how exactly the list was formulated or if it was subject to political influence. For example, Nigeria has not been on the list for the past five years, despite the rise of the Boko Haram insurgency. Iraq was inexplicably absent from the list from 2005 to 2010 during a time when it had some of the highest rates of civilian deaths in the world.[39] Likewise, Nepal and Sri Lanka were not on the list even during periods when both countries were in the middle of major insurgencies. The fact that the World Bank list automatically excludes non-IDA eligible countries that have not hosted a U.N. peacekeeping mission explains why a country such as North Korea or Egypt has never appeared on the list. Currently, the upper tiers of the Fund for Peace list seem to give a better snapshot of potential global flashpoints than does the World Bank list.

- **The World Bank list has limited predictive value.** The World Bank list has more limited predictive value than one would expect for anticipating violent conflict, suggesting that it might not be fully capturing the dynamics that constitute

fragility and vulnerability to conflict. Some countries that did not appear on the list until after significant conflicts erupted include: Libya, Syria, Mali, Georgia, Yemen, and Ukraine. Again, some of those countries would not have appeared because of their lack of eligibility for IDA lending, but this further contributes to the sense that the World Bank list is more reactive than proactive. However, in some cases, such as Côte d'Ivoire, which has been on the list since 2006, the World Bank list was an accurate harbinger of trouble ahead.

- **There are missing precipitants of fragility.** The World Bank list—because it is driven largely by country-income levels as reflected in IDA status—looks past some obvious common sense precipitants of fragility. For example, neither Jordan nor Lebanon is currently on the list, although both are now home to explosively large refugee populations from Syria and vulnerable to that nation's conflict spilling over into their countries. Kenya has steadily crept up the Fund for Peace list of potentially fragile states, primarily due to its involvement in military operations in Somalia and retaliatory the militant Islamist al-Shabab attacks within Kenya, but this reality has not translated onto the World Bank list.

- **A revised approach is needed.** The World Bank should explore revamping its methodology so that its results are less rigidly dependent on IDA-loan eligibility and develop a richer measure to complement its scores on CPIA—a useful but incomplete measure that overlooks some obvious factors driving fragility. The recent OECD suggestion that states be determined to be fragile based on five dimensions would appear to capture more elements that fuel potential crises and deserves further exploration. These five elements are: levels of violence; access to justice; effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions; economic foundations; and the capacity to adapt to social, economic, and environmental shocks or disasters.[40]

- **There is a revolving door problem.** Because of the very particular nature of the World Bank model and its strong reliance on the CPIA score, some countries move on and off of the list in fairly short periods of time as their numbers bounce above and below this line. Given the frequent tendency of countries to slip back toward conflict within a decade after fighting has stopped, establishing a model that would place countries on lists for a longer watch period might be warranted. For example, Cameroon, Malawi, and Equatorial Guinea each appear on the list for a single year—2010, 2014, and 2005, respectively—yet it is hard to imagine the conditions that would make a country genuinely fragile lasting for such a limited period of time. This also underscores the point that fragility is best considered on a spectrum rather than a stark choice of either fragile or stable.

- **Fragility is stubborn.** Fifteen of the 26 countries—58 percent—on the World Bank's original 2005 list are still on the list today. These countries are: Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kosovo, Liberia, Myanmar, the Solomon Islands, Somalia, Timor-Leste, Togo, and Zimbabwe. Their consistent presence on the list speaks both to the difficulty of getting a country to return to stability once it has entered a major phase of conflict, such as in Afghanistan or Somalia, and the importance of trying to intervene in countries before they reach such a point to prevent such protracted crises.

The OECD employs a useful model in preparing its annual list of countries it considers fragile. It combines the latest Harmonized List of Fragile Situations published by the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank with those countries that have a score of 90 or above on the Fund for Peace Failed State Index.[41] This model seems to yield a list that, by and large, aligns well with broad perceptions of fragility.

There is strong agreement among all of the respective fragility and conflict lists about those countries that are profoundly conflict-affected. There is not much dispute that Afghanistan, Somalia, and the Central African Republic have serious problems. The real challenge with the MDGs is to not only make progress in these incredibly difficult situations, but also to shore up and accelerate progress in states that are not immediately thought of as fragile so that the pool of protracted conflicts can shrink over time. The merits of prevention are paramount.

Notably, and although it did not receive the broad attention from the public or policymakers that it deserved, a 2013 assessment from the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group, or IEG, expressed considerable concern with the harmonized list, saying that it "has not been consistent with actual fragility and conflict risks in many countries."[42]

Looking at the track record of the World Bank in assessing conflict, the evaluation group observed:

> The FCS [or, fragile and conflict-affected states] list did not include any of the Arab Spring countries, or Mali, because they were over the CPIA threshold, and the list does not consider underlying causes of conflict or political instability. Nepal was excluded from the list during its decade of conflict and was only added in 2010 after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, when a UN mission

was deployed. Cameroon has been on the FCS list during four of the last 10 years and has moved in and out of the list twice based on CPIA ratings, although the underlying fragility and political risks remain acute and unchanged. Because Cameroon's CPIA rating is above the 3.2 threshold, the country team still does not treat it as a fragile and conflict-affected state. Unless the CPIA criteria change, countries such as Nepal and Sierra Leone will graduate from the list of fragile countries although risks persist. Compiling country-level data on fragility and conflict from available sources, the evaluation identified 16 countries that could have been added to the FCS list during the past decade. Five criteria for fragility were considered: political coup, conflict and violence, social exclusion and ethnic diversity, refugee inflows, and conflicts in neighboring countries

We echo the call of the IEG to develop a more robust approach to classification by "supplementing the CPIA-based classification with other instruments, or substituting another instrument for classification purposes."

G7+ and the New Deal

The g7+

Established in 2010 by a group of countries that had recently experienced conflict, the g7+ is a voluntary association of conflict and post-conflict states working to stop conflict and eradicate poverty through country-owned and country-led strategies. The association serves as a platform for member countries to advocate for effective development policies and to participate in peer-to-peer learning. Member states, as of January 2015, include:

Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, Central African Republic, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, and Yemen.

In its advocacy role, the g7+ works to provide fragile state perspectives and has participated in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and acted as an observer in the International Development Association replenishment meetings—IDA17.[43]

The g7+ has also become a vocal participant in the post-2015 development agenda discussions, promoting "peace and capable institutions" as a standalone goal during the 69th session of the U.N. General Assembly.[44] In 2014, g7+ also developed a framework for the International Finance Corporation, or IFC, for the corporation's public-private partnership engagement in fragile situations.[45]

One of the most encouraging aspects of the g7+ has been its commitment to good governance and the belief that a core objective in peace building and state building is to transform resource wealth into tangible benefits for the people of the g7+ countries. As g7+ notes, "This can be achieved through best practice international systems and models of governance prioritizing inclusive politics, security, justice, strong economic foundations and good resource and revenue management as integral steps to sustainable development."[46] The g7+ approach is a major step forward in recognizing country ownership of peace and stability and recognizing that legitimate politics and justice are essential elements of lasting prosperity.

The implementation of global agreements, such as the OECD High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness and the New Deal for Fragile States, are informing the post-2015 conversation about how to boost development gains in conflict zones. A range of experiences can be highlighted from civil society, government, the private sector, and other actors about operating in these settings in order to inform policy. Lessons and recommendations on development progress in conflict settings can be drawn from national institutions, community-based services in health, nutrition, protection, and education, as well as areas such as data gathering, accountability mechanisms, citizen participation, technical assistance, and partnership with local actors.

Meeting MDGs: The record

At its core, this report seeks to explore the track record of fragile and conflict-affected states on the Millennium Development Goals. As discussed above, no single, comprehensive list of fragile and conflict-affected states exists—just as no single definition of a fragile and conflict-affected state exists. Using fragility and conflict lists from the United Nations, the World Bank, the OECD, the Uppsala Conflict Encyclopedia, and the Fund for Peace, this report compares the MDG experience of 55 countries. This cohort of countries includes every country on the World Bank's list, as well as the top two tiers of the Fund for Peace list.[47] The 55 countries included in this analysis are as follows:

TABLE 4

Countries selected for this analysis

Afghanistan	Guinea-Bissau	São Tomé and Príncipe
Angola	Haiti	Sierra Leone
Bangladesh	Iraq	Solomon Islands
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kenya	Somalia
Burundi	Kiribati	South Sudan
Cambodia	Kosovo	Sudan
Cameroon	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Syrian Arab Republic
Central African Republic	Liberia	Tajikistan
Chad	Libya	Timor-Leste
Comoros	Madagascar	Togo
Republic of the Congo	Malawi	Tonga
Côte d'Ivoire	Mali	Tuvalu
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Marsall Islands	Uzbekistan
Djibouti	Micronesia	Vanuatu
Equatorial Guinea	Myanmar	West Bank and Gaza
Eritrea	Nepal	Yemen
The Gambia	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
Georgia	Pakistan	
Guinea	Papua New Guinea	

Authors' note: The authors take no position on the relative merits of any country being on the list above. They are included solely based on the analyses conducted by the World Bank and Fund for Peace, respectively.

So how did these 55 countries perform on the seven goals and 15 targets that applied to them within the MDGs?[48] The record is not encouraging.

Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, and Targets
From United Nations Millennium Declaration

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- **Target 1.A:** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day
- **Target 1.B:** Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
- **Target 1.C:** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- **Target 2.A:** 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 3.A:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- **Target 4.A:** Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the mortality rate for children younger than age 5

Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- **Target 5.A:** Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
- Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- **Target 6.A:** Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- **Target 6.B:** Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it
- **Target 6.C:** Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- **Target 7.A:** Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- **Target 7.B:** Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
- **Target 7.C:** Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- **Target 7.D:** 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 8.A:** 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 8.B:** Address the special needs of the least-developed countries
  Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least-developed countries' exports; enhanced program of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries, or HIPC, and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance, or ODA, for countries committed to poverty reduction
- **Target 8.C:** Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states through the U.N. Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the 22nd special session of the U.N. General Assembly
- **Target 8.D:** 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 8.E:** In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- **Target 8.F:** In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

The murkiness of meeting targets

This report considered a target as being met only if all of the indicators beneath it were met.[49] Rather oddly, the United Nations does not have a set formula for determining if targets are met, and some studies give countries credit for achieving some but not all of the indicators. In general, the first indicator within a set is usually perceived to be the most important. Obviously, the authors would have found a higher level of apparent progress against the targets had they used a less rigorous standard that considered a target met as long as some of its indicators were met.

It is also important to note that the Millennium Development Goals, while agreed to in 2000 and running to 2015, actually use 1990 as a baseline for measuring a country's progress. So in actuality, a country has had 25 years, rather than 15 years, to achieve these targets—although this fact is rarely mentioned outside of statistical circles.

Table 6 details the official U.N. MDG record of all 55 states against these targets.

TABLE 6

Country progress toward Millenium Development Goal targets

Progress based on U.N. MDG data

Country	1A	1B	1C	2A	3A	4A	5A	5B	6A	6B	6C	7A	7B	7C	7D	Total
Nepal	○	-	○	-	-	○	●	○	○	○	●	-	-	○	-	9
Cambodia	●	-	●	-	-	●	●	●	-	-	●	-	●	●	-	8
Lao People's Democratic Republic	●	-	●	-	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	5
Pakistan	●	-	●	-	-	-	-	●	●	-	Static	-	-	●	-	5
Bosnia and Herzgovina	●	-	●	Static	-	○	-	-	Static	N/A	-	-	-	●	N/A	4
Malawi	-	Static	●	-	-	●	-	-	●	-	Static	-	-	●	-	4
Myanmar	N/A	Static	●	●	●	-	-	-	N/A	-	Static	-	●	-	Static	4
Tajikistan	●	-	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-	●	-	N/A	4
The Gambia	●	Static	●	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	Static	-	●	-	Static	4
Timor-Leste	N/A	-	-	-	●	●	●	-	N/A	N/A	Static	-	●	-	N/A	4
Tonga	N/A	Static	N/A	●	●	-	-	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	●	●	N/A	4
Georgia	-	-	●	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	3
Guinea	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	-	3
Mali	-	Static	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Static	-	●	-	●	3
Nigeria	-	Static	●	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	Static	-	●	-	-	3
Syria	Static	-	-	●	●	-	-	-	N/A	N/A	Static	-	-	●	-	3
Tuvalu	N/A	Static	Static	●	●	-	N/A	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	-	●	N/A	3
West Bank	●	-	-	●	●	-	N/A	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	3
Afghanistan	N/A	N/A	Static	Static	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Bangladesh	-	-	●	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Cameroon	●	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Equitorial Guinea	N/A	Static	-	-	-	-	●	-	Static	N/A	-	-	●	-	Static	2
Eritrea	N/A	Static	-	-	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	2
Liberia	N/A	-	N/A	-	-	●	N/A	-	-	-	Static	-	●	-	Static	2
Madagascar	-	-	Static	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	Static	-	-	-	N/A	2
Marshall Islands	Static	Static	N/A	-	●	-	N/A	Static	N/A	N/A	-	-	-	●	N/A	2
Micronesia	Static	N/A	N/A	N/A	●	-	-	Static	-	N/A	N/A	-	●	-	N/A	2

●   Achieved global target
●   Achieved national target, but not global target
○   Expected to achieve global target by 2015

Static   One data point; cannot measure progress
N/A   Data is unavailable
\-   Failed global target

Country	1A	1B	1C	2A	3A	4A	5A	5B	6A	6B	6C	7A	7B	7C	7D	Total
São Tomé and Príncipe	Static	Static	●	-	●	-	-	Static	-	N/A	Static	-	-	-	N/A	2
Sierra Leone	-	Static	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	-	Static	-	●	-	Static	2
Solomon Islands	Static	Static	●	-	●	-	-	Static	N/A	N/A	Static	-	-	-	N/A	2
Togo	-	Static	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Static	-	●	-	Static	2
Uzbekistan	N/A	-	-	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-	-	-	N/A	2
Angola	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Comoros	Static	Static	Static	-	-	-	-	-	Static	-	-	-	-	●	-	1
Guinea-Bissau	-	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	Static	1
Kiribati	N/A	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	Static	N/A	-	-	●	-	N/A	1
Libya	-	N/A	Static	N/A	Static	●	-	-	Static	N/A	N/A	-	-	N/A	N/A	1
Vanuatu	N/A	Static	-	-	●	-	-	-	N/A	N/A	Static	-	-	-	N/A	1
Zimbabwe	Static	Static	-	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Burundi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Static	0
Central African Republic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Chad	Static	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Republic of the Congo	Static	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Côte d'Ivoire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Djibouti	Static	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Static	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Haiti	Static	Static	-	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Iraq	Static	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	0
Kenya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Kosovo																0
Papua New Guinea	◐	Static	-	-	-	◐	-	Static	-	-	Static	-	-	-	N/A	0
Somalia	N/A	Static	Static	N/A	Static	-	-	-	Static	-	Static	-	N/A	-	Static	0
South Sudan	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	Static	0
Sudan	Static	Static	Static	Static	-	-	-	-	-	Static	Static	Static	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Yemen	Static	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Static	-	-	-	-	0

Source: Millenium Development Goals Indicators, "All MDGs," available at http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed January 2015).

●   Achieved global target
◐   Achieved national target, but not global target
○   Expected to achieve global target by 2015

Static   One data point; cannot measure progress
N/A   Data is unavailable
-   Failed global target

Of the 55 states examined in this report, even the best performing country, Nepal, only met slightly better than half the MDG targets. Nepal is expected to meet 9 of the 15 targets by year-end, according to the latest available U.N. data.[50] Cambodia, the second-highest performer, has currently met eight of the targets.

Of the 17 highest-performing countries, 10 had achieved middle-income status by January 2015, the time this report was prepared.

Thirty-seven countries achieved only 1 or 2 of the 15 total targets or were so incomplete in official U.N. data that it was impossible to determine their progress. The average result of the 55 countries was to meet two targets, slightly better than 13 percent of the total.

The most commonly met targets, in order of likelihood of being met, were: eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education; halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and reducing the mortality rate by two-thirds for children younger than age 5.

The least likely targets to be met were: achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reversing the loss of environmental resources; and achieving by 2010 universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it. However, since the targets are incredibly broad, poorly defined, and poorly measured it is unsurprising that the selected countries struggled to achieve few—if any—targets. In terms of the Sustainable Development Goals, sharply drawn, realistic, and measurable targets are far more likely to drive actual progress.

Interestingly, of the 23 lowest-performing/lack of data countries, 9 were least-developed countries and 14 were middle-income countries, underscoring the point that fragility and conflict are not purely a low-income country problem.

Relative progress

After looking at the basic record of fragile states on the MDGs, we turned to additional questions. How did fragile and conflict-affected states do on the MDGs relative to each other? Further, even if a fragile country did not meet an MDG target, did it experience strong absolute progress? The research first tracked

country-level progress on 10 representative MDG targets, noting which countries achieved the largest gains and deteriorations on a given target. The report then compared this MDG progress data to external factors to uncover which criteria were most associated with progress on the MDGs in the specific context of fragile and conflict-affected states.

Methodology

For the purposes of this analysis, we selected a basket of MDG goals, targets, and indicators that was broad, representative of the full MDG framework, relevant to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, and focused on children. The analysis examines the results of 55 states affected by conflict, fragility, or crisis across 10 targets and their associated indicators. These indicators represent seven of the eight goals. The targets and associated indicators included in this analysis are:

TABLE 7

Selected indicators for this analysis

	Target	Indicator
MDG 1.1	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	Population below $1.25 per day, or purchasing power parity percentage
MDG 1.5	Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	Employment-to-population ratio, both sexes, percentage
MDG 1.8	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	Children under age 5 moderately or severely underweight, percentage
MDG 2.1	Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere—boys and girls alike—will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	Total net enrollment ratio in primary education, both sexes
MDG 3.1	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	Ratio of girls to boys in primary education, using the gender parity index in primary level enrollment
MDG 4.1	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	The children younger than age 5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births
MDG 6.1	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	People living with HIV, 15–49 years old, percentage
MDG 7.8	Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	Proportion of the population using improved drinking water sources, total

Source: United Nations Development Programme, "The Millennium Development Goals: Eight Goals for 2015," available at http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html (last accessed May 2015).

We compared progress on these 10 targets and indicators across our cohort of 55 fragile and conflict-affected countries, using the time period 2000 to 2013. All MDG data for the 55 countries is from the official U.N. MDG database.[51] Additional data around these targets and indicators are available through other U.N. sources and non-U.N. entities; however, this analysis only uses the official database for purposes of consistency and standardization. Data produced by the World Bank and OECD are often at considerable variance from these figures and from each other.

Our analysis explores individual country-level progress—or lack thereof—on MDG indicators irrespective of MDG global target levels. We use the country-year as the unit of analysis and track absolute MDG progress using 2000 data as the baseline. In other words, this analysis compares the progress of fragile and conflict-affected states regardless of country income and development levels. The difference between tracking absolute rather than relative progress is an important distinction, and countries starting from a lower baseline are often able to demonstrate greater absolute progress.

Similar to how the forthcoming SDGs will operate, this analysis uses a 15-year time period, beginning the clock on progress in 2000. The common variable among these 55 countries is their "fragile and conflict-affected distinction" at some point during the 2000–2013 time period.[52] Better progress on the MDGs by nonfragile countries as compared to fragile and conflict-affected states is well documented. The purpose of this analysis is to compare fragile and conflict-affected states to one another, exploring the differentiated experience of these countries with the MDGs and which criteria might be associated with better performance on the MDGs.

Analysis

No uniform patterns emerged from the MDG track record of fragile and conflict-affected states from 2000 to 2013. No single country showed a comprehensive record of improvement or decline; as might be expected, individual targets offered individualized challenges. For instance, Malawi showed impressive gains in progress on halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and increasing the proportion of people with access to safe water and basic sanitation. But it was among the worst performers in enrolling children in primary school—actually showing a 1.7 percent

decline over the given time period.[53] Country examples such as these abound, reinforcing the need to understand the specific circumstances of a fragile state as the global development community works to see progress on the MDGs.

Broadly speaking, certain fragile and conflict-affected countries emerged as generally improving or generally regressing on the suite of 10 targets used in this analysis. When the absolute progress of the report's 55 countries is compared, four countries emerge as the most improved on the MDGs: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mali, and Nepal. Again, this analysis considers the very different starting points of each country so those countries that made higher achievements from a lower baseline will exhibit greater MDG progress than those countries that began the MDG period with stronger performance on the data. Those countries that exhibited the lowest rates of progress are: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Libya, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Uzbekistan.

Fragile and conflict-affected states experienced differentiated track records based on a given indicator. Table 6 offers a breakdown of the countries that exhibited the most and least improved levels of progress on the MDGs. However, it should be noted that all fragile and conflict-affected countries in the analysis showed improvement on MDG 4.1 to reduce child mortality rates. Thus the country showing the largest decline in this case is the one that made the lowest level of progress on the indicator. For the full results of each country's absolute progress on each target, see Appendix A.

It is also essential to note that countries in the least improved category did at least have data for these targets. In each case, there were significant numbers of countries that lacked data for these targets, and those countries may actually have been the least improved in this category—although it is impossible to determine. Therefore, the least improved countries are best understood as countries that measured the targets but made the least absolute progress.

As shown in Table 8, progress or decline on the MDGs by fragile and conflict-affected states is not limited to a given region or income bracket. This cohort of countries fits no easy pattern of development. External assistance and mechanisms from international donors must be differentiated and tailored to meet the specific contexts of fragile and conflict-affected states.

Most and least improved countries by Millenium Development Goal indicator

MDG	Most improved	Least improved
1.1: Percent of the population below $1.25 purchasing power parity per day	Tajikistan	Madagascar
1.5: Percent of the employment-to-population ratio	Zimbabwe	Bangladesh
1.8: Percent of underweight children under 5 years old	Nepal	Somalia
2.1: Total net enrolment ratio in primary education	Burundi	Tonga
3.1: Ration of Gender Parity Index in primary level enrolment	Nepal	Angola
4.1: Mortality rate for children under five years old, per 1,000 live births	Malawi	Bosnia and Herzegovina
5.1: Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	Sierra Leone	Côte d'Ivoire
5.6: Percent of unmet need for family planning	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Timor-Leste
6.1: Percent of people living with HIV, ages 15 to 49	Zimbabwe	Equatorial Guinea
7.8: Percent of population using improved drinking water sources	Afghanistan	West Bank and Gaza

Source: Authors' calculations based on U.N. Millennium Development Goals data, available at http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed April 2015).

With that said, progress on certain MDG targets is closely tied in the context of fragile and conflict-affected states. As Table 9 indicates, the MDG track record of the 55 countries points out critical areas in which efforts to make progress on one target have spillover effects on another target. The highlighted correlations point to MDG targets that show a strong association in progress or decline.

As might be expected, the track record of fragile and conflict-affected states on MDG 1.1 to reduce the proportion of the population living below $1.25 per day is strongly associated with multiple other MDG targets. If a fragile country makes progress in reducing its extreme poverty level, it might also expect to see reductions in child mortality rates, maternal mortality rates, and unmet need for family planning, as well as an increase in the proportion of the population with access to safe water and basic sanitation. These associations would seem to underpin and support the focus on ending extreme poverty in the post-2015 agenda as particularly useful in the case of fragile and conflict-affected states.

TABLE 9

Millenium Development Goal track record correlation matrix

Correlation matrix of paired correlations based on MDG data from the 55 fragile and conflict-affected states

	MDG 1.1	MDG 1.5	MDG 1.8	MDG 2.1	MDG 3.1	MDG 4.1	MDG 5.1	MDG 5.6	MDG 6.1	MDG 7.8
MDG 1.1	1.0000									
MDG 1.5	0.4466	1.0000								
MDG 1.8	0.4654	0.6108	1.0000							
MDG 2.1	-0.3432	0.1434	-0.3860	1.0000						
MDG 3.1	-0.1743	0.0802	-0.2999	0.5982	1.0000					
MDG 4.1	0.6103	0.3934	0.3089	-0.5010	-0.6421	1.0000				
MDG 5.1	0.6602	0.3481	0.3271	-0.5817	-0.5495	0.8785	1.0000			
MDG 5.6	0.7721	0.4149	-0.0120	-0.1040	-0.2823	0.3213	0.3220	1.0000		
MDG 6.1	0.2784	0.2948	-0.3507	0.0595	0.1418	0.1526	0.1610	-0.0444	1.0000	
MDG 7.8	-0.6022	-0.4086	-0.3639	0.2701	0.4803	-0.6534	-0.5923	-0.3722	0.1007	1.0000

Notes: Highlighted cells indicate that improvement on one MDG correlates to improvement in the paired MDG. The correlation matrix uses pairwise correlations based on MDG data from the 55 fragile and conflict-affected states. A score of 0 indicates no correlation, a score of 1 indicates perfect positive correlation, and a score of -1 indicates perfect inverse correlation.

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Millennium Development Goals Indicators, "All MDGs," available at http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed March 2015).

Not surprisingly, the highest association of MDG progress by fragile and conflict-affected states is exhibited between reductions in child mortality rates and maternal mortality rates. Progress on child mortality rates is also particularly associated with an increase in the proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Highlighting these associations in MDG progress offers areas of potential focus that might carry exponential effect in the cases of fragile and conflict-affected countries.

The data abyss

Measuring and monitoring progress is a critical element of the MDGs, and nowhere do we see a greater gulf between the ideal and the reality than in fragile and conflict-affected states. Some indicators—such as child mortality, maternal mortality, incidence of HIV/AIDS, and availability of safe water and basic sanitation—exhibited relatively high data availability with regard to both country coverage and yearly consistency. However, other indicators fell woefully short.

Official data are especially lacking for fragile and conflict-affected states on MDG 1.1 to reduce the percentage of the population living below $1.25 per day. With the focus of ending extreme poverty as a cornerstone of the upcoming post-2015

sustainable development agenda, this dearth of data presents a serious challenge. As indicated in Table 8, the U.N. official MDG database recorded two or more data points for only 19 of the 55 countries used in this report. Eighteen of the countries had only a single poverty data point between 2000 to 2013, and another 18 countries alarmingly had no data or simply were not included in the database. Similar stories unfold for indicators around employment, MDG 1.5, and universal access to reproductive health, MDG 5.6. Progress is especially hard to measure in fragile countries.

TABLE 10

Data availability for 55 fragile and conflict-affected states on 10 Millenium Development Goal indicators, 2000–2013

MDG	1.1	1.5	1.8	2.1	3.1	4.1	5.1	5.6	6.1	7.8
At least 2 data points	19	15	41	40	49	54	51	20	38	53
One data point	18	15	10	2	2	0	0	24	0	0
No data	1	24	3	12	3	0	3	10	16	1
Country not included in indicator series	17	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Millennium Development Goals Indicators, "All MDGs," available at http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed March 2015).

Calls for a so-called data revolution as a part of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda are especially critical in fragile and conflict-affected countries, but it is clear that this revolution will start from a scant baseline in these countries. At a minimum, this MDG information will assist countries and international donors in better targeting their efforts to promote development. However, data availability and coverage could also indicate a sharper focus and stronger efforts and could prove critical in everything from assessing fragility to boosting foreign direct investment to making development programs more effective. In many ways, the basic understanding of the conditions on the ground in conflict-affected and fragile states remains an abyss.

It seems no coincidence that MDG 4.1, the target to reduce child mortality rates, was the only indicator on which every country showed progress and for which every country had at least two data points—excluding Kosovo, which is not included in the official U.N. database. The range of decline in the child mortality rate was between a decrease of 106.3 per 1,000 births and a decrease of 2.6 lives per 1,000 births. This experience would seem to support the long-held notion that one counts what is measured and measures what is counted.

Thus the push for more complete and consistent data around the MDGs and forthcoming SDGs should not simply be a call from academic researchers but a rallying point for policymakers and development professionals in their efforts to realize real progress within their countries. Conversely, if policymakers fail to measure these basic development indicators in conflict-affected and fragile states, they will implicitly send the message that they think these countries' progress is unimportant, unachievable, or both.

Other criteria associated with MDG progress in fragile and conflict-affected states

Using the Millennium Development Goal track record of selected fragile and conflict-affected states, this report also explores what conditions and factors are associated with progress or decline on the suite of 10 MDG targets and indicators. While we cannot pinpoint causality, a comparison of official U.N. MDG data against data around a number of fragility-specific factors does highlight certain areas for greater development emphasis and further research.

We utilized a series of additional factors that fall broadly into three categories: governance, economy, and resource flows. While certainly not exhaustive, these conditions were generally agreed to have some impact on the development landscape of a given country, whether conflict-affected or not. Other useful points to consider in later research might include information on inequality, relative dependence on natural-resource wealth, and relative economic diversification. The additional factors and their measures used in this study include:

- Governance

  - Democracy, as measured by the Polity2 score of the Polity IV Dataset[54]
  - Corruption, as measured by the Worldwide Governance Indicators' Control of Corruption Estimate
  - Civil liberties, as measured by Freedom House's Freedom in the World: Civil Liberties Aggregate Score
  - Political liberties, as measured by Freedom House's Freedom in the World: Political Rights Aggregate Score

- Economy

  - Income, as measured by gross national income, or GNI, per capita, constant with 2005 U.S. dollars in World Bank data

- Economic growth, as measured by gross domestic product, or GDP, growth as an annual percentage in World Bank data
- Net trade, as measured by net trade in goods and services according to the balance of payments in current U.S. dollars in World Bank data
- Population growth, as measured by population growth as an annual percentage in World Bank data

- Resource flows

  - Net official development assistance, or ODA, as measured by net ODA received, in constant 2011 U.S. dollars, according to World Bank data
  - Domestic resources, as measured by revenue—excluding grants—as a percentage of GDP, according to International Monetary Fund, or IMF, data
  - Private investment, as measured by net foreign direct investment in the balance of payments in current U.S. dollars in World Bank data
  - Remittances, as measured by received personal remittances in current U.S. dollars, according to World Bank data
  - Social safety nets, as measured by the percent covered by all social assistance, according to World Bank data

We compared 2000–2013 data on the above 13 factors to MDG progress data on our cohort of fragile and conflict-affected countries using regression analysis and pairwise correlation matrices.[55] Broadly speaking, across all 10 MDG targets and associated indicators, the incidence of corruption and levels of population growth proved the factors most associated with MDG performance by fragile and conflict-affected states.

The relationship between corruption and development has been well-documented, and this report adds further evidence to the theory that increased levels of corruption likely depress levels of development and/or thrive where development levels are low. In the case of fragile and conflict-affected states, corruption levels especially exhibit a significant relationship to MDG track records on extreme poverty, the level of malnourished children, the ratio of girls to boys in primary school, child mortality rates, maternal mortality rates, and the percentage of the population with access to safe water and basic sanitation—MDGs 1.1, 1.8, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, and 7.8, respectively. As the figures below indicate, as the perceived level of corruption falls in a given country, development outcomes generally improve.

FIGURE 1

Corruption level to child mortality in Liberia, 2000–2013
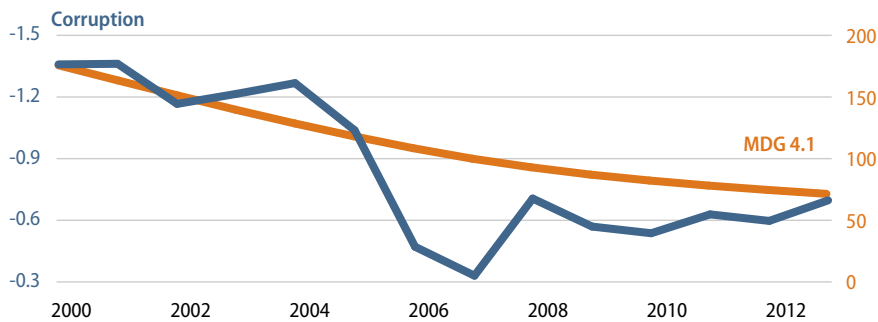
Corruption

MDG 4.1

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Millennium Development Goals Indicators, "All MDGs," available at http://mdgs.un-.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed March 2015).

FIGURE 2

Corruption level to maternal mortality in Afghanistan, 2000–2013
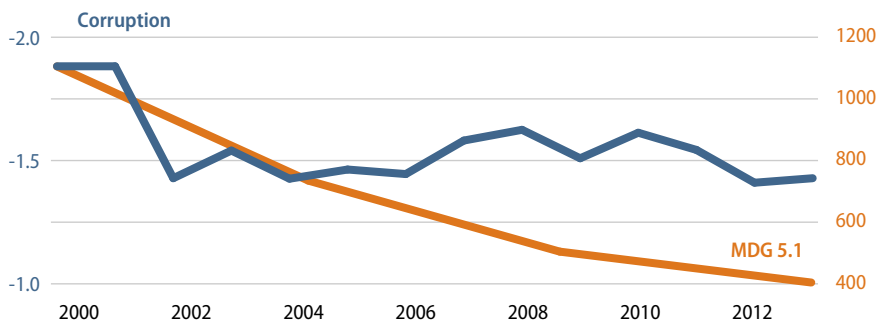
Corruption

MDG 5.1

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Millennium Development Goals Indicators, "All MDGs," available at http://mdgs.un-.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed March 2015).

The other factor with a seemingly significant relationship to MDG progress in fragile and conflict-affected states is population growth. For our cohort of countries across the suite of 10 MDG targets and indicators, a decline in population growth is associated with a general improvement in development outcomes. The relationship between population growth and development progress is particularly significant as relates to extreme-poverty levels, the ratio of girls to boys in primary school, child mortality rates, maternal mortality rates, and a population's access to safe water and basic sanitation—MDGs 1.1, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, and 7.8, respectively. Country examples below illustrate the relationship between population growth and MDG progress in fragile states.

FIGURE 3

Population growth level to child mortality in Cambodia, 2000–2013
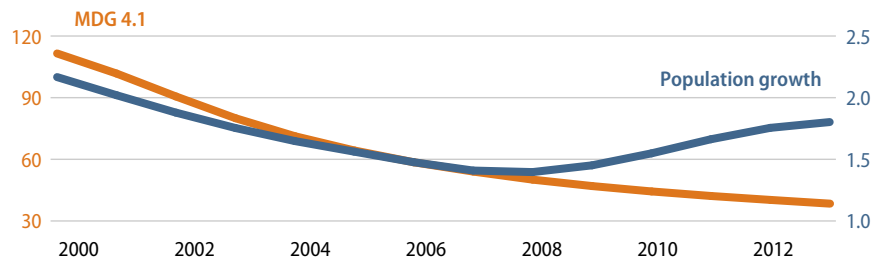
MDG 4.1

Population growth

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Millennium Development Goals Indicators, "All MDGs," available at http://mdgs.un-.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed March 2015).

FIGURE 4

Population growth level to improved access to water in Mali, 2000–2013
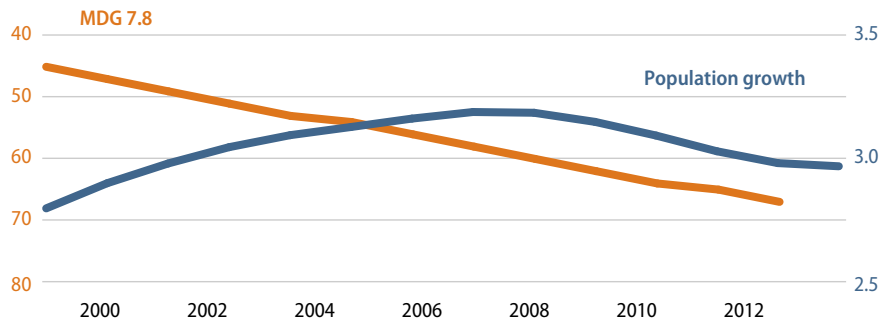
MDG 7.8

Population growth

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Millennium Development Goals Indicators, "All MDGs," available at http://mdgs.un-.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed March 2015).

The following list offers a breakdown on how various factors affected each of the 10 MDG targets and indicators. Those conditions, indicated below, proved to be highly significant in their relationship to the individual MDG indicator, **but please note that they do not indicate causality.**

• MDG 1.1: Extreme poverty

  – A decrease in **population growth** is associated with a decrease in extreme poverty
  – A decrease in **corruption** is associated with a decrease in extreme poverty
  – An increase in **democracy** is associated with an increase in extreme poverty

- MDG 1.5: Employment-to-population ratio

  − A decrease in **remittances** is associated with an increase in employment
  − An increase in **political rights** is associated with a decrease in employment
  − An increase in **civil liberties** is associated with an increase in employment
  − An increase in **democracy** is associated with an increase in employment

- MDG 1.8: Childhood hunger

  − A decrease in **remittances** is associated with a decrease in child hunger
  − A decrease in **corruption** is associated with a decrease in child hunger
  − An increase in **net trade** is associated with a decrease in child hunger

- MDG 2.1: Primary school enrollment

  − No condition proved uniformly significant in its relationship to progress on primary school enrollment levels

- MDG 3.1: Girl-to-boy ratio in primary school

  − A decrease in **corruption** is associated with an increase in the ratio of girls to boys in primary school
  − A decrease in **net ODA** is associated with an increase in the ratio of girls to boys in primary school
  − A decrease in **population growth** is associated with an increase in the ratio of girls to boys in primary school

- MDG 4.1: Child mortality rate

  − A decrease in **corruption** is associated with a decrease in child mortality rates
  − A decrease in **population growth** is associated with a decrease in child mortality rates
  − An increase in **income** is associated with an increase in child mortality rates

- MDG 5.1: Maternal mortality rates

  − A decrease in **population growth** is associated with a decrease in maternal mortality rates

- A decrease in **corruption** is associated with a decrease in maternal mortality rates
- An increase in **democracy** is associated with a decrease in maternal mortality rates

• MDG 5.6: Unmet need for family planning

- No condition proved uniformly significant in its relationship to meeting the need for family planning

• MDG 6.1: Incidence of HIV/AIDS

- Almost all conditions were associated with fragile state MDG progress on reversing the incidence of people living with HIV/AIDS

• MDG 7.8: Access to safe water

- A decrease in **corruption** is associated with an increase in the proportion of the population with access to improved water sources
- A decrease in **population growth** is associated with an increase in the proportion of the population with access to improved water sources
- An increase in **civil liberties** is associated with a decrease in the proportion of the population with access to improved water sources

While the level of resource flows generally did not offer a predictable indication of development outcomes, remittances flows exhibited the strongest association with development outcomes as measured by the MDG targets and indicators. Higher levels of remittances were associated with poor development outcomes. Further, as remittance flows decreased, countries generally experienced an improvement in MDG progress. This makes sense on a number of levels, and it is logical that populations would be more reliant on family and friends sending money home when the economic prospects at home are poor. This trend suggests that remittance flows may be a reasonably population-sensitive barometer of whether conditions are fundamentally improving in a country or not, and maintaining or increasing heavy reliance on remittances may prove a precursor to stalling progress toward stability.

The role of democracy in fragile states is important to examine closely. It may strike some as counterintuitive that extreme poverty increased as democracy increased in the countries in this study. However, it has long been recognized in the conflict field that a shift toward democracy often presents a period of unique

vulnerability for a fragile state with a real risk of slipping back toward conflict or more authoritarian systems, and better assisting countries during what is often a delicate transition period should be a priority. It is also clear that steady, long-term progress toward democracy and transparency can be an important step toward stronger institutions and reduced corruption, both of which have strong positive correlations with positive development outcomes.

Finally, and perhaps most surprisingly, economic factors played a far less significant role in success or failure on the MDGs by fragile and conflict-affected states. This is in no way to suggest that jobs and growth are unimportant, as they are indeed a bedrock of development and human progress. But in the special context of this cohort of countries, governance and demographics exhibited strong associations with MDG development outcomes. This evidence could point to a prioritized focus on governance institutions and social factors that more effectively complement economic factors and job creation in the specific cases of fragile and conflict-affected countries in the post-2015 sustainable development goals. It may also suggest that economic growth, trade, and investment are essentially lagging indicators that are reliant on progress with institutions, peace agreements, and corruption before they show steady improvement. It is also important to stress that many of the factors required for institutions to perform better require concerted action and political will by local actors, not simply an infusion of more or different kinds of aid.

Economic growth, trade, and investment are essentially lagging indicators that are reliant on progress with institutions, peace agreements, and corruption before they show steady improvement.

Case studies

To better explore how the factors around success or failure on the Millennium Development Goals played out in the real world, the authors examined a number of case studies from their findings in order to better illuminate the sometimes complex dynamics at play on the ground. By looking at practical case studies from countries that were high performers on the goals, we begin to see that interventions targeted at the most vulnerable population groups often yield important results and that even impressive development gains still remain at risk because of underlying or unresolved fragility.

Nepal

Among all 55 fragile states examined in this study, Nepal showed the largest degree of improvement for two of the MDG indicators during the 2000–2013 period: its percent of children younger than age 5 who are underweight and the Gender Parity Index in primary education enrollment. These are significant advancements and were achieved amid progress in other major development measures, such as life expectancy, educational attainment, and per-capita income.

All of this came as Nepal emerged from a 10-year Maoist insurgency that claimed more than 13,000 lives between 1996 to 2006 and a brief return to absolute monarchy. Nepal's 2006 peace deal brought a commitment by all parties to pursue democratic change. Implementation of the assorted peace agreements has been at times rocky—with an uptick in violent crime—but there has not been a return to full-scale violence. The economy has grown solidly, but not spectacularly, at between 3 percent and 6 percent annually since the end of the conflict.[56]

The United Nations Development Programme, or UNDP, helped to detail some of the reasons Nepal was able to secure such significant gains, at least by the standards of a fragile state.[57] The infrastructure of roads has expanded and upgraded considerably, the private sector's share in the Nepalese economy increased, and

TABLE 11

Nepal's progress toward the MDGs

Status as of 2013 at a glance

Goal	Likelihood of achievement				Status of supportive environment				
	Achieved	Likely	Potentially likely	Unlikely	Lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but improving	Weak
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger		●							
1(a) Reduce extreme poverty by half						●			
1(b) Full and productive employment for all			●				●		
1(c) Reduce extreme hunger		●			●				
2. Achieve universal primary education			●		●				
3. Gender equality and empowerment of women				●			●		

Note: Data was missing for the likelihood of achievement likelihood of achievement of 1(a).

Source: United Nations Development Programme in Nepal, "Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Progress Report 2013" (2013), available at http://www.np.undp.org/content/nepal/en/home/library/mdg/mdg-progress-report-2013.html.

there has been dramatic expansion of the already robust number of civil-society organizations helping them to become a major mobilizer of resources. The report also credits the continued decentralization of governance and the commitment to democratic norms as important factors. In addition to these, the dramatic increase in remittances by an ever-growing number of Nepalis working abroad has significantly affected family incomes. Fifty-six percent of Nepalese families receive remittances, accounting for at least 31 percent of overall family income and 22 percent of GDP.[58]

Nepal has repeatedly committed to achieving the MDGs, and the MDGs were adopted as a planning framework to inform the national development process. Also importantly, Nepal embraced a Poverty Monitoring and Analysis System to track its relative progress toward the MDGs.[59]

Several approaches by the government and local actors were also helpful, and there has been a countrywide effort to scale up community-based interventions with a record of high impact, including female community health volunteers, community-based integrated management of childhood illness, and the distribution of birth-preparedness packages.[60] The number of birthing centers has increased, as has the number of birth attendants. Development experts and government officials have worked hard to provide incentives to encourage girls and traditionally

marginalized groups to attend school, including through mapping pockets where children are not enrolled, home visits to encourage attendance, and village-level education campaigns. Although there are still concerns about retention rates and educational achievement, there are more girls in school in Nepal than ever before. This emphasis on reaching vulnerable groups is a clear pro-poor strategy and consistent with the notion that reaching traditionally marginalized groups will often require very deliberate planning and community-sensitive approaches.

But it is also important to avoid over-optimism in the Nepalese context. In many ways, the country should be doing well on development. It is sandwiched between two of the fastest growing major economies on the planet, China and India. The Maoist insurgency, although taking a significant toll in terms of lives, was not waged in such a fashion that it caused significant damage to the country's infrastructure. The country has long hosted a wide variety of nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, it has a longstanding U.N. development presence, and development operations continued to varying degrees even during the conflict. The country has always received generous international assistance, and while the figure has declined in recent years, Nepal is still reliant on foreign assistance for about one-quarter of its budget.[61]

However, the tensions around the Maoist insurgency and the increasing rise of caste, linguistic, and regional identity politics that have sprung up in its wake have not abated. The grand bargain of the peace deal—a new constitution—has yet to reach agreement almost seven years after the first election to establish a Constituent Assembly to draft such a constitution. More disturbing, the Maoists and others have openly suggested that they would consider a return to arms if social progress stalls. Troublingly in light of the findings of this study, Nepal's scores on control of corruption have not improved from the end of the insurgency and have indeed slid backward since 2000. In short, Nepal is both a useful case study and a potential cautionary tale and, like many countries trying to emerge from conflict, its fragility remains more acute than a quick glimpse might indicate.

That fragility was painfully underscored by the April and May 2015 earthquakes that hit Nepal, killing thousands and causing considerable property damage. A history of conflict can leave countries more vulnerable and ill-prepared to respond to disasters, both natural and man-made.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan presents one of the more unusual development case studies in recent memory. For the purposes of this study, it demonstrated the largest improvement in the percentage of its population using improved drinking water sources of all 55 fragile and conflict-affected states examined during the 2000–2013 period.

Moreover, drinking water is far from the only area where Afghanistan has demonstrated major improvement during this period: expected years of schooling has quadrupled, life expectancy improved by more than 10 percent, and gross national income per capita has more than doubled.[62] The United Nations Children's Fund, or UNICEF, notes that under Taliban rule, fewer than 1 million Afghan children were enrolled in school, but that number had climbed to 8 million by 2011.[63] Many of those new enrollees are girls who had traditionally been denied access to that opportunity.[64] Some 20,000 community health workers—half of whom are women—have been trained and deployed throughout the country, and the number of working health facilities has quadrupled.[65]

The Health Ministry is regarded as one of the country's strongest and most capable public institutions, with a record of firm leadership and relatively low corruption, and that has made a real difference in public health outcomes.

But several factors are crucial to take into consideration when examining Afghanistan as a case study and whether it has relevance to other fragile states trying to make progress on basic development measures. Afghanistan began the MDG period in incredibly rough shape, with a very low development floor after years of conflict and international neglect. An international pariah due to Taliban rule, the country lacked even basic enough data to be rated in the United Nation's annual Human Development Index. Conditions on the ground were some of the worst in the world, and having such a low development baseline has made the potential pace of change striking.

All of that changed with the coalition invasion of the country following the September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda attacks in Virginia and New York. Not only did Afghanistan suddenly host a major international military presence led by the United States, but the international community also opened an almost unprecedented spigot of financial assistance to the country. As the Congressional

Research Service noted in April 2015, "Through the end of FY2014, the United States provided about $100 billion to Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban, of which about 60% has been to equip and train the [Afghan National Security Forces, or] ANSF."[66]

To put the nonsecurity assistance to Afghanistan in perspective: Net official development assistance per capita in Afghanistan from 2000 to 2012 increased 3,114 percent and works out to be about $1,761 per Afghan.[67] To think of it in another way, and understanding that these were largely program funds not cash transfers, there is not an economy on earth that would not demonstrate substantial change if every single person in the country was given $1,761 in cash. The marked gains in access to drinking water make a great deal of sense considering that U.S. assistance in particular in Afghanistan has often had a heavy tilt toward infrastructure improvements. Sustainability of progress will be a central issue, and annual GDP growth, which hit an eye-popping 21 percent in 2009, according to the World Bank, plunged to 1.9 percent in 2013.[68]

In many ways, the most burning question is whether or not Afghans and Afghan institutions have ownership of the sweeping changes that have been brought to the country or if the tides will shift in a dramatically different direction as international forces, and funds, begin to draw down.

As one NGO representative working in Afghanistan noted, "The pro-poor policies that support the vulnerable groups, including children and women, are being developed by the government. However, these efforts have been largely because of the donor's push and pressure. The actual implementation of the policies however remains the main challenge."[69]

Some of the underlying indicators suggest that Afghanistan's progress is in danger of dissipating absent this influx of international support. In 2014, the country was ranked as among the 10 most corrupt in the world by Transparency International, and Afghanistan continues to face a series of challenges, including weak institutions, deep social divisions, and a lack of comparative advantages in the economic sector.

Save the Children ranked Afghanistan as the "worst place in the world to be a mother" in 2010 and 2011, even as it noted substantial improvements in education including the introduction of the Basic Package of Health Services program, trained midwives, and improved immunization coverage.[70] The 2010 Afghanistan Mortality Survey, implemented by the Afghan Public Health Institute, the

Ministry of Public Health, and the Central Statistics Organization, found that only one in five Afghan women were using modern-day methods of family planning and only one-third of babies were born in health facilities, with pregnancy-related deaths still one of the leading causes of female mortality in Afghanistan.[71] However, the country's population growth rate has slowed significantly.

Afghanistan has made remarkable progress over the past 13 years, and this progress has often come with a steep price tag. It will likely remain in the ranks of fragile countries for some years to come.

Cambodia

Cambodia stands out as the fragile state able to make the most significant progress across the range of MDG targets explored in this report. It also stands as a fascinating test case of whether rapid economic gains can effectively gloss over political fissures and weaknesses in governance.

Cambodia was able to achieve the MDG target of halving extreme poverty by 2009. According to Cambodian government reports, it has also achieved near universal primary school enrollment, achieved near gender parity in primary school enrollment, and made major gains in health. Efforts to deal with HIV/AIDS are particularly striking, and the World Bank notes, "As of 2011, nearly 90% of AIDS patients in Cambodia have access to antiretroviral treatment. This coverage rate is among the highest in the developing world."[72]

Clearly, dynamic economic growth has played a powerful role in moving the numbers in Cambodia. The government has embraced major economic reforms, and as UNDP notes, there has "been a focus on rapid growth in the industrial and service sectors, as the keys to employment creation and income generation, relying on the private sector as the true engine of growth, and an increase in agricultural production and productivity, especially in rice."[73] From 2003 to 2008, economic growth in Cambodia averaged 10 percent per year and reached as high as 13.3 percent in 2005.[74] Although down slightly, growth continues to be robust. As reported by the World Bank:

> Cambodia continues to enjoy robust growth, albeit at a slightly slower pace. Real growth in 2014 is estimated to have reached 7%. The garment sector, together with construction and services, in particular finance and real estate, continues to

propel growth. However, the 2015 and 2016 projection for economic growth is about 6.9%, as it confronts stronger competition in garment exports, continued weak agriculture sector growth, and softer growth in the tourism sector.[75]

The Cambodian government has targeted becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2030 and a developed country by 2050.[76] And, unlike a number of fast-growing economies in Asia, Cambodia has actually been able to reduce inequality, as measured through the Gini Index, as it has grown—although inequality obviously remains a concern.

But governance and corruption remain the elephant in the room. Transparency International rated Cambodia as the most corrupt country in Southeast Asia, and it ranked as the 156th worst nation for perceptions of corruption on the list of 175 countries examined by Transparency International in 2014.[77] Although officially a parliamentary democracy, the country is ranked as "not free" by Freedom House, and concerns about government repression and abuses are long-standing.[78] Cambodia has been a democracy in name, but never truly in practice. Prime Minister Hun Sen has been in power for 30 years, one of the longest current stints of political power in the world. After major gains by the opposition party in 2013, the Cambodia National Rescue Party, the government has cracked down on public protests and increasingly limited space for civil society and NGOs.

And despite the magnitude of its progress, just more than 10 percent of the country's population remains in absolute poverty, and many of those who have escaped absolute poverty in recent years are still close enough to that threshold that even small shocks could propel them back into extreme poverty. As the World Bank noted, "many of the poor—who were just below the poverty line in 2004—were able to move just above the poverty line in 2011," and vulnerable to the point where a bout of sickness, an accident, or a natural disaster could push them back into debt, landlessness, and falling victim to human rights violations.[79]

While there appear to have been modest improvements in governance and corruption in Cambodia in recent years, the country presents a familiar development quandary. Is it safer for countries to develop their economies first and open their political systems second? Or does doing so needlessly run the risk of an eventual social explosion that would badly erode economic gains? Obviously, this is not strictly an either-or proposition, and the international community will need to work with Cambodians to help determine how this deeply imperfect experiment in democracy can be guided toward a foundation of lasting stability and transpar-

ent, representative institutions. As much as we might wish for it, there is no easy answer in that regard, as the leaderships of countries such as China, Rwanda, and Cambodia are clearly banking on rapid economic growth and rising standards of living to blunt calls for political liberalization.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone presents an equally complex case. As the MDGs began in 2000, Sierra Leone was still in the throes of a brutal civil war that had become internationally notorious for its ferocious treatment of civilians. However, the eventual introduction of a peacekeeping force, a peace agreement, and efforts to hold perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity accountable for their actions allowed for far more rapid progress than many thought possible, particularly in the area of maternal mortality, where Sierra Leone showed the most improvement in our study between 2000 and 2013.

A UNICEF case study explored some of the dynamics of Sierra Leone's shifting approach to maternal mortality.[80] In Sierra Leone, maternal mortality peaked in 2000 with a disturbingly high 1,800 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births. Some of the factors behind the low utilization of health services in Sierra Leone included sub-standard facilities and equipment, underpaid and under-motivated health workers, a general lack of confidence in health services, and the price of health services—which was cited as the most important barrier.

As part of its 2008 poverty-reduction strategy, the government of Sierra Leone placed greater emphasis on maternal and child health and launched a Reproductive and Child Health Strategic Plan. In 2010, the government established the Free Healthcare Initiative for children younger than age five, as well as pregnant and lactating women. UNICEF cited dramatic improvements at health facilities as a result of the plan after just a single year: Maternal complications were dramatically reduced and maternal case fatalities dropped 61 percent.[81] The acceptance of modern family planning methods rose sharply, there was a 45 percent increase in the number of deliveries with skilled attendants, and the number of women coming back for post-delivery health check-ups increased by one-third.[82]

None of this would have been possible without increased government financing for health and the spillover impact of improved working conditions for health care workers and strengthened coordination and management of the country's health systems in general. But far more work still needs to be done. Approximately

50 percent of girls in Sierra Leone become pregnant before age 20, and Save the Children has ranked Sierra Leone in the bottom 10 countries of its Mothers' Index for the past eight years. Despite significant progress in improving health care, when compared to other countries, Sierra Leone continues to suffer some of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world. Save the Children estimates that 1 out of 24 women die during pregnancy or childbirth and 18 percent of children in Sierra Leone do not live beyond age 5.[83]

And the weaknesses of Sierra Leone's health care system were cast in sharp relief by the onset of the Ebola crisis in May 2014, which rapidly unraveled Sierra Leone's fragile progress. The viral outbreak killed more than 3,000 people, triggered a global health crisis, and stretched Sierra Leone's government to a near breaking point. Beyond the obvious toll in terms of lives lost, the World Bank estimates that Sierra Leone will lose about $1 billion out of its expected economic growth for 2015—an enormous sum for a low-income country trying to emerge from a legacy of conflict. The impact of Ebola across the economies of West Africa has been catastrophic.[84]

The recent challenges in Sierra Leon demonstrate yet again that fragile states remain vulnerable longer and to a wider variety of factors than they are often assumed to be.

Implications for the SDGs and conclusion

What does the experience of the Millennium Development Goals in conflict and fragile states tell us about the contours of the Sustainable Development Goals? The following are key takeaways:

SDGs do not reflect the reality of conflict-affected and fragile states

Looking at the limited progress of conflict-affected and fragile states in meeting the existing MDGs, it is apparent that an agenda of 17 goals and 169 targets would be very difficult to implement in countries struggling to meet their citizens' most basic needs. This approach to conflict-affected and fragile states is potentially problematic given that the majority of the world's extreme poor will reside in these states during the 2016–2030 period. While it is important to be ambitious, it is equally important to develop a framework that is implementable.

As the research articulated, many of the conflict-affected and fragile states lack effective data on even the most basic targets of the existing MDGs. Around one-third of the conflict-affected and fragile states over the past 15 years had no data on income poverty, unemployment, and the incidence of HIV/AIDS. Even finishing the work of the MDGs will require enormous mutual commitment from these developing countries and the rest of the world. In short, U.N. member states need to avoid designing an agenda that is largely divorced from the reality of ending extreme poverty in countries struggling with institutions, persistent threats of conflict, and significant lingering social tensions. Now is the time for conflict-affected and fragile states to make a clear and compelling case for a framework that works and resonates with their reality; an ambitious but achievable framework that can be funded, tracked, and delivered in every country for every citizen—in peace or in conflict.

Furthermore, in reference to calls by the g7+ to address the absence of governance in the MDGs, it will be important to include a standalone goal on good governance in the next framework. Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive

Around one-third of the conflict-affected and fragile states over the past 15 years had no data on income poverty, unemployment, and the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels, should be kept centrally in the framework as a universal goal to be achieved by fragile states, as well as through the strong support of the international community overall.

Extreme poverty is the right topline target

More positively, in all of the discussions on the emerging SDGs, ending extreme poverty has not only been the first target articulated, it has been viewed as the overarching ambition of an agenda that also integrates sustainability, finishing the job of the MDGs, and leaving no one behind. Recognizing that poverty is multidimensional, research from conflict-affected and fragile states over the past 15 years only underscores the power of raising incomes for the extreme poor in connection with progress in ensuring quality basic services in health, education, and other areas. Advancements in reducing extreme income poverty were strongly correlated with reducing infant and maternal mortality and improving access to basic sanitation. Targeting a reduction in extreme income poverty is the right approach to helping the poorest of the poor.

'Leave no one behind' is the correct strategy

The push to leave no one behind—the notion that special attention needs to be paid to reaching traditionally marginalized populations—is also crucial. These marginalized communities are particularly affected when they live in conflict-affected and fragile states, where discrimination can tend to be more extreme and even violent. More effectively connecting these populations to the social, economic, and political lives of their societies is the most effective means to help them climb out of extreme poverty and remain there. For this reason, it is essential that the SDGs include the principle of "no target met unless met for all social groups" along with guidance on how to operationalize it, including through the strengthening of data collection, disaggregating core indicators, and setting stepping stone equity targets.[85] Addressing the needs of traditionally marginalized populations would also go a long way in helping build peace and would address the disparate treatment of different populations based on their gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, or even geographic location—which is often the fault line for conflicts in the first place.

Institutions are crucial

As almost every major analysis of conflict-affected and fragile states over the past decade has indicated, bolstering the capability and effectiveness of institutions is crucial to ending conflict and promoting durable stability. It is no accident that corruption and weak governance were some of the factors most heavily correlated with fragile states failing to make progress against the specific targets examined in this report. If countries cannot govern, or are governed only as a means to exploit wealth, this will badly undermine hopes for development progress. The OECD observes, "If institution building and conflict reduction continue at their existing pace, by 2030 nearly half a billion people could remain below the USD $1.25 per day poverty line."[86] It is encouraging that the current version of the SDGs, thanks to the efforts of g7+ countries and others, includes a clear emphasis on effective governance—given that it will be daunting to advance development in conflict-affected and fragile states without grasping the nettle of institutions. The notion that countries can somehow work around bad governance has been often tried and rarely successful. But policymakers also need to acknowledge that building effective institutions is slow, hard, and often uneven work. There are no silver bullets. Equally importantly, the data from this study would seem to confirm another point well understood by experts on conflict: countries face particular turbulence and fragility as they try to transition to democracy, and new democracies are particularly vulnerable to slipping back toward conflict. This would seem to warrant more steadfast and predictable support for fragile, new democracies from the international community. The international community too often has fallen prey to thinking that democracies are about one successful election, rather than the enduring ability to govern and share power.

Understanding what the data tell us is important

As this report has already stressed, correlation is certainly not causation. That being said, this research provides a useful barometer to give a quick snapshot of whether or not a fragile country is likely headed in the right direction or not with regard to the targets discussed in this report. If a country has slowing population growth, is making progress on dealing with corruption, and is becoming less dependent on remittances, it is likely headed in a positive development direction more broadly. If it continues to rely heavily on remittances, has not made progress in providing access to family planning, and continues to have high rates of corruption or very weak governance scores, its ambition to achieve core development goals will likely remain unrealized.

The data gap is profound

One of the enduring takeaways from this research was the absolute paucity of data on basic human indicators in conflict-affected and fragile states. While many of the conversations around the SDGs have called for a data revolution to unleash the power of information on the development challenge, it is clear that the challenge in fragile states is really one of establishing some basic benchmarks of social and economic progress. The imperative for doing so is even more compelling when one considers the fact that the greatest progress on the MDGs in fragile states almost always came on those targets that countries measured. This is not to say that simply measuring something will automatically lead to substantial progress, but it is very difficult to make something a genuine priority when it is not being tracked. We argue strongly that there should be a major push to ensure that the basic set of indicators from the original MDGs are measured in every country, everywhere.

In looking at the track record of the MDGs in fragile states and pondering their future place within the evolving SDGs, it is striking how much work still needs to be done. The moment is ripe for a much broader exploration and reinvention of how the world tracks conflict and fragility and the mechanisms, facilities, and interventions in place to assist these countries. The widespread impression that the initial MDGs were very successful in reducing global poverty numbers is warranted, but it is important to understand that much of this progress was driven by historic economic progress in India and China—stable societies with relatively strong institutions and strong economic plans. Progress in these societies was in some ways the low-hanging fruit in the calculation.

The means of implementation are crucial

Achieving the aspiration of the SDGs to end extreme poverty within the next 15 years necessitates the far harder task of substantially improving living standards in countries beset by persistent fragility, violence, and unrest. Far more work needs to be done on the SDGs in the design of practical plans and means of implementation to help development work in these settings. Rhetorical commitment alone will be insufficient. The World Bank's own evaluations acknowledge that many of its country assistance strategies are simply not grounded in the reality of work in conflict-affected and fragile states, and that the World Bank as an institution lacks a realistic framework for promoting inclusive growth and jobs in such settings.[87]

Much the same could be said of many other bilateral and multilateral donors. All of this is even more troubling given that resource flows to conflict-affected and fragile states are under considerable pressure, with the OECD noting that official development assistance to fragile states fell by 2.4 percent in 2011 and is expected to shrink further.[88]

Now is the right moment to consider if special mechanisms, such as risk insurance or first-loss guarantees, could be effectively employed to attract private investment in such states, and if stronger accountability mechanisms could ensure that multinationals are meeting their fair tax burden in developing countries. There has been much discussion of guaranteeing that a set percentage of official development assistance is targeted at least developed countries within the SDGs. While not all fragile states are in the least-developed country category and not all least-developed countries are fragile, the least developed fragile states usually have few other sources of financing than development assistance and should be seriously considered. This report's analysis also suggests that funding for fragile states needs to be more predictable, maintained over a longer period of time, emphasize long-term structural reforms, and maintain awareness of and nimbleness within fluid political climates that ultimately aids or deters development progress. It is essential to note that assistance levels to fragile states is disparate; currently, half of the official development assistance to fragile states is directed at just seven countries, and an increasing amount of this assistance taking the form of loans rather than grants.[89] It is also imperative that there is a special emphasis on programs reaching children and youth. Currently a youth bulge is occurring throughout fragile states - the OECD estimates that close to 40 percent of people living in fragile states are younger than age 15–which can present another challenge at stability.[90]

Perhaps more than anything, the world and the leaders of these countries—and of all countries—need to give their own citizens the tools they need to advance their own development: fundamental human rights, access to basic social and financial services, say in their own governance, and equal treatment regardless of gender, race, religion, caste, or class. It is no accident that these foundational underpinnings of development are also the foundational underpinnings of long-term peace and stability.

Now is the right moment.

Appendix: Analysis data sources and methodology

This report relies on data extracted from the official U.N. Millennium Development Goal database.[91] Data were extracted in December 2014. To examine the relative progress of the 55 countries included in the analysis, the report used available MDG data from 2000 to 2013. The authors used MDG data for 10 indicators as shown in Table 7 on page 34.

First, the analysis compared the absolute progress of each country on each of the 10 MDG indicators. Irrespective of official U.N. MDG targets—such as reducing child mortality by two-thirds—the analysis simply compared the levels of progress achieved by each of the 55 countries over the time period.

The authors determined absolute progress levels by taking the difference in the earliest available data point, ideally 2000, and comparing it to the latest available data point, ideally 2013. In cases where no or only one data point existed, we could not record progress levels for a given country on a given indicator. Table A1 shows the absolute progress for each fragile country on each of the 10 indicators.

The authors used this first cut to establish which fragile countries made the largest gains in MDG progress over the given period. The analysis treated each country's own baseline data as the starting point so those countries that had the biggest gains to be achieved often showed the greatest progress. Likewise, those countries that began the study's time period in 2000 already showing achievement on the MDGs registered lower gains in MDG progress relative to other fragile and conflict-affected countries.

Next, the study compared the MDG progress results using the country cohort to explore how the 10 indicators were correlated with each other in the context of fragile states. As shown in Table 9, the authors produced a correlation matrix using pairwise correlations based on MDG indicator data from the 55 fragile and conflict-affected states. The correlation matrix offers an indication of the direction and degree of correlation for progress on the 10 indicators in the case of conflict countries.

Millenium Development Goal absolute progress, 2000–2013

Country	MDG 1.1	MDG 1.5	MDG 1.8	MDG 2.1	MDG 3.1	MDG 4.1	MDG 5.1	MDG 5.6	MDG 6.1	MDG 7.8
Afghanistan	N/A	N/A	Static	N/A	0.27	-38.3	-700	N/A	0	42
Angola	-10.9	N/A	Static	-0.1	-0.22	-49.3	-640	N/A	0.6	8
Bangladesh	-15.3	-13.7	-5.5	0.9	0.01	-47	-170	-4.7	0	9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	2	-2.7	N/A	N/A	-2.6	-3	Static	N/A	2
Burma	N/A	N/A	-7.5	N/A	0.01	-29	-160	Static	-0.2	19
Burundi	Static	N/A	-9.8	53.3	0.2	-66	-260	3.4	-2	3
Cambodia	-19.1	7.7	-10.5	6.2	0.07	-72.6	-370	-16.1	-0.7	25
Cameroon	-1.2	9.3	0	9.4	0.03	-56.7	-150	3	-0.6	12
Central African Republic	0.4	N/A	1.7	22.6	0.06	-34.9	-320	Static	N/A	6
Chad	Static	N/A	0.9	12.1	0.15	-43.2	-520	7.7	-1.1	6
Comoros	Static	N/A	-9.7	6.9	0.06	-23.4	-130	N/A	N/A	3
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Static	Static	-9.4	N/A	0.09	-57.4	-370	-2.7	-0.4	2
Republic of the Congo	Static	Static	-0.2	38.9	0.15	-72.3	-200	-1.3	-2.1	6
Côte d'Ivoire	0.5	N/A	-2.6	2.8	0.1	-46.1	50	Static	-3.4	2
Djibouti	Static	N/A	4.4	33.8	0.14	-31.1	-130	N/A	-0.9	10
East Timor	N/A	-12.2	4.7	20.4	0.03	-52	-410	27.7	N/A	16
Equatorial Guinea	N/A	N/A	-5.1	-6.1	0.16	-46.6	-500	Static	2.9	0
Eritrea	N/A	N/A	Static	0.7	0	-39.4	-290	Static	-1.5	6
Gambia	Static	N/A	2	0.9	0.17	-45.2	-150	Static	0.4	7
Georgia	-1.3	-3.3	-1.2	7.8	0.02	-22.6	-19	-11.5	0.2	10
Guinea	-13	Static	-12.8	30.3	0.17	-69.5	-300	Static	0.5	12
Guinea-Bissau	Static	N/A	-3.8	21.4	0.26	-56.9	-280	N/A	1.5	22
Haiti	Static	N/A	-2.5	N/A	N/A	-31.6	-130	-4.3	-0.9	1
Iraq	Static	Static	-4.4	3.8	0.01	-10.6	-4	Static	N/A	5
Kenya	Static	Static	-1.1	17	-0.01	-40.2	-170	-1.8	-2.8	10
Kiribati	N/A	Static	Static	N/A	0.07	-12.8	-70	Static	N/A	8
Kosovo	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lao People's Democratic Republic	-10.1	Static	-4.8	21	0.1	-46	-380	-19.6	0.2	27
Liberia	Static	-7.5	-7.9	5.8	0.18	-104.1	-460	Static	-1.3	14
Libya	N/A	N/A	Static	N/A	-0.06	-13.9	-6	Static	N/A	0
Madagascar	5	1.8	Static	12.2	0.03	-54.6	-110	-5.5	-0.2	12
Malawi	-12.3	Static	-7.7	-1.7	0.07	-106.3	-240	-3.7	-5	23

Country	MDG 1.1	MDG 1.5	MDG 1.8	MDG 2.1	MDG 3.1	MDG 4.1	MDG 5.1	MDG 5.6	MDG 6.1	MDG 7.8
Mali	-10.8	Static	-11.2	17.4	0.13	-97.2	-310	-2	-0.7	22
Marshall Islands	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.7	0.06	-4	N/A	Static	N/A	2
Micronesia	Static	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.03	-16.7	-34	N/A	N/A	-1
Nepal	-28.3	Static	-13.9	21.3	0.3	-42.2	-240	-0.3	-0.1	11
Nigeria	4.9	Static	-2.8	0.8	0.11	-70.3	-390	1.4	-0.2	9
Pakistan	-14.9	3.3	-0.4	16.3	0.19	-27.1	-110	-12.9	0	3
Papua New Guinea	N/A	N/A	9.1	Static	0.05	-17	-120	Static	-0.2	5
São Tomé and Príncipe	Static	Static	4.3	2.5	0.02	-38.3	-90	Static	0.1	19
Sierra Leone	-1.7	-5.7	-3.6	N/A	0.07	-70.9	-1100	-1	0.6	13
Solomon Islands	N/A	N/A	Static	5.1	0.06	-4.3	-80	Static	N/A	1
Somalia	N/A	N/A	10	N/A	Static	-28	-350	N/A	-0.2	9
South Sudan	N/A	N/A	-4.9	Static	Static	-83.3	-470	Static	-0.3	0
Sudan	Static	N/A	Static	N/A	N/A	-31.2	-180	Static	N/A	N/A
Syria	Static	-12.3	4.1	2.2	0.04	-8.7	-26	Static	N/A	2
Tajikistan	-28.8	7.5	-2.8	4.4	0.05	-45.8	-45	Static	0.2	12
Togo	-10.5	Static	-5.8	7.8	0.14	-37.1	-130	Static	-1.5	7
Tonga	N/A	N/A	N/A	-9.2	0.04	-5.8	29	N/A	N/A	0
Tuvalu	N/A	Static	Static	N/A	-0.09	-13.3	N/A	Static	N/A	4
Uzbekistan	N/A	N/A	-2.7	-1.2	-0.03	-21.4	-12	N/A	-0.1	-2
Vanuatu	N/A	Static	Static	-0.1	0.02	-6.2	-34	N/A	N/A	15
West Bank and Gaza	Static	-5.8	1.5	0.2	-0.01	-8.4	N/A	Static	N/A	-10
Yemen	Static	-1	-7.6	20.8	0.21	-44.4	-100	Static	0	-5
Zimbabwe	N/A	16.7	-3.9	-2	0.02	-14.1	-210	-0.9	-11	0

Notes: "N/A" indicates no data was available for a country on a given indicator from 2000–2013. "Static" indicates only one data point was available.

Source: Authors' calculations based on U.N. Millennium Development Goal data, available at http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed February 2015)

This report utilized country-year MDG data in multivariate regression analysis to highlight the relationship between MDG progress in fragile and conflict-affected countries and certain other criteria. The authors regressed available country-year data for each indicator against country-year data for 13 different criteria representing governance, economic, and resource flow trends in each of the countries. See page 41 for a list of criteria and indicator sources.

The authors specified a number of models for econometric analysis in this study. Using regression analysis, the authors analyzed country-year indicator data for each indicator against all 13 criteria and thematic bucket of criteria. This report only shows results with a 0.01 significance level and an impactful coefficient.

Moreover, the authors undertook sensitivity analysis, running regression analysis with each of the criteria omitted for each set of indicator data. The regression tables below offer examples of the results from this stream of analysis.

TABLE A2

Effect of selected criteria on Millennium Development Goal 4.1 and 7.8

	Progress on 4.1	Progress on 7.8
Corruption	-38.18 ***	31.13***
	(5.4)	(2.73)
Population growth	23.44***	
	(2.48)	
Social assistance coverage	-0.21*	-0.013
	(0.31)	(0.127)
Revenue of GDP	1.02***	-0.009
	(0.22)	(0.078)
Gross national income, or GNI, per capita	-0.006	
	(0.003)	
Gross domestic product, or GDP, growth	-0.01	-0.47**
	(0.27)	(0.20)
Freedom in the World civil liberties		-0.69***
		(0.20)
Polity IV Polity 2 score		0.33
		(0.25)
Observations	300	235
Countries	54	53
R-squared	0.38	0.43

Notes: Each column represents a separate regression. Dependent variables are listed in the top row. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** indicates significance at the 1 percent level.

Source: Authors' calculations based on U.N. Millennium Development Goal data, available at http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (last accessed February 2015)

Finally, the authors explored the relationship between MDG indicator progress and the 13 selected criteria through a pairwise correlation matrix. A matrix was produced for each of the 10 indicators, which served to further confirm the resulting relationships from the multivariate regression analysis.[92]

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