



Environmental Sustainability and Gender Equality

Poverty has a woman's face, and the recent climate change, energy and food crises, all exacerbated by the financial and economic crisis, have made this goal come to the forefront as a major area of work to effectively eradicate poverty and achieve not only sustainability but also gender equality. Rural women suffer the most from environmental degradation. Societies where women are more equal stand a much greater chance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015. Every goal is related to the empowerment of women.

MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability



Targets

1. Integrate principles of sustainable dev. into country policies, and reverse loss of environmental resources
2. Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
3. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
4. Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Quick Facts

- * 884 million people worldwide still do not have access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion people lack access to basic sanitation services, such as toilets or latrines.
- * Searching for privacy to defecate exposes women to ridicule, sexual harassment, and rape.
- * The world has missed the 2010 target for biodiversity conservation, with potentially grave circumstances, including the loss of indigenous plants and herbs used by women leaders and elders for healing.



feminist task force

The Feminist Task Force (FTF) was launched in 2005 when leaders of international women’s rights groups gathered in New York City for the UN Commission on the Status of Women annual meetings. The global launch marked the start of a new alliance aimed at ending poverty among women and putting gender equality at the core of poverty eradication. Established under the umbrella of the **Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)** the Feminist Task Force focuses on raising awareness around women’s issues and calling for “**Gender Equality to End Poverty**”.

Ten years ago, when the Millennium Declaration outlined the eight MDGs, many women’s organizations viewed them as “minimalist development goals”; as simply watered-down commitments of the internationally agreed development goals of the UN conferences of the 1990’s. Since then, reports indicate mixed progress, with the new crises worsening the feminization of poverty.

Now, with only five years left until the 2015 deadline to achieve the MDGs, the UN MDG 2010 Review Summit in September provides an opportunity to critique the progress of governments in fulfilling the MDGs, and also offers women’s organizations the time to emphasize once again the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women in achieving all the MDGs and sustainable human development.

Women’s groups will critically assess how the MDGs have or have not served women, and examine the impact on women of interconnected crises – financial/economic, climate change, food, maternal mortality – and how they have exacerbated living conditions for women and thrown millions back into poverty.

