

For this issue of Social Watch, four sets of tables have been prepared to show follow-up of government commitments made at the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing).

This appendix is structured in five sections. The first indicates the sources of data and the general methodology used in following up on commitments. The second section contains overall comments on the tables referring to commitments and some clarifications on specific aspects of the methodology used. The third section refers to the tables on development assistance and allocation of social spending. Since the focus of this issue of Social Watch is equity, the fourth section explains and comments on equity-related issues. Finally, the fifth section provides details on the Chart of Progress towards achieving the commitments.

Data handling, use of various sources, and the methodological criteria applied to process indices and rankings involve a variety of complex decisions that may be controversial.

Although there have not been any substantial changes since the first issue of Social Watch, the current issue is enriched by contributions, suggestions and agreements made at a workshop on indicators for social development commitments. This workshop was organised by the Third World Institute and held in Montevideo in August 1997, with the participation of specialists from United Nations, UNICEF, NOVIB and the social science team of the Social Watch secretariat. Most of the differences in methodology used in the 1998 report *vis-à-vis* preceding issues reflect the incorporation of suggestions and contributions (among which we should acknowledge those sent from New York by the United Nations Development Programme) regarding the treatment of sources, selection of indices, and re-scaling and presentation of information. However, ultimate responsibility for the opinions, decisions and possible errors rests with the Social Watch secretariat and not with the workshop participants or their institutions.

Among the difficulties encountered in data management, we should highlight the diversity of dates of the information and the considerable discrepancies among statistics provided for the same

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years by different sources. The criteria adopted to handle these difficulties were as follows: to use the most recent source provided by any of the best known international organisations;¹ to consider that the data provided was reliable, unless it presented surprises that did not respond to various known causes; to choose the source that provided the greatest span of countries when tables having the same date were available. Since much of the available data refers to a period (for example 1990–94) and not to a single year, the recommendation to center information at the mid-point (in this example, 1992) to calculate progress indices was followed.

To calculate indices of progress, the goals specified in each of the commitments were used. In those cases where the goal was not specified as a numerical value, criteria were used that are set out in the second section for each of the corresponding cases. In the case of Commitment 3 (referring to child mortality), we assumed the commitment to be reduction to one-third of the 1990 level, and to 50 per 1,000 in the case of infants under one, and to 70 per 1,000 for children under five.

Indices of progress involve the adoption of a benchmark with respect to which progress is assessed. Each of the indicators evolve differently, forcing us to adopt a specific benchmark evolution. This was provided either by specialised bodies, as in the case of population growth, or in the absence thereof, was inferred on the basis of some treatment, such as time series analysis, provided that sufficient data were available. There is no accepted evolutionary model, nor are the required number of observations available, to make an approximation using the second alternative, as was done for most of the indicators associated with the commitments.

Faced with this situation and the need to design some way of assessing progress toward achievement of goals, a decision was made to apply a simple, uniform evolutionary model that would be as «loose» as possible. Therefore, the findings derived from the methodology adopted do not seek to provide an exhaustive or categorical assessment, but rather an approximation or indicative guide. Whenever possible for the follow-up of commitments, a simple and uniform procedure was prepared: an index of fulfill-

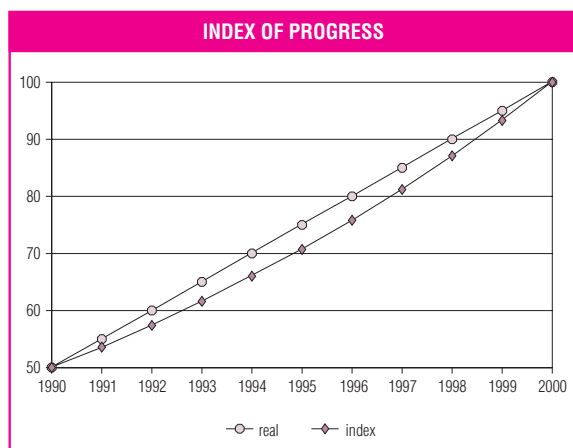
¹ The sources used in each case are specified at the foot of the corresponding chart. Work has been done on the basis of information provided by the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, Habitat, UNESCO, the World Bank.

ment that endeavors to reflect the degree to which the countries have advanced in the achievement of the proposed goal.

As in many cases, where information available in the countries themselves is more recent than that published by international organisations, the value that indicators should have had in 1997 is taken. This should enable those interested in following up on a specific indicator –using the methodological assumptions– to check with more recent information to see if progress in being made at a rate that will make it possible to achieve the goals by the year 2000.

To illustrate the design and interpretation of the progress index, we present a hypothetical case. Let us assume that the evolution of an indicator –which we shall call «real»– is known. It starts with a value of 50 in 1990 and increases by 5 units a year, reaching 100 in the year 2000. The following graph shows the linear progress of the «real» indicator throughout the decade. The same graph shows a curve representing expected progress in accordance with that foreseen by the procedure we have used to calculate the progress index. The table at the foot shows the values for each year, usually presented in tables as «recommended values» This also provides the expected value for 1997 (in our example it would be 81.2).

As there are many possible routes for the various indicators reflecting the achievement of commitments, we have used a form of calculation that assumes that the proposed goal will be reached via an evolution that is not very demanding.



The index of progress qualifies the value observed as ahead of, on time or lagging behind the expected progress. As may be seen in the table of values, in this hypothetical case, the progress indicator calculated for the «real» indicator systematically rewards the country, as it is always above the values that it would have had, had it followed the standard path. For example, in 1994, the «real» indicator recorded a value of 70, while the «expected» value was 66. As a result, the 4.85 index shows that the country progressed more than expected during the fourth year and is almost in the position foreseen for 1995, when the expected value was 70.7. However, when the country falls behind, this procedure penalises it in a more exacting way.

Year	Index of progress for a real case	Normative index of progress
1990	0.00	0
1991	1.37	1
1992	2.63	2
1993	3.78	3
1994	4.85	4
1995	5.85	5
1996	6.78	6
1997	7.65	7
1998	8.48	8
1999	9.26	9
2000	10.00	10

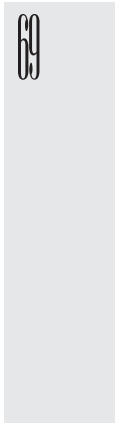
In the case of commitments that require the reduction of values, it was decided to transform them into achievements, measuring growth in the complementary value. For example, instead of the per cent of illiterate people –which should go down– we used the per cent of literate people –which must increase.

It would seem logical to average various progress indices to arrive at a combined index of progress towards goals, the way the UNDP's Human Development Index combines economic, health and education indicators in a single figure. Yet the lack of precision in this measurement of distance from intermediary goals, and the many cases where no data are available for various indicators, led us to make the comparison using a re-scaled progress index. In this way, reading of the data is simplified and the false precision suggested by a progress index using decimal figures is eliminated. The countries were re-arranged into major groups: those that had already achieved the goal at the outset (usually 1990); those that had advanced rapidly and who according to the latest available data had already achieved the goal set for the year 2000; those advancing rapidly and who according to the latest available data had exceeded the value that they «should have had» according to the «recommended» index; those who were progressing but at an insufficiently rate; and finally, those who had fallen behind.

The national reports (save four of them lacking the necessary information) are accompanied by a figure that records the situation of four indicators: mortality of children under five, literacy, Gini index and the UNDP Gender Development Index (GDI). This figure makes it possible to compare a diamond built on the respective average data for the countries of the region to which the national report pertains, with another figure built using the indicators of the particular county. On each axis, when the country's value is farther from the center than the regional value, its situation is better than the average of its neighbours. When the country's value is closer, the situation is worse. Summing up, the larger the diamond the better the situation measured by these four equity indicators.

COMMITMENTS AND FOLLOW-UP

This report presents twelve tables with their respective graphs, illustrating the countries' evolution regarding the commitments made by the governments at the Social and Women's Summits.



Social Watch chose thirteen commitments from among those that can be measured quantitatively, as the most relevant. But it has not been possible to follow up on the thirteenth commitment to «improve the availability of economic and suitable housing for all, in pursuance of the World Housing Strategy for the Year 2000», since appropriate indicators for a sufficient number of countries were not available. In the other cases, one or more indicators providing an illustration of the commitment have been chosen.

In each case, the relevance of the indicator selected in relation to the commitment varies. It was decided to choose those available for a sufficient number of countries from among those best adapted to the dimensions to be measured. A table has been prepared for each commitment. It presents: the 1990 value of the indicator(s) (or the nearest date possible in the event that information for that year was not available); the value for the latest year available; the value that should be reached in 1997; and the goal to be reached in the year 2000. For commitments with goals beyond the year 2000, we established the series using the values to be achieved within that lapse of time, and to take the value generated as the year 2000 goal, so as to adjust all the runs to one decade.

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL SPENDING

There are two tables referring respectively to the commitments on development assistance and government social spending. The first table refers to developed countries' commitment to allocate 0.7% of their gross domestic product to official development assistance (ODA). As no deadline has been established for the achievement of this goal, progress or regression has been assessed on the basis of variations between 1995 and 1996. The table on public social spending surveys spending on basic education, basic health, water, sewerage and other infrastructure services. To this we have added spending corresponding to food assistance. Finally, we have also included all expenditures on education (and not only on basic education).

EQUITY

Two tables were prepared on equity that enable an approximate measurement to be made. Providing regional averages to enable comparison with neighbouring countries. Two dimensions of equity are covered: one linked to gender and a second to access to basic services. Three indicators were selected for preparation of the gender equity table. Two of them are indicators calculated by the United Nations and were taken from the 1997 Human Development Report.

The index of Gender Empowerment basically refers to the situation of women vis-à-vis decision-making posts and incorporates the percentages of women holding parliamentary office, executive and management posts, and professional and technical posts. It

also incorporates share in job-derived income. The Gender Development Index covers aspects such as life expectancy, adult literacy rates, combined enrollment in primary, secondary and tertiary education and share in job-derived income. The third indicator corresponds to the percentage of women in the work force.

The social equity table uses education, health and access to drinking water as its main dimensions. Given that the survey endeavors to assess equity of access, indicators have been chosen that refer either to the government's political will to make access as unrestricted as possible, or to disparities in rural-urban gap. Thus, public spending on education and rural-urban disparities in the percentage of the population with access to health services and to drinking water have been used.

THE TABLE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS

For this issue, an indicative table has been prepared of progress towards goals, incorporating a dimension of Political Will (ODA). For each country the table shows a synthesised re-scaling of the progress indices (when available) or proximity to the goals (when these had already been achieved in 1990, there is no progress index). To arrange the table, values were allocated to the groups of countries represented using different colours and a simple average was prepared by adding up values and dividing them by the number of values available.

The progress index concerning Development Assistance was weighted by two, on the basis of the substantial importance of this commitment. The values allocated in order to calculate the average were: -1 in the event of significant regression, 0 for stagnation or slight regression (except when this regression occurred within the values of achieving the goal and did not threaten achievement in the short term), 1 when progress was insignificant, 2 for progress in time to achieve the goal in the year 2000, 3 when the value expected for the year had been surpassed, and 4 when the country reached the 2000 goal in the year for which information is available or had already reached it in 1990 and no significant regression had taken place.

ODA has been re-scaled in the following way:

- a) those countries that had reached or were above the goal of 0.7% were given a value of 4, equivalent to accomplishment of the goal;
- b) those countries showing regression were given a value of -1 in accordance with the criteria established above;
- c) countries showing slight progress were allocated a value of 0, equal to stagnation;
- d) countries that showed an ODA growth of under 20% (1995 = 100) were allocated a value of 1;
- e) countries with ODA growth of over 20% (1995 = 100) were allocated a value of 2.

Countries with fewer than four indicators were not considered in the table.