

# Getting the MDG Fundamentals Right

ODI-CPRC Partnership Event,  
24<sup>th</sup> September 2008

# Content of event

- ODI Briefing Paper 43 outlines the case
- Second Chronic Poverty Report indicates how the fundamentals can be achieved
  - Proposal for a social assistance goal/target
- Illustrations from countries
  - Bangladesh: gender equity and human development
  - Sudan: peace and reconstruction
- Focus on the debate in the south

# Performance

- The ‘fundamentals’ are as important as the targets
- Hard to reach targets underpinned by progress to gender equality
- Large numbers excluded – vulnerability a key factor which can be addressed
- Conflicts reduced but recovery/reconstruction a challenge

# Debates

- Link MDGs to the big debates, and have them in the south
  - Sustained economic growth and social services: greater southern influence swinging in favour of growth: quality and effects of growth are key
  - Protection against shocks: downward mobility into poverty can cancel out gains from growth
  - Debate on sustainable development reawakened by climate change: reappraisal of environmental underpinnings
  - Fragile states: but quality of external intervention in fragile states is poor; the humanitarian-development divide lives on, making the peace dividend hard to achieve

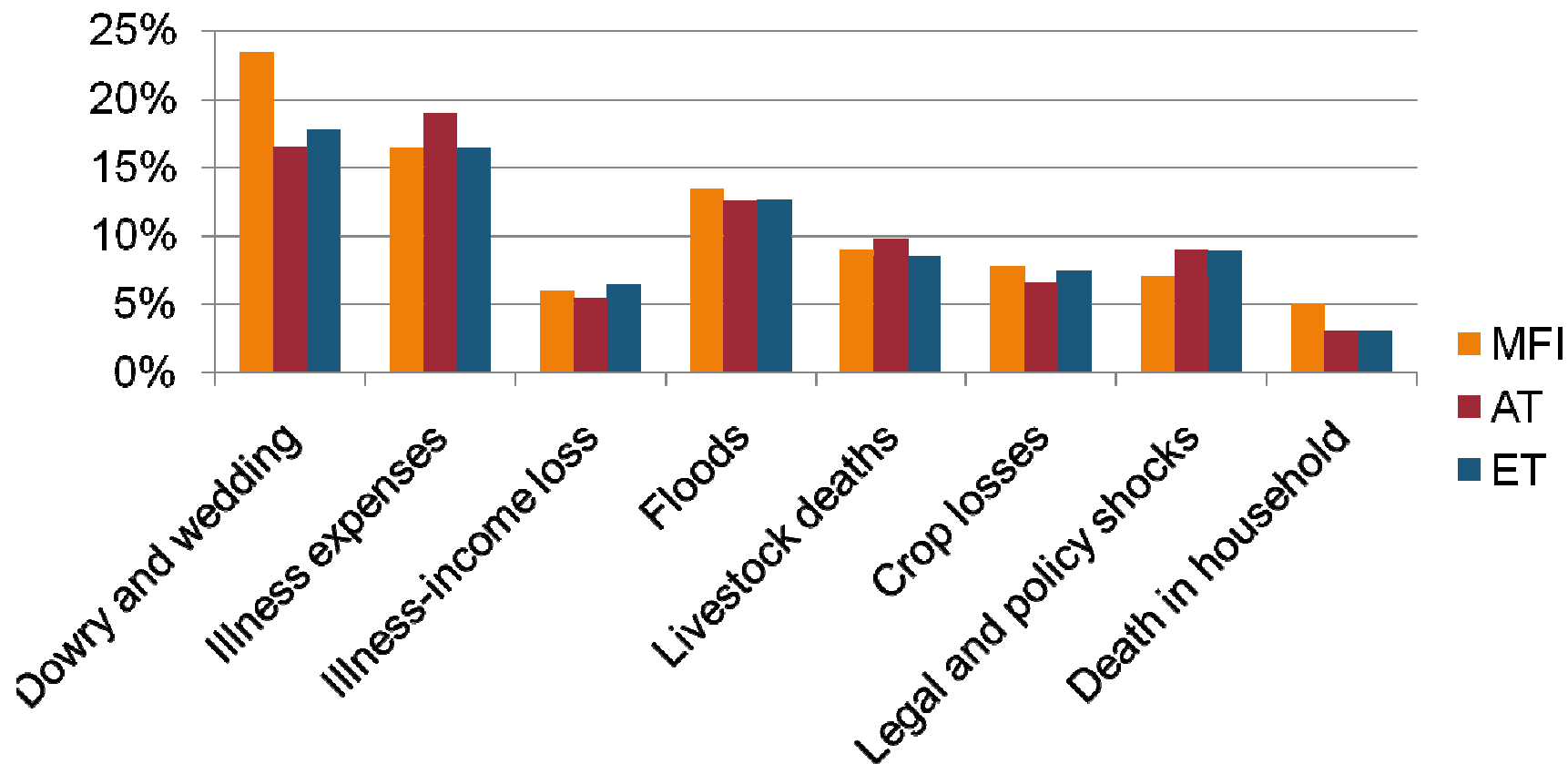
# Gender equality

- Gender equality: focus national debate on changing indicators in addition to the narrow targets
- Progress towards gender equality underlies most of the human development goals
  - Bangladesh as a shining example
- It also has a big long term impact on reducing poverty
  - Eg via the effects of women's education
  - Via an inclusive demographic transition, requiring universal access to reproductive health services

# Vulnerability

- Shocks are omni-present for poor households...
- The effects can be compounded and long lasting
- Fragile states increase vulnerability
- Protecting against shocks is fundamental
  - CPRC case for a social protection MDG/target

# Most important shocks experienced by households over the last 10 years, 1996-2006



# Peace and political stability



- Conflicts reduced, but inequalities intractable
- Recovery and reconstruction is painfully slow, threatening the peace dividend
- The humanitarian-development divide is a live and well
- The MDGs provide an umbrella for both
- Institutionalising the social protection provided by humanitarian aid is a glue to mend the tear...

# Growth

- Growth provides the growing revenues for human development (and social protection)
- Sustained economic growth reduces poverty directly...but each country has to work out a pro-poor growth agenda
- Is there enough emphasis on growth?
- Employment is key but not all work is 'decent'
- Unresolved debate about environmentally sustainable growth

# Reinforcing the debate the south

- Targets can seem ‘foreign’
- Indicators and focusing on the fundamentals may help
  - Eg the valid concern with growth
- Some goals are problematic (eg MDG7)
- Some strategies are problematic: need to work ‘with the grain’ of political and social life, including movements aiming to increase accountability

# And now to the detail

## Thank you

# A social assistance Millennium Development Goal/Target

# Vulnerability



- Shocks (and responses to shocks) cause chronic poverty and descents into poverty
- Vulnerability prevents children going to or completing school
- Demand for health services is weakened
- Participation in enterprise is limited
- Taking risks in accessing better jobs are avoided

# The social compact

- Reducing citizens' vulnerabilities is in the essence of a state-citizen social compact
- Could also be part of an international social compact if adopted by in the MDG framework

# The MDGs

- Option 1: a goal
- Option 2: a target
- Option 3: the Millennium Declaration

A process towards adopting a goal or target  
by 2010

# A goal?

- High profile
- Protection = the outcome
- Social Assistance = the means
- Children are the target (indicator)
- Underpins both human development, pro-poor growth, and peace and stability

# A target

- On social assistance
  - Under a social protection goal, or
  - Under MDG 1
- Indicators focused on children
  - Overwhelming evidence of benefit
  - Children are ‘deserving’
  - No perverse effects
- (But this does not mean child grants)

# A way forward?

- Discussions at this HLE (eg Africa meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup>)
- Campaign?
- Further evidence of what works especially in low income countries
- How does this fit/contradict what else is being proposed for the MDGs?