

Human Condition Improving Faster Than Ever Before, Says Gates

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- Child mortality has halved since 1990
- The strength of the Millennium Development Goals is their simplicity and accountability
- Climate change must be incorporated into future frameworks
- The theme of the 43rd World Economic Forum Annual Meeting Resilient Dynamism. For more information, visit <http://wef.ch/Davos>

Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, 24 January 2013 – Speaking today at the 43rd World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, William H. Gates III described the positive advances made in the reduction of child mortality and his belief that further improvements are to come.

“ We ’ ve improved the human condition faster than ever before, ” he said, referring to the impact of the United Nations ’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and specifically MDG number four, which addresses child mortality. “ At the base year 1990, 12 million children died every year. By 2015, it will be below 6 million. ”

When asked what improvements might be made in the MDGs, Gates said he believed no extra goals were needed and only the targets should be revised. “ Leave it alone, ” he said. “ It ’ s hard to argue with success because this success is measured in lives. ”

Gates was speaking on a panel which included Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations; David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; Helene D. Gayle, President and Chief Executive Officer, CARE USA; Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda; Paul Polman, Chief Executive Officer, Unilever; and H.M. Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Cameron emphasized the importance of not wasting the remaining three years to 2015, when the timeframe of the existing MDG is due to elapse. Along with other panellists, he praised the simplicity and accountability of the existing MDGs and warned against complicating them if and when they are updated in 2015.

His comments were echoed by Gayle, who attributed the MDGs ’ success to their simplicity and measurability. “ It is doable to make poverty history, ” she said. “ The challenge will be keeping them [the MDGs] simple. ” She added that climate change will have one of the greatest impacts on poverty of any issue, saying that climate change should be added to the MDG framework.

Polman pointed out that food security is a critical issue facing the delivery of the MDGs. “ It is hard to beat global poverty if you don ’ t have food security, ” he said.

Queen Rania stated her belief that equality education is key, saying that young people need to be equipped with 21st century skills to reach their potential and unlock the benefits of entrepreneurialism. “ Good teachers teach, ” she said. “ But great teachers transform. ”

Kagame also applauded the progress made under the MDG framework. “ The MDGs have been very valuable in many ways and proof of what the world is capable of doing when it comes together around certain principles, ” he said.

The 43rd World Economic Forum Annual Meeting is taking place from 23 to 27 January under the theme Resilient Dynamism. More than 2,500 participants from over 100 countries are taking part in the Meeting. Participants include nearly 50 heads of state or government and more than 1,500 business leaders from the Forum ' s 1,000 Member companies, as well as [Social Entrepreneurs](#), [Global Shapers](#), [Young Global Leaders](#) and representatives from civil society, media, academia and the arts.

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