

# *Millennium Development Goals and Christian Social Thought*

March 9, 2015

Townhouse Hotel – Cape Town

Dr. Jan Jans

*Associate Professor of Ethics  
Tilburg School of Humanities*



# Introduction - 1

- Background of this topic for a Round Table
  - MDGs do ‘span’ 1990-2015
  - Great interest in 2001: not just ‘Goals’ but also ‘Targets’ and *measurable* ‘Indicators’
  - Also on the agenda in 2007 ~ 40 years of *Populorum Progressio* (Pope Paul VI): “We must make haste. Too many people are suffering. While some make progress, others stand still or move backwards; and the gap between them is widening” (n° 29).

# Introduction - 2

- Some important steps towards MDGs
  - UN World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen 1995 → *Copenhagen Declaration*; 10 non-binding commitments
  - *UN Millennium Declaration*, New York, 8 September 2000; → ...
  - ... *MDGs* released in August 2001
  - *Road Map Towards the Implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration*, December 2001

# Introduction - 3

- “The Age of Miracles”, **TIME** January 26, 2015
  - 910 million people out of extreme poverty since 1990
  - 47% decrease in global malaria mortality since 2000
  - 50% decline in children mortality under 5 since 1990
  - Schools, latrines, clean water, ICT, ...
- MDGs Report 2014: *Foreword* by Ban Ki-Moon
  - “MDGs were a pledge to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity...”
  - “MDGs have made profound difference in people’s lives...”
  - “But more needs to be done to accelerate progress...define *Sustainable Development Goals* for post-2015...”

# 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
  - children in conflict areas
  - girls poor rural households
  - children with disabilities

# 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 no later than 2015
  - status of women in labour market
  - family-friendly policies to support women's participation in job market
  - increase of political participation by women

# Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

- Target 4.A: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
  - attention for preventable diseases
  - extra attention for neo-natal period
  - programmes of measles immunization



# 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
  - skilled health providers
  - adolescent child-bearing
  - demand for family planning

# 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

# Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population 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, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries
- Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states

# Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt
- Target 8.E: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries
- Target 8.F: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially ICT

# CST questions with regard to MDGs - 1

- 1° Which ‘model of development’?
  - Risk of top-down by donors
    - ↔ “... world solidarity should allow people to become the artisans of their destiny (*PP* n°65)
  - Option for the poor: “... decisions must be judged in the light of:
    - what they do *for* the poor
    - what they do *to* the poor
    - what they *enable* the poor *to do for themselves*

# CST questions with regard to MDGs - 2

- 2° The human person: *corpore et anima unus*  
→ room for 'spiritual dimension'?
  - in MDGs no explicit reference to God or religion(s)  
~ UDHR
  - implicit or 'anonymous' presence? ~ 'European Constitution': basic principles of human dignity, equality and equity ~ CST on dignity, human rights, common good, love → no need for conflict but recognition of limits in MDGs



# CST questions with regard to MDGs - 3

- 3° Solidarity?
  - religious roots of human/e relationality ~ ‘creation’
  - primacy of common good → individual flourishing
  - responsible for all ~ making ourselves neighbour ~ recognition of the other in need
  - the challenge of just laws and their acceptance precisely as instruments of justice
  - if evil can spread through ‘systems’, goodness can also...

# CST questions with regard to MDGs - 4

- 4° Subsidiarity?
  - the ‘virtue’ of institutions so they create solidarity
  - support persons as the ‘artisans of their own destiny’
  - mutual partnership, especially in uneven relations of power & money
  - the mistake of ‘trickle-down’, both factually and as in principle

# CST questions with regard to MDGs - 5

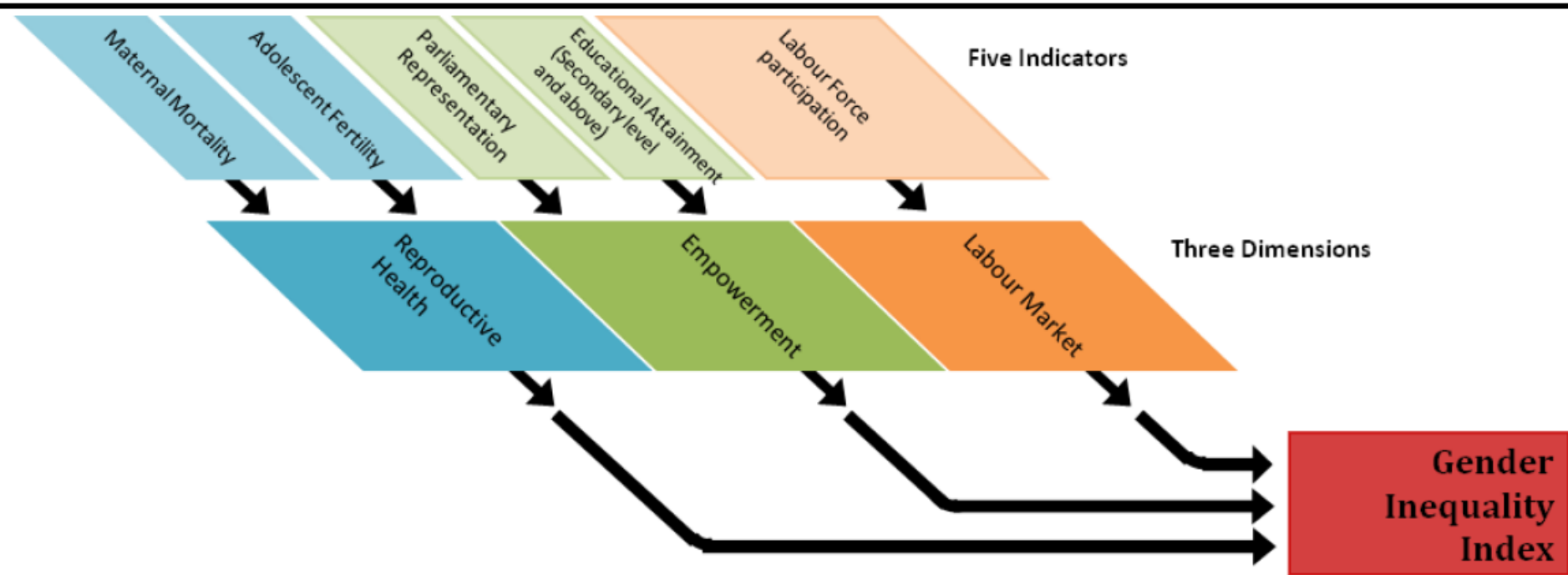
- 5° Participation?
  - political involvement by becoming a responsible citizen ~ political formation
  - link between subsidiarity and participation; distribution and access  $\leftrightarrow$  corruption
- Cf. Tina Beattie, *Compass 2015* ~ CAFOD 'voices from the ground'

# Gender inequality ~ MDGs



- Explicit and implicit in the findings of all the MDGs
- Recognition of connection between equality in gender-roles and development
- Cultural and religious obstacles ~ special attention in *Post-2015 Development Agenda*

# Gender Inequality Index



Note: The size of the boxes reflects the relative weights of the indicators and dimensions

Figure 1: Components of the GII: three dimensions, five indicators

Source: UNDP 2010

# Gender Inequality Index



# Post-2015 Agenda and CST

- Growing awareness in UN of the importance of consultation with the ‘stake-holders’ = women
- Christian Social Teaching/Thought →→ CS  
*Listening?*
- A structural problem of women’s representation?
- Joining forces to end “Gender injustice – surely humanity’s most foundational and persistent structural sin” (Julie Clague, 2011).

