

# Scorecard and Outlook Report 2010

## Millennium Development Goals

### Belize

*September 2010*

# How the Report was Developed

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The Belize Scorecard and Outlook Report 2010 is the result of a collaborative effort between national partners and United Nations Country Offices coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This process commenced in 2008 with the adoption of a co-writing approach led by a Consultant Economist. The Consultant Economist provided overall guidance on the specification, refinement and implementation of a methodology for assessing Belize's progress toward achieving the MDGs and for determining the measures and resources needed to ensure that the targets are reached. This methodology included data collection, expert analysis of trends identified and documented in this Report, the estimation of required national investments to meet the targets by 2015, and the outlook for achieving them. The Lead Consultant also undertook the general writing, editing and preparation of the Report.

To facilitate the co-writing approach a National Assessment Team (NAT) comprised of four Technical Working Groups (TWGs) was formed. Each TWG was supported by a University of Belize Focal Point who worked in tandem with technical counterparts from the government ministries responsible for national planning and for implementation of policies related to the MDGs. The key roles of the Focal Points and counterparts were to identify ongoing interventions, key influencing factors, and additional measures required to achieve the MDGs. In addition, Focal Points organized and facilitated consultations with other national experts and technical persons who could provide data and detailed information for use in the assessment of progress toward a specific MDG. Finally, the NAT drafted inputs to the Scorecard and Outlook Report and reviewed and endorsed analyses prepared by consultants and partners. The UN Country Offices, through the Heads of Agency and technical officers, contributed data and substantive recommendations to improve the quality of the Report.

In keeping with the design, the Scorecard and Outlook preparation process involved training as well as research and analysis in technical areas related to the eight MDGs. Training activities were undertaken in the areas of data collection and analysis; incorporating gender roles in national policies and plans; technical writing and editing. The process benefited also from the involvement of the Statistical Institute of Belize whose technicians reviewed all data and metadata before validating and endorsing them. Specific assistance for quality assurance, including guidelines on the use of metadata and review of work organization and terms of references, was provided by the UNECLAC regional office in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Government of Belize wishes to thank all participants for their effort and diligence in preparing this update of the performance of Belize and in defining a path and outlook for successful achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

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## Acronyms

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbons
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
DOE	Department of the Environment
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse gases
GNI	Gross National Income
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IRS	Indoor Residual Spraying
ITBs	Insecticide Treated Bed-nets
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KWh	Kilowatt Hours
LIC	Land Information Center
MARP	Most at risk population
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEA	Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MHD	Ministry of Human Development (and Social Transformation)
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOMS	Midwives and Others with Midwifery Skills
MWRA	Men and women of reproductive
NAP	National AIDS Program
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODP	Ozone Depleting Potential
ODS	Ozone Depleting Substances
PAHO/WHO	Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
SICA	Central American Integration System
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TB	Tuberculosis
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF  
WB  
WTO

United Nations Children's Fund  
World Bank  
World Trade Organization

## INTRODUCTION

In September 2000, on the basis of a sense of shared international responsibility, Belize joined the global agreement to pursue the time-bound Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Most of the MDGs are set for 2015. They relate to poverty generally and to specifics such as hunger, illiteracy, disease, discrimination against women and environmental degradation. Against the background of the agreed targets and quantitative indicators, this Scorecard and Outlook Report emphasizes the use of empirical evidence to document: (i) the progress that has been achieved to date; and (ii) the prospects for achievement of agreed targets in the light of existing and anticipated policies and programmes. Where achievement has not been adequate, the causes will also be identified.

Belize committed to achieving the eight MDGs. Accordingly, the Scorecard documents achievement under these broad headings as listed:

1. Eradicate poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

The Scorecard also documents the challenges Belize confronts on the basis of the data presented. It provides summary graphical, tabular and schematic assessments on the indicators associated with each of the goals above and supplementary indicators suggested by policy details along with qualitative analysis to complement the quantitative indicators in the tables presented. Throughout the document, a number of key questions are asked and answered. What is the level of achievement on the overarching poverty reduction goal? Were sufficient persons lifted out of poverty and indigence? What are the important successes to date? Is national commitment part of this success? How does success compare on the other seven goals? What are the main bottlenecks impeding progress on the MDGs? Are there key lessons to be learned from the overall picture? For example, is poverty reduction emerging from redistribution or from development of the capital stock and production system? Are there lessons to be learned about the way the development effort might be recalibrated to address the multifaceted character of the problem through a suitably multidimensional investment effort?

The ongoing impact of the recent and still evolving global financial and economic crisis on Belize and on vast areas of the world emphasizes the importance of the joint responsibilities of the country and the world community. These events emphasize the critical significance of Belize's responsibility to identify the roots of its development challenges and lead the world in providing sound and lasting solutions to its twin problems of development and poverty. Accordingly, the Scorecard assesses the extent to which, the country has led and coordinated efforts to meet the development goals and targets utilizing both national resources and support from international development partners.

With regard to the Outlook, the broad question is whether Belize, with support from its international development partners, is on track to adequately prepare for the final push to the 2015 targets. Given the trends and the programmes in place, it considers the prospects for achieving the MDGs in Belize. Will the required level and structure of investment spending be achieved in order to lift more persons out of poverty and keep them out; or will underinvestment persist, leading to a prognosis that more Belizeans will fall into poverty leaving the country worst off? What are the fiscal considerations and commitments that are necessary to achieve the MDGs? Guided by an assessment of the overall rate of growth of investment needed to achieve a development process that can reduce the poverty rate to 16.8% in 2015, the Outlook goes further to identify the types and timing of national and line ministry investments that are most likely needed, as well as to assesses the likelihood that the targets will be reached.

While recognizing that the underlying development problems are longstanding, this Outlook also takes account of the recession, the process of recovery in the international economy, the likely impact on the country's growth path, and the flow of assistance from development partners. Both the Scorecard and Outlook are designed to provide government and local partners with an empirical record and interpretation of progress on agreed priorities, and to document the actions, opportunities and the challenges involved in getting things right and on track up to 2015 and perhaps beyond. Of some importance, and consistent with guidelines proposed in Devarajan, et al (2002),<sup>1</sup> the Report, in particular the Outlook, is designed to provide broad investment parameters that would guide the actions needed to meet the 2015 targets. In that regard, the Report identifies the financial contributions required of the development partners, including the advanced economy countries, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, the Inter American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, and other international development institutions. A forthcoming Needs Assessment and Costing Exercise will include the process of identifying the MDGs where progress can be achieved most expeditiously.

The specific purpose of the Needs Assessment and Costing Exercise is to provide detailed estimates of the set of necessary public policy interventions and investments required to attain the MDGs in Belize and methods of financing them. This process will also include the identification of bottlenecks which impeded progress to achieve the MDGs and will fit with the ongoing national effort to define a development pathway to 2030. It is hoped that stark empirical reporting will highlight data availability and deficiencies even as it lends support to the constituencies that advocate for activity on the MDGs in Belize and abroad.

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<sup>1</sup> Devarajan, S., Miller, M.J. and Swanson, E.V. (2002). Goals for Development: History, Prospects and Costs. Human Development Network and Development Data Group, The World Bank.

## Report Structure

There are four sections to the report. **Section I** motivates the Scorecard and Outlook with a brief accounting for Belize's achievements and failures "at a glance", especially as related to the persistent increase in general poverty. **Section II** provides a background to the Report. It documents and accounts for the underlying pattern of increase in poverty mainly by the overarching trend of investment or underinvestment in domestic capacity-building to expand access to entrepreneurial, income and consumption opportunity. Primacy is given to the need to view investment in education, health, housing and similar domestic capital forms as more than "social sector" investments. These are also the leading forms of economic investment required to transform the capacity of the population to address the social and economic challenges defining the development problem. A "social sector" interpretation typically leads to significant underinvestment in necessary related capacity-building and ownership. This method is appropriate since, as is clarified by the Target 8a of MDG8, all the MDGs that are linked through the general poverty rate and the need to manage the scale and targeting of investment to reduce or eliminate poverty.

**Section III** provides the detailed scorecard. **Section IV** documents the outlook for achievement of the targets by 2015, set in the light of the policies, programmes and anticipated financing. Specifically, it documents the current package of commitments and measures to achieve the MDGs, the cost of the package including commitments from domestic and international partners, and the likely impact on relevant MDGs.

This Scorecard and Outlook Report is Belize's second Report on the MDGs and provides updated information and analysis on the country's implementation status for all the MDGs. The analysis conducted in the Outlook includes suggested fiscal considerations, which can inform policies to invest in MDG achievement.

## **SECTION 1: MDG PROGRESS AT A GLANCE**

### **1.1 The Millennium Development Goals**

At the beginning of the new millennium, world leaders made commitments to strengthen a global partnership to improve the lives of the world's poor in the course of one generation, from 1990 to 2015. This partnership was consolidated through the newly established MDGs which are now an integral component of the international development agenda of the United Nations. The agenda includes quantitative targets to improve results in poverty reduction efforts, health, education, gender equality, and the protection of the environment through stronger partnerships between developed and developing countries and amongst developing countries, as well as partnerships with the private sector. The MDGs have become a platform for galvanizing international efforts to reduce poverty and hunger and advance the agenda of human development in all countries.

The MDGs are a set of quantifiable, time-bound goals that articulate the social, economic and environmental advances that are required to achieve substantial gains in human development. Goals 1 to 7 are committed to raising the poor out of poverty and hunger, getting every child into school, empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability. Goal 8 explicitly recognizes that eradicating poverty worldwide can only be achieved through international cooperation. The challenges associated with the achievement of the MDGs cut across a vast array of interlinked issues – ranging from gender equality, through health and education, to sustainable development of the environment. The achievement of all the MDGs will result from government policies and the involvement of the private sector, civil society, and the local communities.

Belize is slowly making progress toward integrating the MDGs into national development frameworks by creating MDG-based national, sectoral and local development strategies, and by using the MDGs to guide monitoring efforts. In supporting the country efforts, the United Nations Offices are committed to providing assistance through tracking progress towards the goals, assessing policy dimensions, building awareness, galvanizing public support for action and supporting specific strategies to address key constraints that limit MDG achievement.

### **1.2 Belize MDG Progress at a Glance**

Poverty has been increasing in Belize long before the current global crisis and the country's development strategy has not been sufficiently conducive to economic growth and poverty reduction. In spite of social protection programmes and new initiatives to widen the reach of the Belize safety net<sup>2</sup>, the number of poor people in Belize continues to rise. The current global crisis is likely to have additional negative impacts on the economic and social fabric of the country. This will further strain poverty reduction initiatives and efforts to achieve the MDGs.

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<sup>2</sup> The roll-out of the National Health Insurance Scheme aimed at reaching poor and vulnerable populations in Southside Belize City and Toledo District as well as the expansion of pension benefits to non-contributing elderly males and females from the Belize Social Security Board have contributed to widening the reach of the safety net.

All of the MDGs are linked through the national efforts to reduce poverty and indigence through development. In this regard, Belize must still find and follow the right track to achieve all of the MDGs by 2015.

### **Poverty and indigence have been increasing in Belize, even in the midst of plenty.**

The available evidence indicates that, overall, the main reason is pursuit of an unrealistic and vulnerable debt-led, consumption-promoting and import-intensive growth strategy. **This has also discouraged domestic savings and resulted in underinvestment in the core ingredient of development – the type of domestic capacity-building and ownership required to achieve the MDGs and thus improve the capacity of the national stakeholders to compete for entrepreneurial opportunity, income and consumption opportunity in an increasingly open global trade and financial system.**

**Thus, Belize is not on track to achieve the following 4 of the 8 goals by 2015:**

- The core poverty and indigence reduction goals expressed in MDG1.
- The education goals expressed in MDG2.
- The gender goals expressed in MDG3.
- The debt management goals of MDG8.

**However, all is not bad news.** Belize has also done well with its health-related investments. If its current health investment package is refined and improved, it is on track to achieve targets related to the following 3 health-related goals and the environmental goal:

- ✓ Child mortality expressed in MDG4 but with slow progress
- ✓ Maternal health expressed in MDG5 not on track but qualitative improvement
- ✓ Major diseases expressed in MDG6
- ✓ The environmental goals expressed in MDG 7 with respect to which progress is slow.

A summary of MDG achievement as of 2009, and related challenges, is provided in **Table 1.1**. The reference years for the baseline data are indicated where possible. The available evidence suggests that Belize is making progress to achieve four (4) of the 8 time-bound goals by 2015. Moreover, all of the on-track performances relate to the health MDGs and the environment:

#### **MDG1 - ERADICATE POVERTY AND HUNGER<sup>3</sup>**

- The poverty rate increased from 33% in 1995 to 41.3% in 2009 - not on track to achieve the target of 16.8% by 2015.
- The poverty gap fell marginally from 10.9% in 2002 to 10.8% in 2009, representing only insignificant adjustment - not on track to achieve the target of 5.5% by 2015.
- The indigence rate increased from 10.8% in 2002 to 15.8% in 2009 - not on track to achieve the target of 6.7% by 2015.
- The GINI coefficient of inequality increased significantly from 0.4, rounded up in 2002, to 0.42 in 2009 – not on track to support the targeted reduction of the poverty rate to 16.8% by 2015.

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<sup>3</sup> Data for the poverty indicators are from the Final Report Belize Country Poverty Assessment, 2009, prepared by the Halcrow Group Limited for the Government of Belize and the Caribbean Development Bank, June 10 2010.

## **MDG2 - ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION**

- The net enrolment rate fell from 90.3% in 1992 to 83.7% in 2009 - not on track to achieve the target of 100% by 2015.
- The proportion of students starting Grade 1 who reached the last grade of primary school increased from 87.2% in 2002 to 91.9% in 2009 - not on track to achieve the target of 100% by 2015.

## **MDG3 - PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN**

- The ratio of girls to boys in primary school increased from 0.939 in 1995 to 1.01 in 2009, indicating that while the target for girls has been surpassed, there has been slippage with respect to boys. The ratio of girls to boys in secondary school increased from 1.105 in 1995 to 1.13 in 2009, also indicating that while the target for girls has been surpassed, there has been serious slippage with respect to boys. The ratio of females to males in tertiary school increased from 1.49 in 2002 to 1.73 in 2009, again indicating that while the target for females has been surpassed, there are serious lags with respect to males. Belize is not on track to achieve the target of parity by 2015.
- The share of women in non-agricultural wage employment increased from 38.7% in 1995 to 41.7% in 2007 - not on track to achieve the target of 50% by 2015.
- The percentage of women in the Lower House of the Belize Parliament fell from 3.45% of the seats in 1993 to zero in 2009 - not on track to achieve significant improvement by 2015.
- The literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds increased from 70.3% in 1992 to 94.7% in 2006, surpassing the literacy target of 90.6% for 2009 - on track to meet the target of 100% literacy among persons 15-24 years by 2015.

## **MDG4 – REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY:**

- Belize was on track to reduce its under-5 mortality, from 23.7 per 1000 live births in 1990 to 22.5 per 1000 in 2009 –indicating very slow progress towards the target of 8 per 1000 live births by 2015.
- The infant mortality rate increased from 17.6 per 1000 live births in 1990 to 17.9 per 1000 live births in 2009 - not on track to achieve the target of 8 per 1,000 live births by 2015.
- The percentage of children immunized against measles increased from 69% in 1992 to 96.6% in 2009 – on track to achieve the target of 100% by 2015.

## **MDG5 – IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH:**

- The Maternal Mortality Rate has increased from 41.7 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 53.9 per 100,000 in 2009 – not on track to achieve the target of 10.4 per 100,000 live births by 2015.
- The proportion of births attended by skilled personnel increased from 79% in 1995 to 95% in 2008 - on track to achieve the target of 100% by 2015.



## **MDG6 – COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES**

- The HIV prevalence among the population 15-24 years was officially established at 0.77% in 2009. No assessment of performance is possible until the next count.
- The incidence of malaria cases per 1,000 persons in the population fell significantly from 49.3 in 1994 to 1.7 per 1,000 persons in 2008 - on track to achieve the target of halting the spread of malaria by 2015.
- The infection rate of tuberculosis fell significantly from 49 cases per 100,000 persons in the population in 1990 to 24.7 cases per 100,000 in 2009 - on track to achieve the target of halting the spread of tuberculosis by 2015.
- The prevalence rate of tuberculosis in the population fell from 78 per 100,000 persons in 1990 to 26.7 per 100,000 cases in 2009 - on track to achieve the target of halting the spread of tuberculosis by 2015.

## **MDG7 - ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- The current proportion of the land covered by forest is approximately 58% and the deforestation rate for Belize is approximately 0.6% per year – not on track to halt and reverse the proportion of land covered by forest by 2015.
- The country is poised to meet the implicit target of 100% access to improved water source for both urban and rural communities.
- Per capita emissions have increased more than 4-fold since 1994. It should be noted, however that the country's emission remains negligible when compared to global recorded levels of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- Preliminary data on carbon emissions (CFCs) for 2008 indicate consumption of 0.780 metric tons. This figure is 2.92 metric tons, or 78.9%, less than the ceiling awarded to Belize.
- Official data from the SIB indicate that the share of the population with an improved water source increased from 43.6% in 1995 to 76.4% in 2006 – on track to achieve the target of 100% access in 2015. Indeed, alternative estimates suggest that access to safe drinking water nationally grew to 99.5% in 2008, though rural areas lag behind at 90%.
- The share of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities increased from 41% in 1995 to 64% in 2007, and approximately 70% in 2008 –showing slow progress to the goal of 100% by 2015.

## **MDG8 - DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- As the economy shifts to greater reliance on the service sector, which is less vulnerable to the type of exogenous price shocks that characterize the traditional specialist exports of goods, Belize's debt service as a percentage of gross exports has recently been falling fairly steadily from 17% in 2006 to 11.4% in 2008, becoming more sustainable in the process.
- The number of telephone landlines has been declining as individuals and households turn to more efficient means of continuous and on-demand cellular or internet communication. Cellular subscribers have been growing rapidly from 6.7 persons per 100 in 2000 to 53.2 per 100 in 2008.
- The number of persons with internet connection has increased slowly, from 6 per 100 in 2000 to only 11 per 100 in 2008. Faster progress is needed to meet the goal of rapid global information sharing and communication that characterises the process of poverty reduction through expansion of opportunity in education, health and efficiency.

Table 1.1: Summary Scorecard - Belize Achievements and Challenges at a Glance					
Goals, Targets and Indicators	Baseline	2009		Target 2015	Progress to 2015
		Target	Achievement		
<b>GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY/ HUNGER</b>					
Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living below the Belize indigence line					
Population below Poverty Line (%)	33.5 (2002)	30.5	41.3 (2009)	16.8	Not on track; significant challenges to achieve this goal
Poverty Gap Ratio (%)	10.9 (2002)	10.1	10.8 (2009)	5.5	Not on track; no significant change
Target 2: Halve proportion population suffers hunger					
Proportion of population less than minimum dietary consumption (extreme poverty) (%)	10.8 (2002)	10.1	15.8 (2009)	6.7	Not on track
<b>GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION</b>					
Target 3: Ensure complete Primary School					
Net enrolment rate in Primary Education (%)	90.3 (1992)	92	83.7 (2008/09)	100	Not on track
Proportion of pupils entering Grade 1 G1, reaching 8 (%)	87.2 (2000)	93.6	91.9 (2009)	100	Not on track
Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds (%)	70.3 (1992)	90.6	94.7 (2006)	100	Well on track; surpassed target for 2009
<b>GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPLOYMENT</b>					
Target 4: Eliminate Gender Disparity					
Ratio of girls-boys in Primary Education	0.939 (1995)	0.96.6	1.01 (2009)	100	On track; new challenges to ensure parity for boys
Ratio of girls-boys in Secondary Education	1.105 (1995)	107.1	113 (2009)	100	Not on track; significant challenges emerging for boys
Ratio of girls-boys in Tertiary Education.	1.49 (2002)	148.8	1.73 (2009)	100	Far off track; major problems for males
Share of Women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector (%)	38.7 (1995)		41.7 (2007)	50	Not on track
Proportion seats held by women Nat'l Parliament (%)	3.45 (1993)		0% (2009)		Not on track
<b>GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY</b>					
Target 5: Reduce by 2/3 <5 yr. mortality rate					
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	23.7 (1990)	8	22.5 (2009)	8	Slow progress
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	17.6 (1990)	17.9	17.9 (2009)	5.9	Not on track
Children immunized against measles (%)	69 (1992)	96.6	96.6 (2009)	100	On track
<b>GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH</b>					
Target 6: Reduce maternal mortality					
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	41.7 (1990)		53.9 (2009)	10.4	Not on track (Qualitative progress)
Skilled birth attendance rate (%)	79 (1995)	97.5	95 (2008)	100	On track
<b>GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER</b>					
Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS					
HIV prevalence population 15-24 (%)	None		0.77% (2009)	None	No trend data available
Target 8: By 2015, halt tuberculosis and Malaria					
Incidence of malaria (cases per 1,000 population)	49.3 (1994)		1.7 (2008)		On track (dramatic reduction)
Incidence of tuberculosis (cases per 100,000)	49 (1990)		24.7 (2009)	None	On track
Prevalence rate of tuberculosis (cases per 100,000)	78 (1990)		26.7 (2009)		On track; high degree of vigilance needed

GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY					
Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainability					
Proportion of land area covered by forest	NA	NA	58% (2009)		Not on track; significant policy adjustment needed.
Land area protected to maintain environment	NA	NA	NA		
Carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) emissions	2.7	NA	NA		On track – negligible emissions relative to global targets.
Consumption of ozone depleting CFCs	NA	NA	0.780 tons (2009)		On track – ceiling awarded Belize surpassed
GDP per unit of energy use	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Kilowatt hours of consumption	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Kilowatt hours of demand	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Target 10: Halve population without access to water					
Population with access to water source	43.8 (1995)	80.8	76.4 (2006)	100	On Track
Social Investment Fund Data - Urban	43.6 (1995)		99.5 (2008)		On Track
Social Investment Fund Data - Rural	51(1990)		90 (2008)		On Track, with continuous improvement
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved livelihood improvement. Owners of their own dwelling					
Population with proper sanitation facilities	41 (1995)	94.6	64.4(2007)	100	Slow progress
Proportion of people with access to secure tenure	94.1	95.2	97.3	100	
Population with WC linked to sewage/septic tank					
GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP					
Target 15: Deal with debt problem in sustainable manner					
Debt service as % of exports	13.1	11	9.5	8.5	Slow progress
Target 16: Implement strategies for productive youth work					
Unemployment of young people 15-24 years old	21.8	18	15	12	Slow progress
Target 17: Provide access to essential drugs					
Proportion of population with access to essential drugs	NA	NA	NA	100	
Target 18: In cooperation w/private sector new techs					
Teledensity (fixed and mobile lines)					
Mobile	6.7 per 100 (2000)	NA	53.2 per 100 (2008)	NA	
Personal computers density	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Internet connections, dial-up and broadband	6 per 100 (2000)	NA	11 per 100 (2008)	NA	

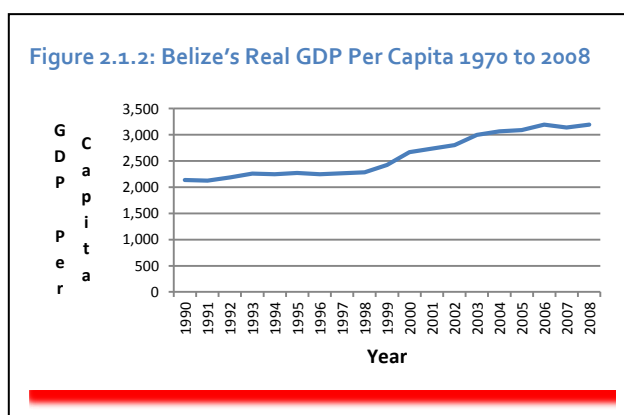
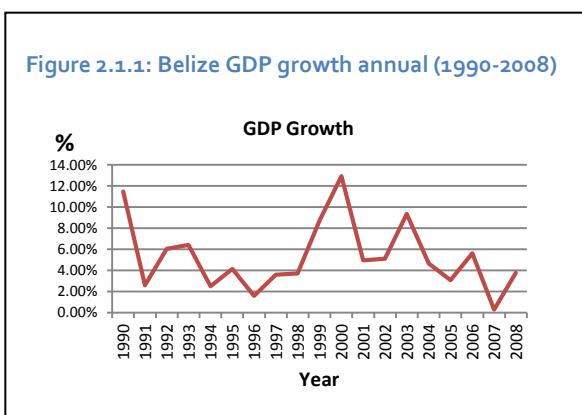
## SECTION 2: MACRO-ECONOMY AND POLICY OVERVIEW

*The MDGs place poverty reduction and the general improvement of the knowledge and health of the citizen at the centre of the development process. This approach is embedded in the global drive to human development, which has as its logic a change in the concept of development from a focus on the dimension of efficiency to adequate consideration of the additional dimensions of longevity and quality of life and knowledge capacity to address the challenges of life and win freedom and self-esteem.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, as with any other country, Belize's performance on each of the MDGs is linked to performance on all the others via the macroeconomic performance on poverty reduction in general. Poverty reduction should be based on two pillars of opportunity growth, one which focuses on investment to build individual and national capacity, and the other on the generation of income to facilitate redistributive social transfers that improve knowledge and health. This means that macroeconomic performance on investment and poverty reduction can be set as the general background for the interpretation of performance on the MDGs.*

### 2.1 Economic growth and poverty

In the last two decades, the economic performance of Belize has been irregular (**Figure 2.1.1; Table 2.1**), with high economic growth rates of some 12% at the beginning of the decade that only lasted for the period 1990-1993. Belize then experienced very slow economic growth during 1994-1995, then increasing levels of growth until it reached a promising 12% in the year 2000. This marked the start of an overall downturn, characterized by economic performance averaging 4.5% in the period 2001-2008 and recorded at -1.5% in 2009. The latter downturn reflects the effects of the global slowdown, natural disasters and the decline in the price of oil.

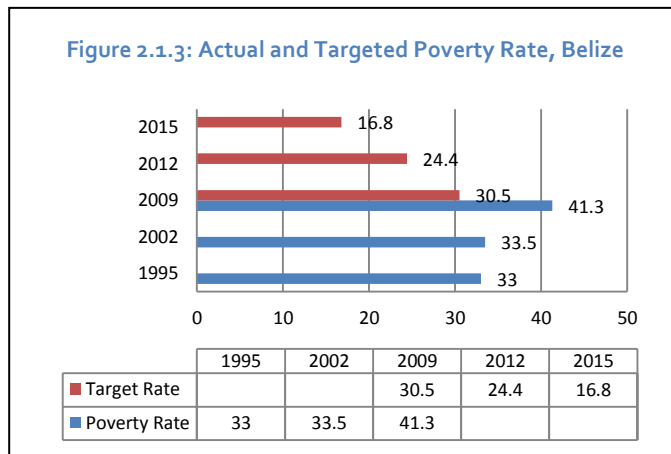
Over 1990 to 2009 real GDP per capita has been increasing in Belize (**Figure 2.1.2; Table 2.1**). This trend is normally associated with a downward movement in the poverty rate. Instead, the percentage of persons living in poverty in Belize increased from 33.5% in 2002 to 41.3% in 2009.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> UNDP (2003). Human Development Report 2003: The Millennium Development Goals, p. 27.

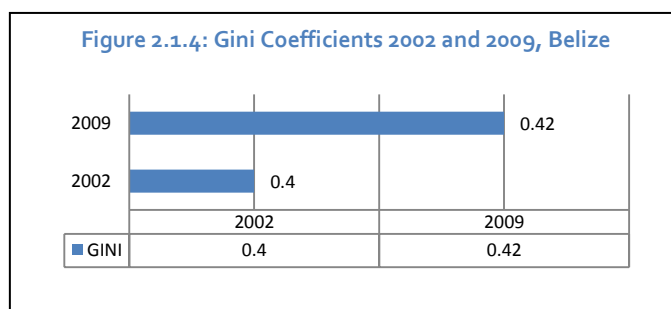
<sup>5</sup> The Final Report of the Belize Country Poverty Assessment indicates that the rate is 34% but this appears to be the result of rounding up.

This means that the poverty rate increased by 7.8 percentage points or, more intuitively, by about 23.3% (Figure 2.1.3; Table 2.2). The outturn runs counter to that anticipated by the National Poverty Elimination Action Plan 2007-2010, published in 2007, which projected significant declines in the poverty rate to 30.5% by 2009, 24.4% by 2012 and 16.8% by 2015 (Figure 2.1.3; Annex 2).<sup>6</sup> This rising poverty rate resulted in an increase in the number of Belizeans living in poverty to 142,861 as of 2009.<sup>7</sup>



It is widely acknowledged that both economic growth and inequality play a major role in generating changes in poverty. Indeed, there is little question that growth is essential for poverty reduction (assuming that the distribution of income remains more or less constant and the rate of growth exceeds the rate of population growth) and much evidence points in this direction.<sup>8</sup> In the case of Belize, the data show that poverty rates have been increasing even though annual GDP growth averaged 4.5% over the period 2001-2008 and per capita GDP has been rising. The suggestion of Bourguignon (2004) that a worsening of inequality tends to increase poverty offers a key to this apparent contradiction. It is noted that, “although poverty reduction is closely correlated to growth in per capita income, this effect appears low in countries where income inequality has been rising”<sup>9</sup> Data from the Country Poverty Assessment Surveys, 2002 and 2009, confirm that inequality increased in Belize from a rounded up 0.4 in 2002 to 0.42 in 2009 (Figure 2.1.4; Table 2.2).

In that regard, consistent with the underlying logic of the MDGs, in Belize the development strategies focused on the rate of growth of investment needed to expand opportunity in infrastructure, education, health and efficiency for the growing population, with an emphasis on private sector leadership. Such an approach would suggest that a positive relationship between GDP or GNI per capita and poverty might result from a fall in the strategic rate and structure of investment and



<sup>6</sup> The basis of these projections was not indicated.

<sup>7</sup> Population estimates are based on the medium variant of the population projections recommended by the Statistical Institute of Belize.

<sup>8</sup> Deninger, K. and Squire, L. (1996). A New Data Set Measuring Income Inequality. World Bank Economic Review; Ravallion, M. (2002). Externalities in Rural Development. Evidence from China. The World Bank (mimeo).

<sup>9</sup> Jäntti, M. and Sandström, S. (2005). Trends in Income Inequality: A critical examination of evidence in WIID2. Helsinki, WIDER (mimeo); López, J. H. (2008). Pro-Poor Growth: A review of what we know (and what we don't). Washington DC: The World Bank.

hence the rate of growth of GDP or GNI<sup>10</sup> in poor households and in sectors that employ the poor and vulnerable. Thus, the beneficial real income effects of general growth do not trickle down to the poor, causing an increase in inequality. The data presented in Section 2.2 support this perspective.

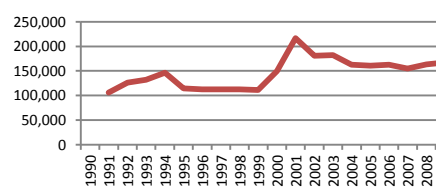
## 2.2 Investment, Poverty Reduction and MDGs

**Belize's poverty data point to an investment elasticity of poverty of about -3.84. Each 1% decrease in investment is associated with an increase in poverty of about 3.84%. This suggests that the consistent reduction in real investment since 2000 is the immediate macroeconomic cause of the increase in poverty.**

Within the context of international cooperation for development, the macroeconomic data on investment, domestic savings and net exports to finance necessary international inflows suggest that underinvestment in domestic capacity-building is one possible explanation for the inadequate poverty performance observed.<sup>11</sup> Investment in domestic capacity backed by domestic savings, as distinct from investment in foreign capital backed by foreign savings, is vital to the growth of average income and (re)distribution of income in favour of the poor and in favour of national ownership in general. Belize's real investment levels have been falling since 2000.

Furthermore, the data point to an investment elasticity of poverty of about -3.84. That is to say, each 1% decrease in investment is associated with an increase in poverty of about 3.84%. Two sources of data motivate this estimate, both related to the likely effect of the recovery of investment and of adopting a policy that will improve investment targeting to the poor, especially through their domestic capital such as education, health and housing. First, every 1% increase in real investment is likely to have a direct effect of lowering the poverty rate by about 2.9%, essentially a reversal of the increase in the poverty rate caused by the fall in the investment rate between 2002 and 2009. In a context of the commitment to achieve the MDGs, it is also assumed that there will be improved targeting of investment and other redistributive measures to emphasize the MDGs, such as through education, health and gender effects, investment will more than reverse the increasing inequality of the period since 2002. The best estimate of the likely effects of such redistribution comes from the case of Jamaica, where the effects of improved investment targeting and supporting redistribution was that each 1% improvement in inequality was associated with a 5.079% fall in the poverty rate.<sup>12</sup> Since these

**Figure 2.2.1: Gross Investments in 'US\$ '000 1990 to 2008**



<sup>10</sup> GNI means gross national income.

<sup>11</sup> See Devarajan, et al, 2002, as referenced above. Also, see Table 1, Annex 1.

<sup>12</sup> For relevant data, see National Report of Jamaica on MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS for the UN Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review, Geneva, July 2009, Planning Institute of Jamaica. Also see the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, published annually since 1990. The estimates average the effects of two periods of policy designed to reduce poverty. Between 1992 and 1996, the Jamaican GINI fell from 0.4 to 0.36 as the headcount poverty rate fell from 33.9% to 26.1%. Similarly, between 2004 and 2007, inequality fell from 0.38 to 0.36 while the poverty rate fell from 16.9% to 9.9%.

are joint (interactive) dynamic effects, in the absence of a suitable number of observations that allow application of a more powerful decomposition algorithm, we simply take a geometric average of the separate calculations. The result is an estimated investment elasticity of poverty of approximately -3.84.13

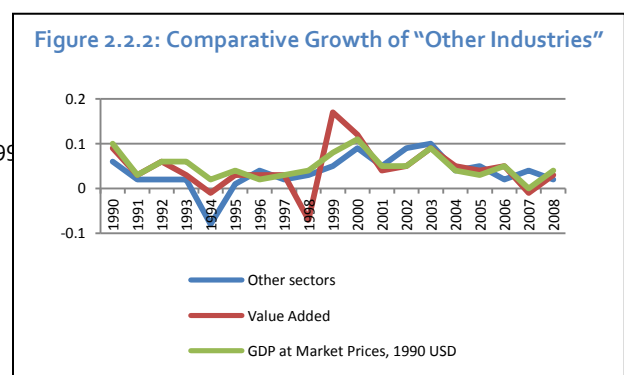
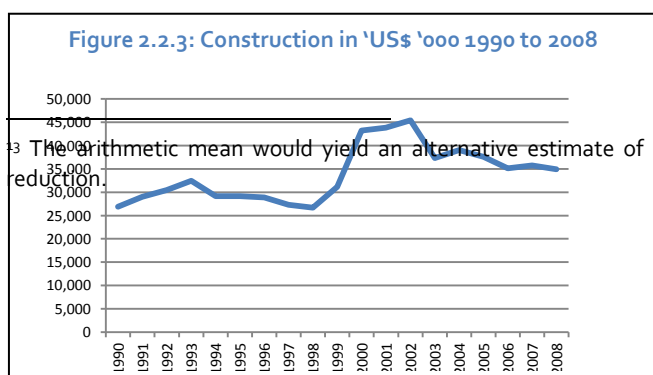
In that regard, in the two crucial extended periods of poverty increase: (i) 1995 to 2002; and (ii) 2002 to 2009, the process of capital accumulation in Belize was halted as capital formation declined. The level of real investment fell by about 6.4% per annum between 1993 and 1998 then recovered briefly in 1999 and 2000. Since 2000, it has been declining by about 4% per annum (*Table 2.3; Figure 2.2.1*).

The generic measures of the standard of living fell correspondingly, providing a mechanism that could drive up the poverty rate. In particular, as the investment rate declined in relevant periods, the rate of growth of GDP per capita fell rapidly.

In 2001, the year preceding the measurement of poverty in 2002, in the context of a precipitous decline in the growth of investment from 45.1% to -16.5%, the rate of growth of GDP per capita fell rapidly from 10.1% to 2.4%; and in the years 2007 and 2008, just before the measurement of poverty in 2009 and following a long period of accelerated decline in the rates of investment, the GDP per capita declined on average, specifically by -0.1% per annum, down from a year of robust positive growth of 3.4% in 2006. Most likely, this fall in the overall standard of living after 2006 was felt heavily by the vulnerable and possibly was picked up by the measure of increased poverty in 2009.

Furthermore, the changing structure of investment worsened conditions for the poor and vulnerable. Investment spending shifted away from sectors that tend to employ the poor and vulnerable and enable their move away from poverty. Construction activity, a major contributor to capital formation and a significant employer of this group, declined in real terms during periods that correspond almost exactly to the periods of poverty increase, assuming some relevant lagged effects. The level of construction activity fell at a rate of 3.8% per annum from 1993 to 1998, with a mild recovery up to 2001, and then fell continuously at a rate of 4% per annum thereafter. This is the same as the rate of decline of gross investment (*Table 2.3; Table 2.4*). *Figure 2.2.2* displays the trends for the construction sector. Construction activity accounts for about 4.3% of value added in Belize (*Table 2.5*).

The “other sectors” indicated in *Table 2.4* account for much of the investment in domestic capital, including education, health, housing, as well as general government services and arrangements for good governance. These also experienced overall growth, but it is instructive that during the periods of poverty increase, growth in investment in such capacities was significantly slower than gross value added. More important, in the period 2002 to 2009 there was actual decline in the real investment in many of these key capacities and opportunities. Notwithstanding, some sectors such as health and

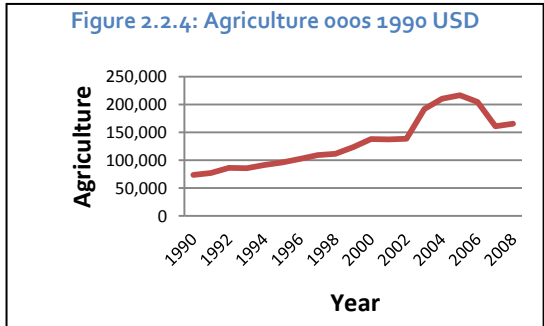


public infrastructure did in fact grow at the rates required to spur development. On average, since 1993 when the increase of poverty began, the other industries have grown at an annual rate of 3.6%, compared to 4.2% for total value-added by the industrial sectors and 4.7% for the GDP at market prices (Table 2.6). Figure 2.2.3 shows these comparative growth patterns.

A significant reason for the underperformance of these driver sectors was the inadequacy of government capital investment, especially in the forms necessary to lead the restructuring of the economy. Table 2.7 reports the pattern of real government capital spending since fiscal year 1999/2000, with respect to Education, Health, Human Development, Environment, and Works, which are the leading line ministries responsible for areas that drive MDG achievement. Over the fiscal years 2002/03 to 2008/09, real capital investment by the Ministry of Works increased by 8% and that by the Ministry of Health grew by 6.6%. These forms of investment meet the minimum necessary condition for development, since the real GDP grew at an average of 4.1% per annum over the same period (Table 2.6). Despite this, real capital investment by the Ministry of Education declined by 12.1% over the same fiscal years (2002/03 to 2008/09). Furthermore, investment undertaken by the Human Development Ministry declined by 14%, and that by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment fell by 6.9%. The overall effect was that real investment by the line ministries leading implementation of MDG related programmes declined overall by 6.4% during fiscal years 2002/03 to 2008/09. At the same time, the capital spending of other government ministries grew by 3.7%. Thus, total government investment declined by an average annual rate of 1.8% percent, even as real GDP was growing at 4.1%.

The overall evidence clearly indicates underinvestment in the most important forms of domestic capital, a signal that the fundamental conditions of development through national ownership were not being satisfied over the years. Indeed, this is compelling evidence of GDP growth without development and with rising poverty. One reason for this is the tendency to view MDG-related investment in education, information, health and housing, as social sector investments aimed especially at the poor or the vulnerable in society. However, far more than being mere social sector investments, these are perhaps the most important forms of (domestic) economic capital required to provide the social and economic fabric within which markets can foster transformative growth. Specifically, in the face of the frequent, sharp, negative, random price and technology shocks to which the economy is often subject, they embody the main capacities needed by Belize to undertake rapid switches of technique, joint production of commodities and effective utilization of knowledge spillovers from the rest of the world, and to raise routinely the efficiency of utilization of relatively scarce foreign exchange.

The agricultural sector is also a significant employer of the poor and vulnerable. Those who possess too little capital (capacity) to be employable in the knowledge-intensive and service-intensive emerging



sector live in the rural areas and depend on buoyant commodity prices. Often, such persons are recent immigrants from neighbouring countries with little education and with significant health problems. It is likely that the recent decline in agriculture has also



served to compound the problems created for these groups by the decline in the construction sector and in overall investments.

Real agricultural output has also been falling steadily since 2005, declining at an average rate of 8% per annum largely as a consequence the negative shocks to global agricultural commodity prices attending the trade liberalization process (**Table 2.4 and Table 2.6**). **Figure 2.2.4** illustrates the trends, which translate to falling profitability or even losses, and slow accumulation of physical and human capacity in the sector.

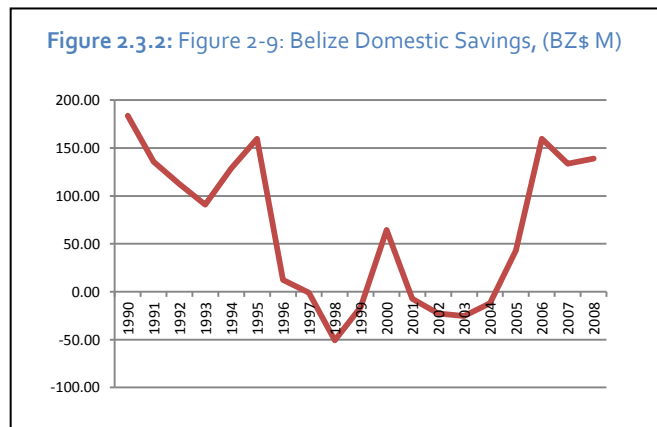
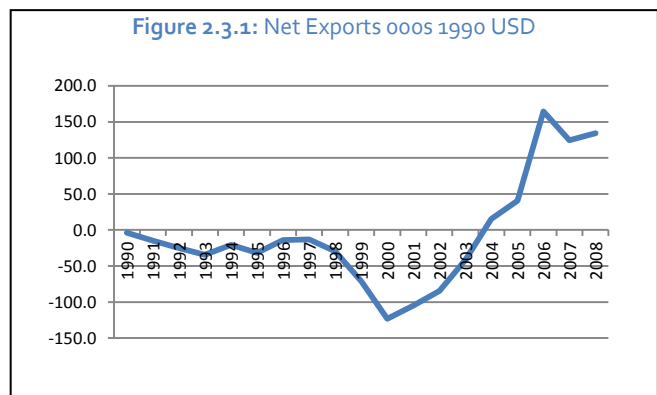
Construction and agriculture are bedrocks of the Belize economy and, in particular, are key sectors employing the poor and vulnerable. Together, they account for more than 25% of total value added, with agriculture accounting for more than 20% and construction accounting for about 4.4% (**Table 2.5**). The agricultural sector is highly susceptible to negative exogenous price shocks and the construction sector to negative shocks of foreign direct investment (FDI). It can therefore be expected that both sectors will be heavily affected by the ongoing financial and economic crisis and anaemic recovery in the global economy, with related consequences for poverty.

### 2.3 Debt patterns and MDGs

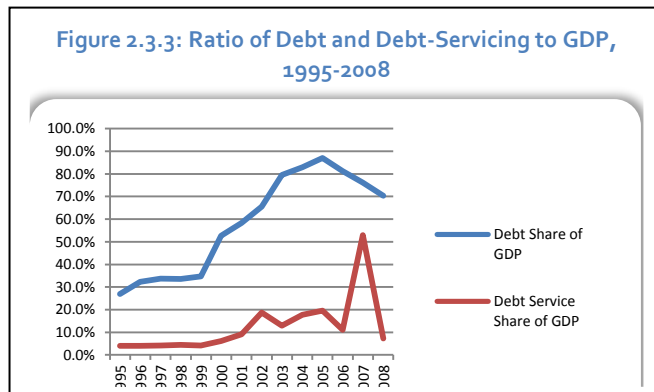
Within the framework of a policy to liberalize and reintegrate Belize into the international production and financial system, there was steadily increasing reliance on ODA and FDI and, most important, on expensive foreign and local commercial debt. Until 2004, the real value of the net exports of goods and services (including tourism) has been increasingly negative, though following an unstable pattern.

After 2004, there occurred what might well be described as a structural break in the relation of exports to imports. Net exports became positive and increased up to 2007, mainly through growth of tourism and mining. The growth of mining reflects the emergence of the oil industry.

Though they remained positive, the downturn of net exports in 2007 reflected the onset of recession in the large economies of the world when the bottom fell out of the commodity markets on which Belize relies (**Figure 2.3.1; Table 2.8**). At the same time, domestic savings have generally been falling rapidly thereby constraining investments in real domestic capital (**Figure 2.3.2; Table 2.9**).

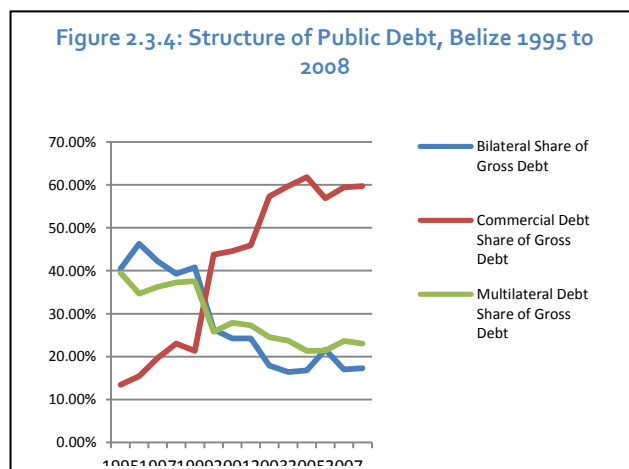


The share of public debt in GDP grew steadily from about 27% in 1995 to 70.3% in 2008, and peaked at 87% in 2005. Since 2000, the share has consistently averaged 73% of GDP (Table 2.10; Figure 2.3.3). Moreover, the stock of public debt has grown at a rate of 17.5% per year, compared to 7.1% for nominal GDP. The burden of debt servicing grew even more rapidly at an average rate of about 62.3% since 2000. Notwithstanding efforts in recent years to bring about manageable levels, debt-servicing has averaged about 17.3% of GDP since 2000.



Finger and Mecagni (2007)<sup>14</sup> of the IMF have presented evidence indicating that in the 30 years to 2007, while there is no simple cut-off point defining unsustainable debt practices, “60 percent of sovereign debt crises occurred when debt levels in the year preceding the crisis had been higher than 39 percent of GDP. Moreover, a 50 percent probability of being in a debt crisis is associated with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 80 percent”.

For Belize, a significant contributor to this situation was the increasing reliance on a high ratio of expensive, long term private foreign debt. This is in contrast to a portfolio mix consisting of a low share of expensive short-term public debt and a high share of the low cost, long-term debt of the international development agencies which have associated budget disciplines. The share of expensive commercial debt in total government debt rose from 13.4% in 1995 to 60% in 2008. By contrast, much cheaper bilateral debt fell from 40.5% of the total in 1995 to 17.3% in 2008 and similarly cheap multilateral development debt fell from 40% to 23% over the same period (Figure 2.3.4; Table 2.11).

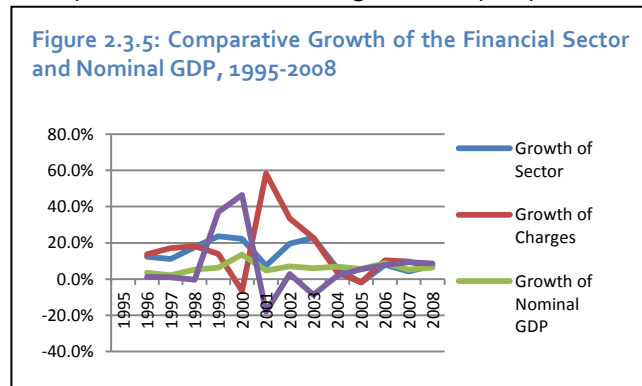


The switch occurred, even though the price of commercial debt (at more than 7% per annum) was consistently more than twice that of the bilateral and multilateral development financing. Correspondingly, the financial sector had several years of relatively risk-free high income premiums, without having to take the risk of innovating with financial instruments that facilitate the development of domestic capital. In nominal terms, the sector grew at an average of 9.2% between 2000 and 2008 while nominal investment grew at only 1.1% and, as we have seen before, real investment fell

<sup>14</sup> Finger, H. and Mecagni, M. (2007). Debt Sustainability after Restructuring. IMF Survey Magazine: Policy. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2007/POL0511A.htm>.

dramatically. During the same period, financial charges grew at 17.9% per annum (**Figure 2.3.5; Table 2.12**).

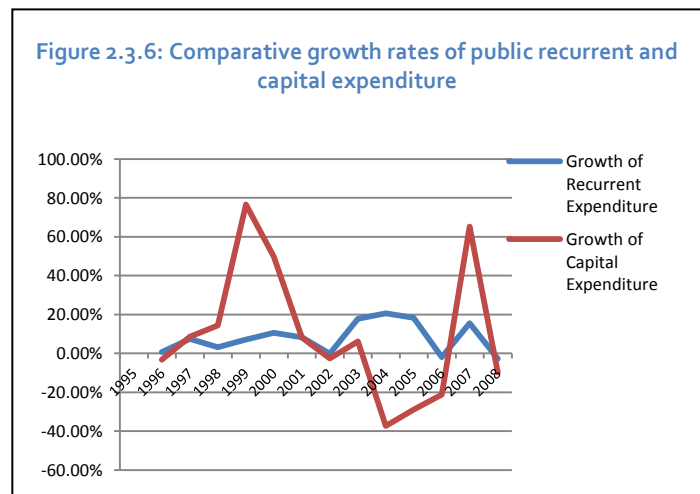
Further, since 2000, the public debt has grown at a rate of 17.5% per year, well above the rate of growth of exports. The latter averaged 8.5% per year, inclusive of two outlier years of 2005 and 2006 when



exports increased by 16% and 26%, respectively. These reflect the emergence of the oil industry and expansion of the shrimp sector. Excluding the outlier years, exports grew at an average of 5%, while imports grew faster at 8.9% per year. Further, the growing debt was used primarily to finance an increasing emphasis on consumption-oriented recurrent spending, mainly emoluments and debt service.

Over the period 2001-2008, consumption-oriented recurrent expenditure grew at 9.6%, faster than government spending on capital formation, which grew at 3.2% (**Figure 2.3.6; Table 2.13**). This absorbed as high a share as 81% of the budget in 2008.

However, the crucial observation, consistent with the overall decline in the rate of investment since 2002, is that the government capital spending declined at an average rate of 4.1% since 2001, with three consecutive years of very rapid decline of 37.3% in 2004, 28.9% in 2005 and 21.1% in 2006. Moreover, the joint effect of all trends identified in this background was to crowd out the various forms of public capital spending needed to support the poverty reduction effort through domestic capital formation and the related process of switching techniques. Consequently, sectors such as the specialist export sectors come under pressure through negative price shocks. This crowding out of domestic savings and domestic capital is in substantive contradiction to the MDG agenda generally, and to expectations of the advocates of international cooperation for development, who anticipated a substantial role for domestic savings and the saving rate (Lewis, 1954<sup>15</sup>; Devarajan, et al, 2002).



<sup>15</sup> Lewis, W.A. (1954). Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour. *The Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, Vol. 22, May, pp. 139-191.

The main implication of this analysis is that one of the causes of impoverishment was the decline in gross real investment, especially investment in domestic capital, accompanied at the same time by an increase in foreign claims on the output and income produced by the economy. In the absence of a strong programme of rapid domestic capital formation, globalization and integration into the global financial system was not accompanied by adequate measures to improve the absolute and relative capacity of the local community—especially the poor, the vulnerable and the local middle classes—to win opportunity for investment, income and consumption. Put differently, the patterns of growth of GDP per capita have not been particularly good for the poor and vulnerable in Belize. The Scorecard presented in Section III includes an assessment of the extent to which the achievements and failures on MDGs reflect or underscore these macroeconomic patterns.

The increase in the rate of poverty in Belize was only exacerbated by the current global financial and economic crisis. The Belize Country Poverty Assessment indicates that 15.8% of Belizeans are now indigent. This translates to an increase in indigence of 46%, compared to a much lower 23.3% rise in the level of poverty. Furthermore, the severity of poverty has increased since 2002. These figures demonstrate that Belize is far off track in the fight against extreme poverty and hunger and will not meet the targets of this MDG by 2015.

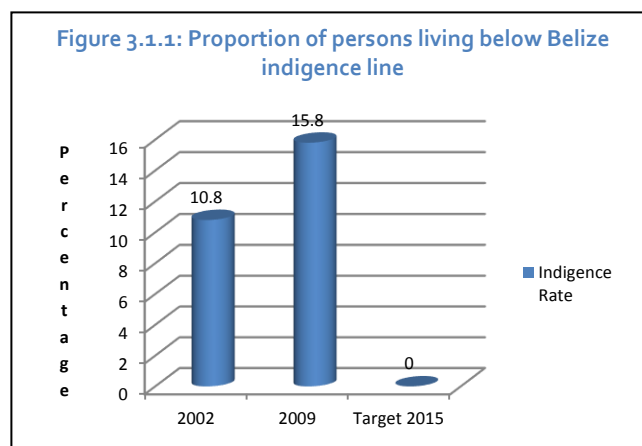
## SECTION 3: THE BELIZE MDG SCORECARD

### 3.1 Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

#### 3.1.1 Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living below the Belize indigence line.

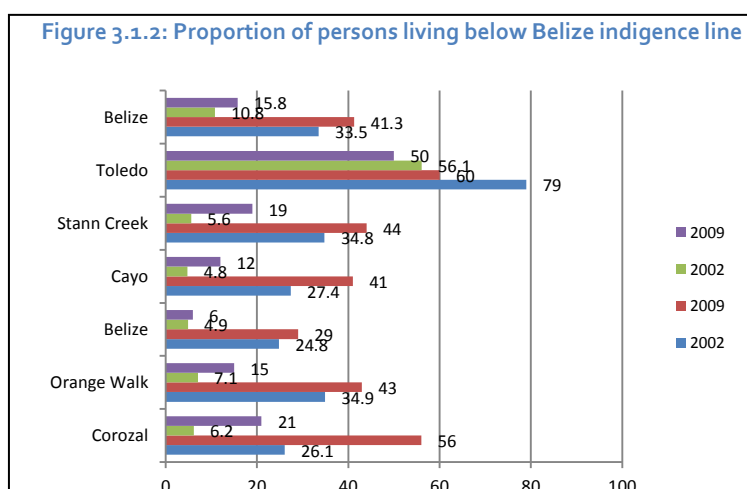
##### Indicator 1.1: Proportion of people living below the Belize indigence line, 1995, 2002, 2009 (Percentage)

Approximately 15.8% of Belizeans lived in indigent conditions in 2009, up from 10.8% in 2002 (Figure 3.1.1; Table 3.1.1). This represents a 46% increase over the period. As is the case for general poverty, this increase puts Belize well off the path to achieve the MDG by 2015 and is also inconsistent with the expectation of a general reduction in poverty by the National Poverty Elimination Action Plan (2007-2011).



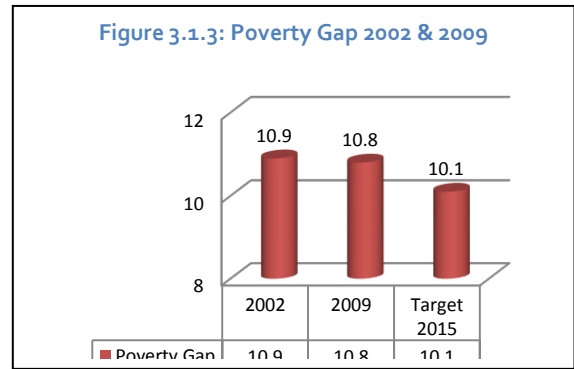
There have been significant changes in the distribution of poverty and indigence by district. Compared to 2002, the poverty rate has risen sharply in the northern districts of Corozal (from 26.1% to 56%), and Orange Walk (from 34.9% to 43%), while the rate has fallen significantly in Toledo (from 79% to 60%) (Figure 3.1.2; Table 3.1.1).

Thus, the districts of Corozal and Orange Walk have now joined Toledo as the focal points of poverty reduction in the country. The change is linked to the vulnerability of export agriculture to large negative exogenous price shocks, combined more recently with the negative demand shocks from the global economic crisis and natural disasters.



### Indicator 1.2: Poverty gap ratio

The Belize poverty gap ratio has been estimated at 10.8 for 2009.<sup>16</sup> This means that the typical indigent person consumes at a rate that is about 10.8% below the relevant poverty line. The poverty gap of 10.8 in 2009 represents a decrease from 10.9 in 2002 (**Figure 3.1.3; Table 3.1.2**), but is still well above the gap of 10.1 targeted by the National Poverty Elimination Action Plan 2007-2011.

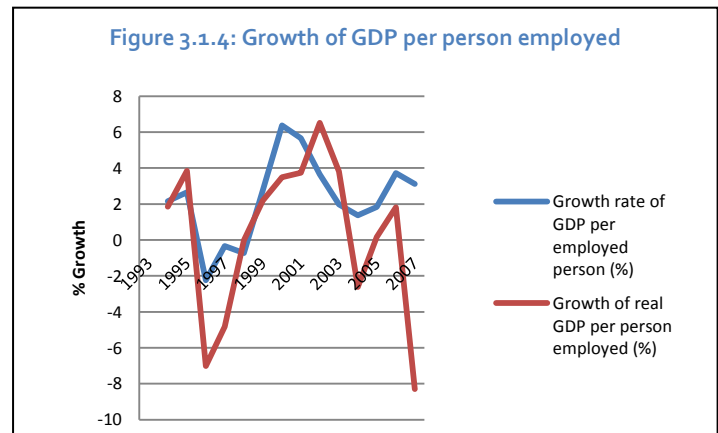


### Indicator 1.3: Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

Households in the poorest quintile accounted for 9.4% of total consumption spending in 2009. The wealthiest quintile consumed approximately four times that amount, accounting for 37.7% of total consumption. The more general GINI measure of inequality indicates that the inequality levels increased over the period since 2002. The estimate for 2009 was 0.42, significantly higher than 0.4 for 2002.

### Indicator 1.4: Growth rate of GDP per person employed

The data on GDP per worker provide clear support for the observed trend in general poverty and indigence. These are graphed summarily in **Figure 3.1.4** and specified in detail in **Table 3.1.3**. The data show that the rate of growth of GDP per worker, measured at market prices (US\$), has trended downward, though with some irregularity, since 2000. More important, since 2002, the period of dramatic increase in poverty, the rate of growth of real GDP per worker, which is to say labour productivity growth, fell even more dramatically.

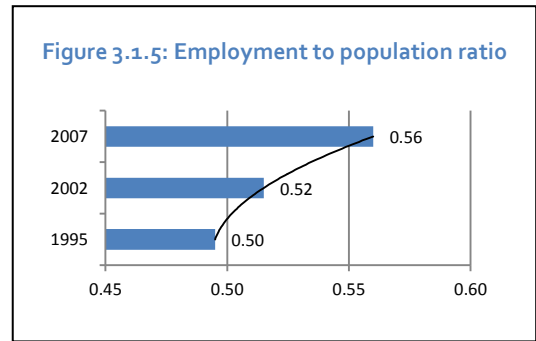


The data are consistent with the above indications that the rate of investment generally, and investment in domestic capital in particular, declined significantly over the same period. Under such conditions, the observed increase in poverty was the most likely outcome in the absence of a radical programme of income redistribution. Importantly, no targets were set for this indicator in the National Poverty Elimination Strategy, so only an intuitive interpretation of performance is possible against the actual trends in poverty and investment. This also signals that the MDGs play an inadequate role in wider medium-term macroeconomic planning.

<sup>16</sup> It is worth indicating here that, as indicated in the annexed metadata, the poverty gap measures the average intensity of poverty (or of indigence) as the average distance at which persons consume below the poverty line (or the indigence line in those cases), taken as a proportion (or percentage) of the poverty line (indigence line). The mean is computed over the population as a whole, so that persons who consume above the poverty line (indigence line) are scored as having a gap of zero.

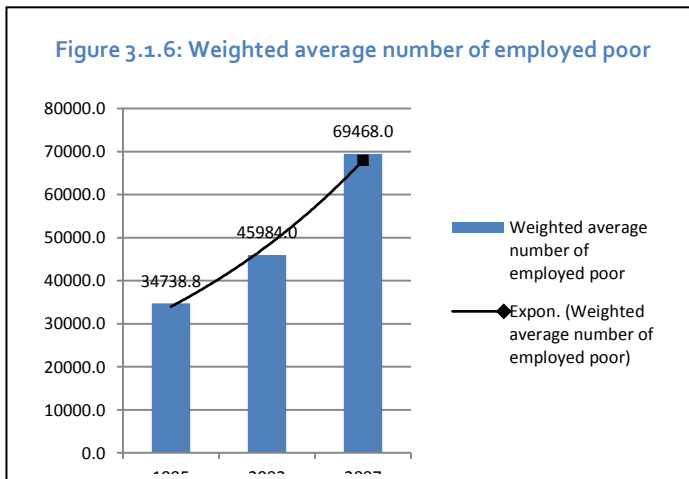
### Indicator 1.5: Employment-to-population ratio

The employment ratio was also increasing, from 0.495 in 1995 to 0.515 in 2002, rising further to 0.56 in 2007 (**Figure 3.1.5; Table 3.1.3**). The growth of the poverty rate (and of the indigence rate) over the same period signals that the new jobs being created might have been very low-end jobs which yielded incomes that are not adequate to lift the families of those earners above the Belize poverty and indigence lines.



### Indicator 1.6: Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day

In the absence of credible data related to purchasing power parity, Belize has opted to report on the general poverty or headcount rate, defined by the percentage of employed persons living below the poverty line defined in the Country Poverty Assessment Survey. Based on that data, Belize is far off track from a credible path to poverty reduction among the employed by



2015. Rather than falling, the number of poor employed in Belize has grown considerably since 1995 with the rate of poverty. The poverty rate increased from an estimated 33% in 1995 to 33.5% in 2002 and to 41.3% in 2009. Correspondingly, weighted by the numbers in the working population and the labour force, the average number of working poor increased from 34,739 in 1995 to 45,984 in

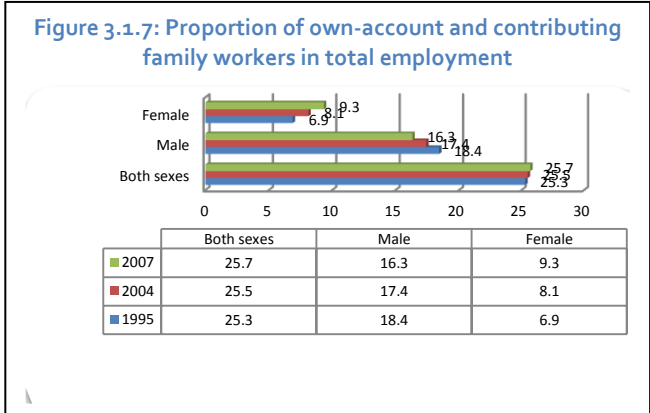
2002 and then to 69,468 in 2007, assuming the poverty rate of 41.3% is applicable to the latter year (**Figure 3.1.6; Table 3.1.4**). On this basis, rather than reducing the number of employed poor, Belize is moving in the direction of increasing poverty of the employed poor. This again suggests that, in a context of growing international competition, the capacity-building process is not adequately equipping Belizeans with increasing capacity to win employment opportunity at incomes above the poverty rate.

The National Poverty Elimination Action Plan, 2007-2010, published in 2007, had anticipated a significant and steady *decline* in the poverty rate to 30.5% by 2009, 24.4% by 2012 and 16.8% by 2015 (See **Annex 2**). Since general poverty reduction provides the broad guidelines for the pool of macroeconomic strategies to achieve the MDGs, these figures indicate the need for a major revision in the entire national poverty reduction strategy if the Belize MDGs are to be achieved by 2015.



**Indicator 1.7: Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment**

The Belize labour market consists of a significant pool of subsistence and, hence, under-employed workers involved in own-account work and unpaid assistance in typically small family enterprises. The share of such workers in total employment has actually drifted very slowly upwards, since 1995, indicating that the economy has not accumulated domestic and international capital at a rate sufficient to embrace the labour force fully in the capitalist market economy. Indeed, increasing subsistence living is one of the common trends accompanying a pattern of under-investment in relevant capital, whether domestic or foreign. Importantly, the rising rate of subsistence employment has been largely on account of rising female participation as subsistence workers. While the share of subsistence males working in the country has drifted downward, from 18.4% in 1995 to 16.3% in 2007, the share of female subsistence workers has increased comparatively faster, from 6.9% of the employed pool in 1995 to 9.3% in 2007 (Figure 3.1.7; Table 3.1.5).



Considering the dominant role of females in provisioning the home and managing the core problems of poverty on a daily basis and in the absence of major programmes to adequately capitalize on self-employment efforts, this indicator is to be treated as an opportunity to review policies and strategies that would enable the creation and expansion of economic spaces that allow for greater participation of women in the labour force. This indicator also signals the need to assess opportunities for skills development required to increase the productivity of those who remain under-employed in the labour force.

**3.1.2 Measures Required to Achieve Goal 1**

Belize is substantially off track to achieve MDG1 and while there are ongoing national interventions that are likely to increase the chance of achieving the MDG targets, there are considerable fiscal constraints that will influence the drive to reduce poverty by 16.6% in 2015. The national efforts for poverty reduction should now focus on expanding capital expenditure, growing domestic capital and generating employment to target the poor in the poverty stricken areas of the country. Efforts to achieve this MDG should also take into account the need for a migration policy that harnesses the productive and intellectual capacity of migrants who can build and strengthen Belize’s domestic capital.

Poverty reduction efforts will therefore need to directly target the new poor at the same time that government is expanding programmes to grow domestic capital formation. In view of the increase in poverty by 7.8 percentage points, these programmes should directly target vulnerable population groups through expanded social assistance programmes. Improved targeting of the poor for education subsidies and grants to cover the cost of higher education is

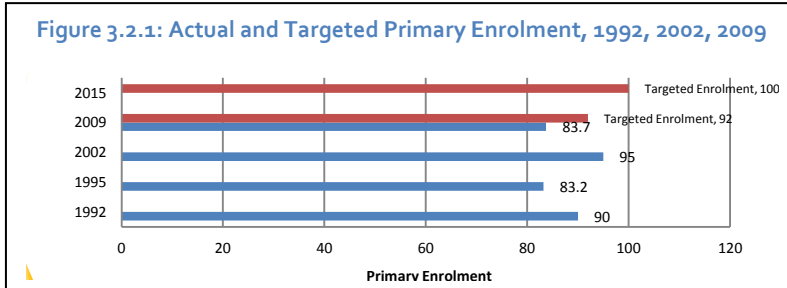
also crucial if the country is to grow and diversify its skills base. Support for entrepreneurship and housing at affordable costs are also essential to lift many out of poverty.

### 3.2 Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

#### 3.2.1 Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

##### Indicator 2.1: Net enrolment ratio in primary education

Primary Education in Belize is mandatory for all children ages 5- 14 years. While no tuition fees are charged, there are other increasing direct costs (transport, school uniform and school



books)<sup>17</sup> that families must meet for enrolment of their children in both government and government aided institutions. As indicated in the National Poverty

Elimination Action Plan of 2007, government’s commitment was to achieve a rate of 92% net enrolment by 2009, on the way to 100% by 2015. Net enrolment is defined as the percentage of children in the age group 5 to 12 years who are enrolled and attending primary school. The trend shows that while the number of 5 to 12 year olds enrolled in primary schools has increased steadily over the years, the “net” enrolment of this age group in primary schools has been on the decline. Primary net enrolment fell from 90% to 83.2% between 1992 and 1995, but increased again to 95% in 2001/02 and has been declining over the past 7 years to 83.7% in 2008/09 (*Figure 3.2.1; Table 3.2.1*). This apparent contradiction of trends reveals that investment to increase access to primary education has not been able to keep pace with a growing population. The declining enrolment may likely indicate that while the number of children in this age group is growing, many are not enrolled in the primary school system. Further analyses on the effect of migrant populations on the primary education sector need to be conducted.

Other key factors explaining declining primary attendance and increasing primary dropout rates are the inadequacies in the processes to sustain quality education (particularly at the primary level), the high proportion of untrained teachers, especially at the early grades, and the absence of role-models who can motivate young boys to stay in school. At the level of the home, contributory factors are the high and rising numbers of female-headed households,<sup>18</sup> poverty, and low parental capacity to provide the structure and information needed to establish and maintain effective discipline and support the building of life skills.

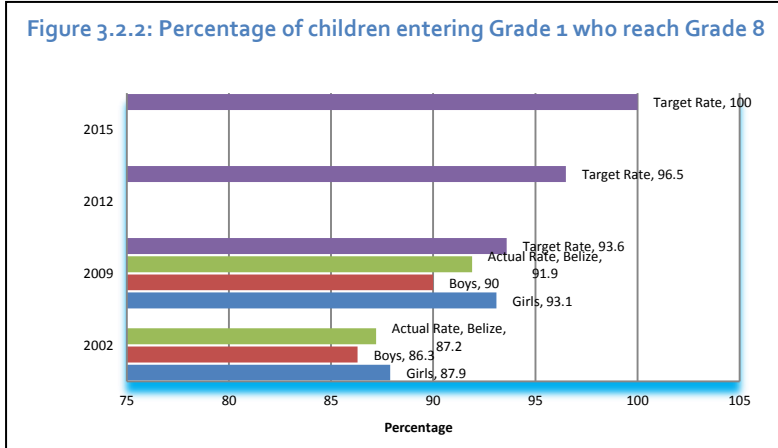
<sup>17</sup> International Institute for Education and Planning, Poverty and Education. Servaas van der Berg. Education policy series 10. ISBN:978-92-803-1322-2, page 22.

<sup>18</sup> Typically, female-headed households are single parent households, which are also relatively large.

Given these factors and resultant slippage in primary net enrolment rates, Belize is not poised to achieve the target rate of 100% primary net enrolment by 2015.

**Indicator 2.2: Proportion of pupils starting Grade 1 who reach last grade of primary (Grade 8)**

As shown in **Figure 3.2.2**, the expected completion rate is up overall and the expected completion rate for girls is virtually on track. A critical indication of improvement in the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable is the progress being made to ensure that children



entering primary school complete the full eight years of schooling. For Belize, the proportion of pupils who start Grade 1 and are expected to reach the last grade of primary school (Grade 8) increased steadily in the last 7 years, from 87.2% in 2002 to 91.9% in 2009. This

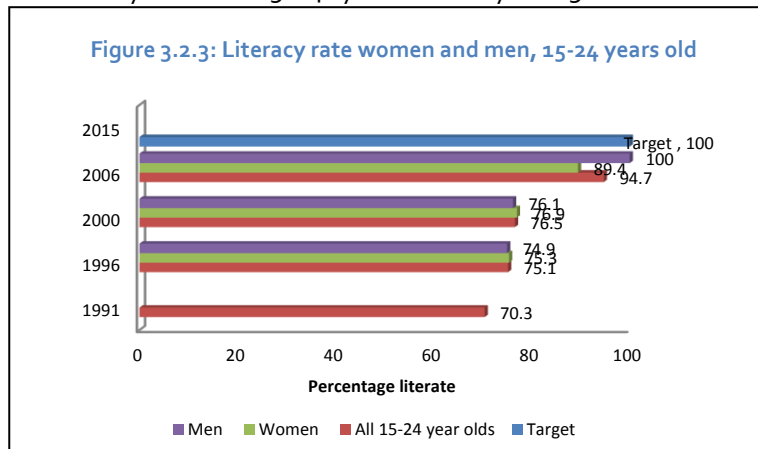
performance has fallen short of the national target of 93.6% set for 2009.

The deficit is an indication that even though the Ministry of Education receives 20% of government revenue after debt payments, the investment has been inadequate to ensure full participation of all children in school that would set the country on track to achieve the goal of 100% in 2015 (**Table 3.2.2**). The completion rate for girls has outpaced that for boys in each year.

Additionally, in 2009, the gap between girls and boys was higher than in 2002, indicating that the girls are leaving the boys behind in terms of the rate of survival up to Grade 8. The rate for girls is very close to the targeted rate for the nation.

**Indicator 2.3 - Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men**

Belize committed to achieving 100% literacy for all 15-24 year olds by 2015 and the intermediate target rate for 2009 was set at 90.6% (**Annex 2**). The literacy goal has been achieved for males but not yet for females. Defining as literate all persons who have completed at least 7 years of formal primary education, the literacy rate grew in the inter-census decade from 70.3% in 1991 to 76.5% in 2000. By 2006, it was 94.7%, well above the target rate of



90.6% and clearly on track to meet the goal of 100% by 2015 (**Figure 3.2.3**). At 100% literacy, men had already achieved the target by 2006 and women were at 89.4%, just at the rate targeted for 2009.

These data indicate that Belize has met and surpassed its literacy targets. The central problems of poverty related to literacy, however, are not merely the remaining pockets of illiteracy but may much more likely be the question of preparedness to compete for higher quality jobs as the economy evolves. The literacy rate may be a very low baseline indicator and the country will need to re-consider the related targets to better align them with the skills needed for poverty reduction. Some of this will become evident from the gender data presented for MDG3.

The present high and increasing trend in the literacy rate reflects the need to improve the quality of education and ultimately to achieve the goals of reducing both the current levels of poverty and the transmission of inter-generational poverty. The decline in enrolment at the primary level of 16.3% in 2009, and a concurrent incompleteness rate of 8.1% in 2009, if unchecked, could cause a *decline in this upward trend in the literacy rate* in the future. From a monitoring perspective, trends in enrolment, completion of the last grade of primary school (Grade 8), and the literacy rate require the tracking of inter-temporal changes of these three indicators at the district level. Such tracking should aim to: *a) assess progress in view of the national target; and b) evaluate the six districts to determine their progress; i.e. those that are improving, those that may be declining and those that may remain static.* This would allow for fine-tuning of geographical targeting and improving the efficiency of spending at the local level. It would also provide for an inter-temporal, district-wide comparison in order to assess progress of these three targets through to 2015, and would help to ensure their attainment.

### **3.2.2 Current Interventions Directed Toward Achievement of this Goal**

Belize has met and surpassed its literacy target but is not on track to achieve the overall education goal in MDG2 by 2015. There are a number of interventions currently under implementation that will likely contribute to steering further progress in this goal.

#### ***Quality School Initiative***

The Quality School Initiative (QSI) is an effort currently being piloted in 5 schools on the Southside of Belize City as well as in 5 schools in the Toledo District. This initiative fosters collaboration and partnership among teachers, students, parents, staff, principals and other administrators. The QSI curriculum is geared towards building student knowledge, strengths, and critical thinking skills, and to developing positive attitudes.

#### ***Nutrition Programmes***

In the absence of a national school nutrition programme, small-scale school feeding programmes are being funded by various denominations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private individuals and entities. Currently, government provides limited funding for nutrition programmes; these require scaling up of all resources to have meaningful impact.

### ***Adopt a School***

The “Adopt a School” programme provides an avenue for the private sector to contribute to the enhancement of the school learning and social environments with benefits to both teacher and students. The “Adopt a School” programme provides creative ways by which various organizations can provide small-scale support that could positively impact achievement of this MDG. These interventions should be specifically targeted towards schools that are in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and rural areas. It should be noted that, in general, educational programmes require financial support other than government funding and that the private sector is a key stakeholder in ensuring success in meeting the MDG2 target.

### **3.2.3 Measures Required To Achieve Goal 2**

Effective delivery of education in Belize is imperative in order to reach this MDG. The Ministry of Education will need to be proactive but it will also need to be supported as it addresses the challenges in the system to spur gains in learning achievements. Some crucial considerations should include improving the physical infrastructure of education facilities, ensuring an adequate supply of skilled teachers who are suitably trained and sufficiently motivated to deliver relevant and engaging curricula to students. In order to support school enrolment and retention, the Ministry of Education will also need to assess the adaptation of non-academic measures including social protection programmes such as support to school feeding programmes, encouragement for effective parent and community engagement, enforcement of parental accountability laws, adoption of relevant and response curriculum, and promotion of safe, healthy and supportive learning environments in the primary schools. To ensure significant and consistent gains in student enrolment and attendance and in teacher quality and retention, it will be necessary to invest in effective supervision and monitoring arrangements in the education system, improve governance and tracking mechanisms, ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities and maintain synergies in the use of resources and capacities.

The Ministry will also need to assess key factors to explain the declining primary school attendance rates such as the high cost of education (particularly with regard to fees and related expenses), inadequacies in the quality and relevance of education (particularly at the primary level), the high proportion of female compared to male teachers (especially at the early grades) and the absence of role-models to motivate students, especially males, to stay in school. There is also need to strengthen the school-home connection for the child and parent. Aggregated data for two consecutive years<sup>19</sup> indicate that the attrition rate at the primary school level is cause for serious concern. Further, statistical research and analysis is required to determine the extent to which this situation persists as well as the underlying contributing factors and strategies to be implemented to reduce its occurrence.

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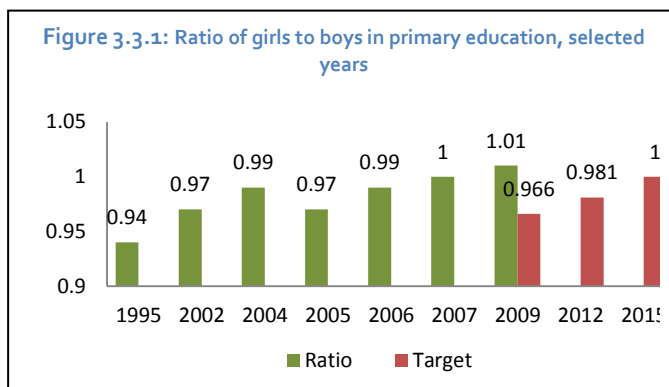
<sup>19</sup> Education Statistics Digest 07-08, Ministry of Education

### 3.3 Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

#### 3.3.1 Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

##### Indicator 3.1 - Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education

The ratio of girls to boys in primary education shows that the proportion of girls relative to boys has increased. This reflects a positive achievement for girls. In 1995, the ratio of girls to boys in primary education was 0.939. By 2002, the ratio was up to 0.97 and at year end in 2009 it has been reported at 1.01 (**Figure 3.3.1**). In other words, for every 100 boys in school there are 101 girls enrolled.



The fact that girls are now outnumbering boys in primary school suggests two things. First, the focus on girls has been successful and must be maintained. Second, there is now a need to focus on educational policies and strategies that would help reach full parity with boys and girls at the primary school level. However, one in every twenty boys and one in every twenty girls do not attend primary school. It will therefore be important for the education sector to thoroughly review and understand the root causes of this imbalance, and address these urgently. Beyond the issue of parity there is also need to focus on the overall participation of children of high school age who are not attending school. In 2006, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) reported that merely 58.7% of children who are of secondary school age are attending secondary school and of the remaining 41.3%, approximately 14.9% are in primary school. The remaining 26.4% are out of school.

A recent national conference<sup>20</sup> with primary school principals and stakeholders in education found that much of the explanation for the male to female school enrolment disparity point to socialization patterns. There are expectations and encouragement for boy's behaviour which are different from that for girls and are generally not conducive to their success in school. The consultation also informed that some actions by parents favour boys dropping out of school to seek early entrance into the work force. "Male privileging"<sup>21</sup> is also seen as an issue in raising boys with the effect that they are left ill-prepared and unfit for the school environment<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> The Unspoken Gender Dimension: Boys and Education Conference, UNICEF 2007

<sup>21</sup> Male Privileging is a situation where boys are allowed seemingly more social freedom in the home than girls. This is described in the UNICEF Boys and Education Conference Report, 2007

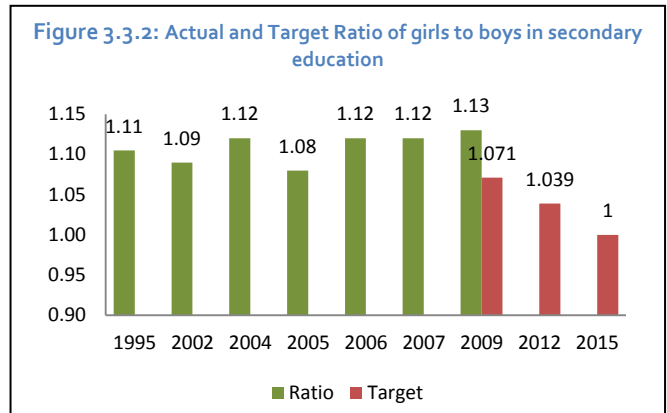
<sup>22</sup> *ibid*



In agricultural communities, the labour of boys is considered more valuable than that of girls and, while boys are likely to drop out of school to work on farms, girls are more likely to complete their schooling. This national conference further noted that many in the Belize education system are critical of the suitability of the teaching methodologies and curricula as a means to address the current lack of parity in education.

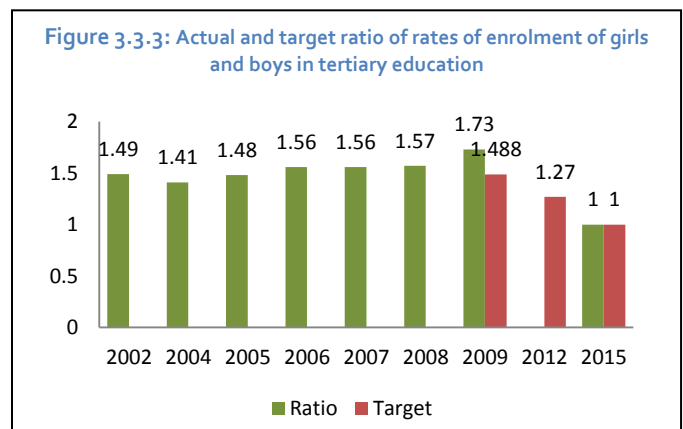
The need for corrective interventions is even more evident in the case of secondary education. Here, the target of parity of

attendance rates between girls and boys was also achieved and surpassed by 2002. The ratio of girls to boys was 1.105 in 1995, reached 1.087 in 2002, and has now risen to 1.13 in 2009 (**Figure 3.3.2**). Thus, while Belize has been exceedingly successful in bringing girls fully into secondary education, it is notable that the small gender gap previously evident in primary school has widened considerably at the secondary school level. This widening gap indicates a need to sustain and improve upon the gains made for girls, while introducing efforts to ensure that boys are not left behind. With a sufficient medium term lag, such disparity would normally play a significant role in the level of poverty. Consequently, it is important to understand the root causes of this gender imbalance and urgently develop relevant interventions targeting boys.



The same pattern of imbalance is repeated in tertiary education. Belize has done well to encourage girls to take up available tertiary places as the basis for ensuring improved capacity to win opportunities for entrepreneurship, income and consumption, but the country has faced challenges in achieving and sustaining parity between boys and girls. The relative enrolment rate of eligible girls to boys increased dramatically from 1.488 in 2002 to 1.73 in 2009 (**Figure 3.3.3**). Increased investment in tertiary education in an increasingly globalized world will be important in developing the capacity to compete for high-quality, high-paying jobs and business opportunities in the local and international market place.

The results partly reflect the widening of gaps starting at the earlier primary and secondary levels, and most fundamentally, in the early childhood phases of education.



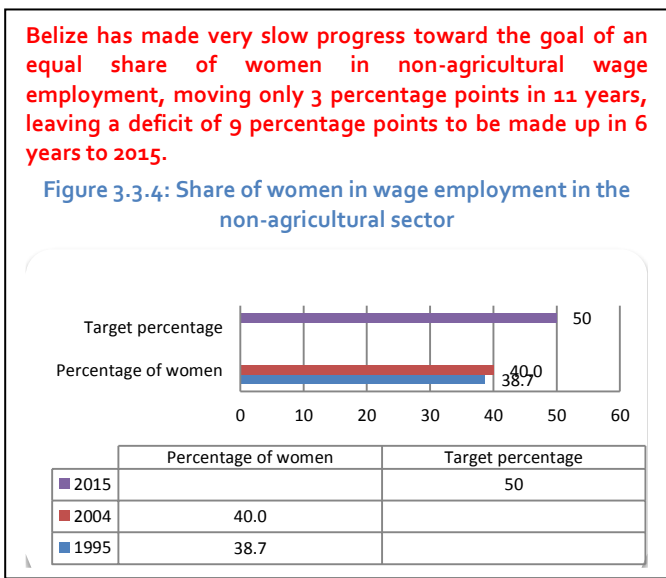
However, there is clearly a need to rethink strategies for and approaches to investment in relevant capacity development for both males and females. This includes curriculum revision and skills development for competency and confidence-building in the pursuit of any chosen career.

It should be noted that the indicator on parity in education does not touch on the issue of educational quality. Some argue that girls and boys upon completion of schools are not satisfactorily equipped with the skills and capacities needed to make them productive members of the workforce. On a related note, the statistics do not capture the extent of the (reportedly common) practice of “social promotion”; that is, promoting failing children to a higher grade in primary school in order to keep them with their cohorts.

It is notable and significant that Belize had been successful in achieving, the indicator on gender parity in primary and secondary education. However, gender parity in education is closely linked to poverty reduction and should be given great attention. The fact that girls in Belize are doing well in school is a cause for celebration. At the same time however, it cannot be emphasized enough that it is gender parity that is important, not the success of one sex or the other. As such, the parity gap that can be seen at all levels of the education system at present must be addressed.

**Indicator 3.2 - Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.**

Women who are not yet in the labour force, or not yet in the non-agricultural sector, represent a considerable resource that can be deployed into non-agricultural employment, as the basis for exploiting available development opportunity. Yet, Belize has made only very slow progress toward the goal of an equal share of women in non-agricultural wage employment. Since 1995, i.e., over 11 years to 2007, the share has moved only 3 percentage points, from 38.7% to 41.7%, with a 9 percentage point deficit to be made up by 2015 (**Table 3.3.1**). Despite increased participation of females in education, there is still slow movement in women’s participation in the formal workforce.



The slow progress is another manifestation of the under-investment in the type of capacity needed to absorb women from current paid agricultural employment or in the subsistence sector of the self-employed into forms of employment in which they use adequate levels of capital. This indicator takes into account women’s active and leading roles in other critical areas of employment such as in the health sector, NGO management, and education. While women tend to have a strong presence in these sectors it still remains that more men than women are likely to access higher paying jobs including those outside of the agriculture sector. Belize is

currently implementing its national census which will provide additional information on women's employment in the non-agriculture sector. Community-based infrastructure development, accessible and relevant education, health, housing and the general capacity-building support to produce and commercialize intellectual property are all crucial to advance achievement in this MDG.

**Indicator 3.3 - Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament**

The National Poverty Elimination Strategy (2007-2011), strives to support gender equality and women's empowerment as a "principle of good governance." Investment of resources, both human and financial, in good governance arrangements is a fundamental indicator when it comes to investment in national capacities, albeit an indicator which tends to show a certain time lag. In turn, the preparedness of women to participate in political processes on par with men is a fundamental indicator of the adequacy of such investment. This indicator is not simply a measure of how many women and men are involved in governing; it goes beyond this and speaks of representation and equality in national decision-making, and equity in national development.

The overall presence of Belizean women at the national decision-making level is low. It is notable that Belize has not shown significant progress in this area; in fact, some regression is evident. In 1993, 3.45% of the seats in the Lower House of the Belize Parliament were held by women. Whilst this improved to 6.9% in 1998, there has been persistent regression since. As of 2003, only one seat was held by a woman and by 2008 there were none (*Figure 3.3-5*). At the sub-national level, the story is somewhat better, yet similar.

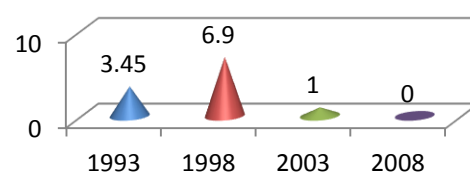
About 32 per cent of elected village council members and two out of nine mayors are women. Per the constitution, mayoral candidates are voted for separately from candidates or

Efforts to improve the level of women's participation in politics involved a first "Women in Politics Project" (WIPProject). The project was a flagship initiative for the National Women's Commission of Belize and was also a first for the Caribbean region. It is designed to build a critical mass of women who want to serve as political leaders and provides them with theoretical and practical training in several areas of politics, including Voter Education, Parliamentary Procedures, The Belize National Gender Policy, and Running a Political Campaign.

The former Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados, Dame Billie Miller was the guest speaker at the first WIP Graduation ceremony held on March 24, 2010, where 47 women graduated after 15 weeks of intense training. Dame Billie said, "Young women have been exposed to leading edge political realities. It is quite an accomplishment and unlike anything of its kind that I have encountered."

The "Women in Politics Project" (WIPProject) was launched on October 22, 2009 with 53 women of all ethnicity, ages and educational qualification.

**Figure 3.3-5: Percentage of seats held by women in the lower house of the Belize Parliament**



councillor so that these two positions reflect poll results and not appointments. It is important to understand that in Belize women are active, vocal and visible in many parts of public life.

They are actively involved in leading and managing large portions of the NGO/CBO<sup>23</sup> sector and frequently use this medium to advocate for change. They are represented in significant numbers at the technical level and the mid-management level in the public sector and in the private sector. Of the sixteen Chief Executive Officers in Government, six (6) are females. Women are often the main drivers of church and community groups. In light of this, their relative absence from the political process suggests that there is room for improvement in terms of their representation at the highest level of national decision making. One implication of their absence at this level is that some sectors, typically those that are led by women, do not have as strong a voice as their numbers suggest. It is imperative that more women are represented in the national government to directly influence positive change and eliminate gender disparity at all levels.

The commitment embedded in the Millennium Declaration is that, by 2015, Belize would make consistent and continuous improvement in the relative capacity of women to access opportunities to serve as constituency representatives. In order for this to happen, some of the root causes of women's absence from political leadership roles will need to be addressed. It is evident that women at the national level are not only far less likely to be voted into office, but are also far less likely to enter into public life. Anecdotal evidence and interviews with women suggest that cultural norms and traditional perceptions of the role of women predominates, and as such, women continue to work "behind the scenes", without stepping forward for election, and without being asked.

### **3.3.2 Current Interventions Directed Toward Achieving this Goal**

Data to guide specific interventions and a proactive policy framework for women's empowerment is crucial to support Belize's achievement of this MDG. Currently, the National Women's Commission is using the 2010 census to collect data on national perceptions of women's role in public life.

This information will further enhance the work of the Commission and influence policy direction for greater participation of women in public life. There is also an innovative and proactive initiative to train women in leadership and politics and thus prepare them for entrance into electoral politics. Also, several instruments that directly impact women's status and well-being in Belize such as the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act and the Families and Children Act are currently under review to ensure further inclusion of women's rights and entitlements in development policy and planning. The Belize National Gender Policy is newly revised.

There is reason to be optimistic with regards to Belize's progress in this this MDG, despite the statistics. The benefits from the continued successes of girls in school will become evident in the longer term, as more educated women, particularly those who have completed tertiary

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<sup>23</sup> Community-based Organizations.

level education, will likely enter the work force. Additionally, the presence of significant female leadership in the NGO sector and community-based organizations is evidence that public spaces for women leaders continue to be created. The challenge, however, will be to bring greater visibility to their presence and to promote their active participation in electoral politics. A number of NGOs, including Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (BEST) and the Women's Issues Network (WIN) Belize are engaged in income generation and vocational training for young women since greater economic empowerment is likely to positively influence women's participation in national politics.

### **3.3.3 Measures Required to Achieve Goal 3**

Belize will not achieve this goal by 2015. The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in its recommendations to Belize's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> periodic report (July 2007) cautioned that the country would need to fast track women's political leadership by putting in "special temporary measures" for women's political representation at the highest parliamentary level. To date, this has not yet occurred though the next reporting period is July 2011. It is unlikely that there will be any change in women's national political representation at this time.

In order to reverse the adverse effects of poverty on women, special attention must be given to adopting strategies that improve their social, financial and political position in the home and in the public domain. There will also be a need to recognize the geographic disparity that influences women's access to education. While girls outnumber boys in secondary and tertiary level education, special attention needs to be given to rural women and girls who are often constrained from completing their education because of cultural norms which enable them to drop out of school at an early age to start families. Additionally, women and girls living in rural areas are less likely to benefit from education and employment since resources tend to target those living in urban centres. All girls and women must be supported to access at least secondary level education in order to build independence and empowerment. Lack of education among women will undoubtedly contribute to increase in poverty among this group, placing them at a further disadvantage in the traditional labour market and in a weak position to undertake viable self-employment.

Women's work must also be valued more. Despite equalling and surpassing males in education at secondary and tertiary levels, women continue to be underpaid, even as they experience low participation in economic activity and have inequitable access to means of production. The data in **Table 3.3.2** demonstrate this for Belize since they show that a higher percentage of females receive the lowest level of wages. It is also notable that the mean wage for females is lower, and that a smaller percentage of women receive income in the highest bracket. There is also a need to create more space for female participation in the special areas in the non-agricultural areas of the workforce such as in the legal, medical, business management, law enforcement, tourism, and natural resource management arenas which are male dominated. Mechanisms must be established to facilitate calls from CEDAW to increase women's economic participation

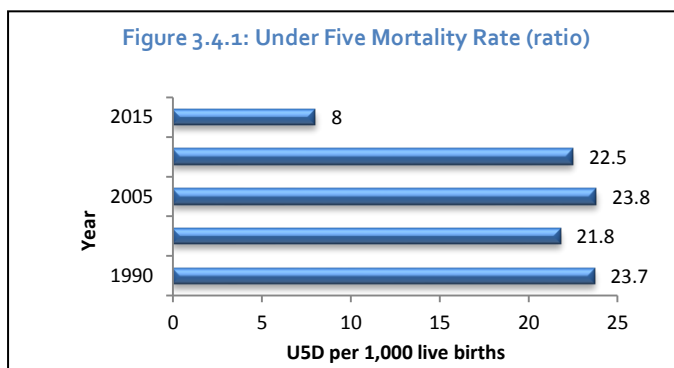
to allow for a higher percentage and greater numbers of women in the labour force. Furthermore, women's participation in the formal and informal labour force must be valued as a legitimate national development strategy in order to improve overall national productivity.

### 3.4 Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

#### 3.4.1 Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

##### Indicator 4.1 - Under-five mortality rate

In Belize, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) for 1990 was 23.7<sup>24</sup> per 1,000 live births and in 2009, the rate decreased to 22.5<sup>25</sup> per 1,000 live births (**Figure 3.4.1; Table 3.4.1**). In 2008, a Ministry of Health U5MR projection exercise showed that if this trend was to continue MDG4 would be achieved in the year 2049.<sup>26</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, the under-five mortality rate fell by 56% between 1990 and 2008, at a weighted annual average rate of 4.5%. Latin America and the Caribbean reported the highest rate of reduction of all regions worldwide that classify their progress toward achieving the MDG target as “on track”. Comparing the under-five mortality rate for Belize in the years 1990 and 2009, there has been no significant change. In 2009, 47% of the total under - five deaths occurred in the neonatal period; globally this percentage is 37%.<sup>27</sup> By region, the highest under-five mortality rates are in southern Belize. In 2002, this area also had the highest rates of poverty and indigence and this remained the situation in 2009.<sup>28</sup>



##### Indicator 4.2 - Infant mortality rate

The infant mortality rate (IMR) is a useful indicator of a country's level of health or development, and is a component of the *physical* quality of life index.<sup>29</sup> The average annual rate of reduction during the period 1990-2007 is 2.9%. For Belize the infant mortality rate for 1990 was 17.6<sup>30</sup> and for 2009, 17.9<sup>31</sup> per 1,000 live births (**Table 3.4.2**). The IMR in 2009 when compared to 1990 has increased by 1.1%. The IMR in the Latin America and Caribbean Region fell from 44 per 1,000 in 1990 to 22 per 1,000 in 2007.<sup>32</sup> The main causes of death are those

<sup>24</sup> The Ministry of Health Belize, made an adjustment to its under five mortality rate for the year 1990 utilizing a backward projection methodology whereby rates reported during the period 1992 to 2008 were utilized in estimating the actual rate for that year.

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Health Preliminary Administrative Report, 2009

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Health. Maternal and Neonatal Mortality review, 2008

<sup>27</sup> Child Health Epidemiology Reference Group (CHERG) estimates of the percent distribution of under-five deaths by cause available in the WHO, World Health Report 2005; estimates of total under-five deaths for the year 2006 based on the work of the UNICEF/WHO/World Bank/UN Population Division Child Mortality Estimation Group (available in the forthcoming The State of the World's Children 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Belize Poverty Report 2002, Central Statistical Office, Belize.

<sup>29</sup> Morris, Morris David (January 1980), "The Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI)", *Development Digest* 1: 95–109

<sup>30</sup> State of the World's Children 2009, UNICEF.

<sup>31</sup> Health Statistics of Belize 2004-2008, Ministry of Health and PAHO/WHO.

<sup>32</sup> Some caution should be exercised in the interpretation of these rates because of the small numbers in the population and in the observed cases.



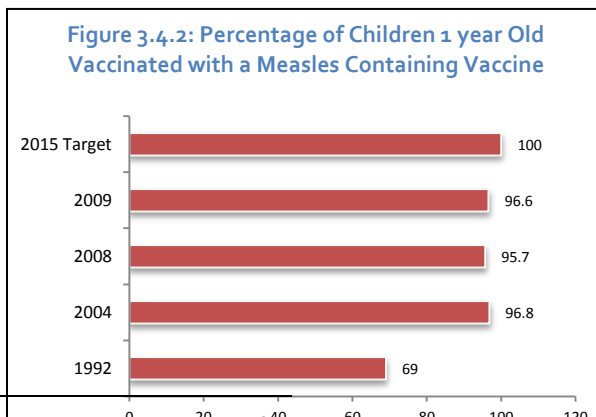
related to the neonatal period.<sup>33</sup> In 2009, 59.3% of the total infant deaths occurred during this period.

Nutrition is one of the leading contributors to infant mortality rate. Further, among the basic and underlying causes of under-nutrition are the environmental, economic, and socio-political contextual factors, with poverty having a central role.<sup>34</sup> Poverty in Belize increased from 33.5% in 2002 to 41.3% in 2009, and it is expected that this increase in poverty would have impacted negatively on child health. Nutrition is a desperately neglected aspect of maternal, newborn, and child health.<sup>35</sup> Notably, the exclusive breastfeeding rate up to 6 months of age for Belize was 10% in 2006.<sup>36</sup> The stunting rates among children under five years of age have shown very slow progress in reduction from 18%<sup>37</sup> in 2002 to 17.6%<sup>38</sup> in 2006. Stunting, severe wasting, and intrauterine growth restriction are among the most important problems affecting with the health and wellbeing of women and children.<sup>39</sup>

**Indicator 4.3 – Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles**

Despite the high migration rate from neighbouring countries into Belize, measles vaccination coverage for children who are one year-old has been achieved and maintained to the minimum accepted standard of 95%. In 1992, vaccination coverage was only 69%. However, by 2004, coverage increased to 96.8%, above the goal of 96.6% set for 2009 (**Table 3.4.3; Figure 3.4.3**). The Belize national vaccination schedule provides antigens against eleven vaccine preventable diseases. Vaccines are provided to the target population at health facilities and during mobile clinics.

The private sector provides around 30% of the vaccines (Belize District) through facilities procuring services for the national health insurance. The success of this vaccination programme has meant that Belize is now within 4 percentage points of the 2015 target of 100% measles vaccination coverage, a performance that is in correspondence with the commitment of the Government of Belize to ensure 100% of vaccines and logistics every year.



The expanded programme on immunization includes a surveillance system through which immune preventable diseases are monitored. Immune preventable diseases have not been the causes of death in children under five in the last 9 years.

<sup>33</sup> The neonatal period is the period from birth, 27 completed days after birth.  
<sup>34</sup> The Lancet, Volume 371, Issue 9608, Pages 243 - 260, 19 January 2008.  
<sup>35</sup> The Lancet, Volume 371, Issue 9608, Page 179, 19 January 2008.  
<sup>36</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, UNICEF, 2006.  
<sup>37</sup> Belize Country Poverty Assessment, Statistical Institute of Belize, 2002.  
<sup>38</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, UNICEF, 2006.  
<sup>39</sup> The Lancet, Volume 371, Issue 9608, Page 179, 19 January 2008.

There have been progress in some process indicators addressing the under five mortality rate, such as, high prenatal care coverage (87%), high skilled birth attendant rate (97%), high vaccination coverage and (>95%), maintenance of mobile clinics (every six to eight weeks).

The policies that contribute to reducing under-five deaths are the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy (2002), Food and Nutrition Security Policy (1996), the Breast Feeding Policy (1996), Companion at Birth Policy (2009), Quality Improvement for Maternal and Neonatal Care Policy (2009), the Family and Children Act and the Public Health Act. Furthermore, the current initiatives implemented to increase child survival are: the expanded programme on immunizations; the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative; the growth promotion programme at community level; the integrated management of childhood illnesses; and nutrition related interventions, e.g., food fortification, micronutrients supplementation, de-worming and distribution of vitamin A, and information, education and counselling services.

Analysis of contributing factors to under-five deaths, as identified through household surveys and the health surveillance system, indicates that behavioural factors are of great concern. These behavioural concerns include low rate of attendance at early antenatal care (23%),<sup>2</sup> with the ideal being 60% during first trimester, low exclusive breastfeeding rate (10.2% first six months in 2006), timely complimentary feeding rate (44%), frequency of complimentary feeding rate (36.8%), adequately fed infants (22.5%), home management of diarrhoea (9.3%), and water treatment (19.9%).<sup>11</sup>

Responses to under-nutrition in children should be broadened to embrace the resources of the health system, including human, financing, and stewardship. Shortage of human resources in health particularly nurses (1.4 per 1,000 population) is significant when compared to other countries, e.g., Finland, 14.7 per 1,000;<sup>40</sup> Canada, 9.9 per 1,000; USA, 8.1 per 1,000; Bahamas, 2.6 per 1,000; and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries, 1.2 per 1,000 population.<sup>16</sup> In Belize about 14% of nursing professionals are placed in the primary health care level at a ratio of 0.2 nurses per 1,000 population.

Even though neonatal deaths represent 47.0% of all under-five deaths, and 59.3% of all infant deaths, there is no neonatologist in the country, and the tertiary care services for neonates are insufficient with respect to infrastructure, human resources, and medical equipment. The existing safety networks do not address sufficiently the behavioural aspects leading to an increase in morbidity and mortality among children, particularly in the most critical period of life (0-35 months). Safety nets should be developed so that they are culturally sensitive and rights-based.

### **3.4.2 Measures Required to Achieve Goal 4**

In order for Belize to achieve MDG<sub>4</sub> more investment is required to increase the ratio of nursing professionals per 1,000 persons in the population, especially at the primary health care level. This investment should also ensure the availability of sub specialists, in particular neonatologists, at the tertiary level and the creation of a neonatal intensive care unit with

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<sup>40</sup> Nurse Labour and Education Markets in the English speaking CARICOM –Issues and Options for Reform, World Bank, 2006

capacity for an increased number of patients and the associated qualified nursing and medical staff required for this level of care. The Ministry of Health recognizes that substantially greater efforts are needed at the institutional and community levels, with adequate social sector investment initiatives and benefits targeting those with the most needs.

A conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme targeting children 0-35 months including the perinatal period (during pregnancy, child birth, and post natal period) should be implemented since CCT's provide cash payments to poor households (consumption quintiles 1 and 2) that meet certain behavioural requirements/conditionality related to children's health and nutrition. Over 30 countries have some form of CCT programme and evidence shows that where nutrition interventions are low, there is significant potential for CCTs to play a great role in reducing under-nutrition by encouraging groups at high risk to use an effective nutrition service. Uptake of CCTs is also likely to improve quality of health services.

There is also a need to maintain compliance with the national vaccination schedule. The primary objective of the vaccination programme is protection of children against vaccine preventable diseases. A vaccination survey carried out in 2009 showed that approximately 20% of the target population received their vaccines at the scheduled time.

Public health surveillance and data is crucial to inform health promoting strategies and programmes and so there is need to improve the surveillance system for under-five deaths to determine high risk areas to focus interventions. Strengthening the public health surveillance system will enable the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of data regarding health related issues for use in public health action to reduce morbidity and mortality among these vulnerable populations.

### **3.5 Goal 5: Improve maternal health**

#### **3.5.1 Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio**

##### **Indicator 5.1 - Maternal mortality ratio**

Belize has made qualitative progress in regards to maternal mortality ratio (MMR). The causes of death have moved from direct obstetric complications, such as postpartum haemorrhage and eclampsia, to indirect obstetric causes, such as heart disease, HIV, among others. The MMR for the period 2005-2009 (82.1) is almost twice the MMR reported in 1990 (41.7). By the year 2009 it had decreased to 53.9 per 100,000 live births, slightly above the MMR for the year 1990 (**Table 3.5.1**). In the year 2005, the MMR for Belize was 134.1, which is higher than countries such as Mexico with 60 and Barbados with 16 per 100,000 live births; but lower than Jamaica with 170, Guatemala with 290, and Guyana with 470 per 100,000 live births.

Analysis of available data shows that the Latin American and Caribbean region has reduced MMR from 180 in 1990 to 130 in 2005, at a rate of 3.3% per year. Furthermore, in lower middle income countries the MMR fell from 210 in 1990 to 180 in 2005, at a rate of 2% per year. Belize

will be challenged to meet this target as one maternal death in Belize per year represents 1.5 times the MDG to be reached by 2015.

