

The calculation, however, is too crude: Neither Sachs nor anyone else is seriously proposing that we solve world poverty by handing poor people enough money to meet their basic needs. That would not be likely to produce a lasting solution to the many problems that the poor face.

To get an idea of the kind of sum needed for reducing poverty in a more sustainable manner, we can take as our target, at least until 2015, the Millennium Development Goals agreed to by leaders of all the world's nations at the UN Millennium Development Summit held in New York in 2000. These goals, chosen because they were challenging but feasible targets to be reached by 2015, include:

- Reducing by half the proportion of the world's people in extreme poverty
- Reducing by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
- Ensuring that children everywhere are able to take a full course of primary schooling
- Ending sex disparity in education
- Reducing by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five
- Reducing by three quarters the rate of maternal mortality
- Halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and halting and beginning to reduce the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
- Reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

A United Nations task force, again headed by Sachs, estimated how much it would cost to meet these goals. The task force drew on preliminary assessments in Bangladesh, Cambo-