



**INTERNATIONAL FOOD  
POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**  
*sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty*

# **The World's Most Deprived Characteristics and Causes of Extreme Poverty and Hunger**



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**"Taking Action for the World's Poor  
and Hungry People"**

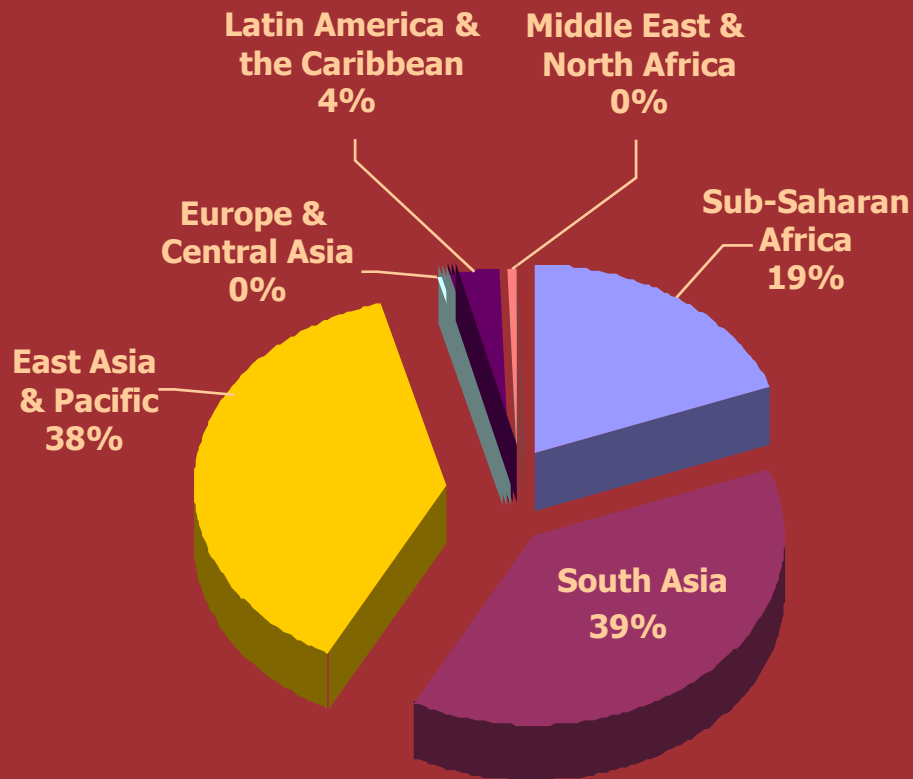
Washington, DC, November 19, 2007

# Millennium Development Goals

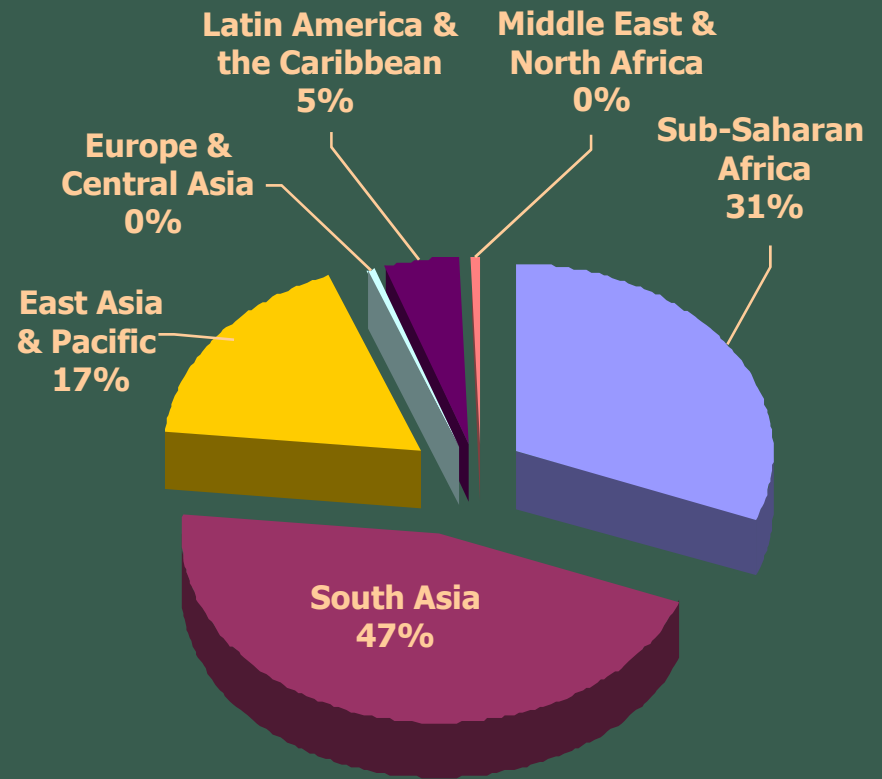
- The first MDG: Cut extreme poverty and hunger in half between 1990 and 2015
- Will the first MDG be met?
- If so, who will move out of poverty and hunger? Who will be left behind?

# Where the world's poor live: *Poor living on less than \$1 a day*

1,248 million in 1990



969 million in 2004



# Global progress reducing poverty

World has achieved considerable progress in reducing poverty:

➤ Population living on less than \$1 a day:

28.6 % in 1990  18.0% in 2004

➤ At this rate, MDG poverty target will be met globally by 2015

## Regional progress uneven

- Reductions in global poverty largely driven by East Asia and the Pacific, aided by South Asia
- Decline in poverty rates in Sub-Saharan Africa stagnating:

46.8 % in 1990  41.1 % in 2004

# Looking beneath the \$1 a day line



Subjacent poor:  
75 cents – one dollar  
485 million people



Medial poor:  
50 cents – 75 cents  
323 million people

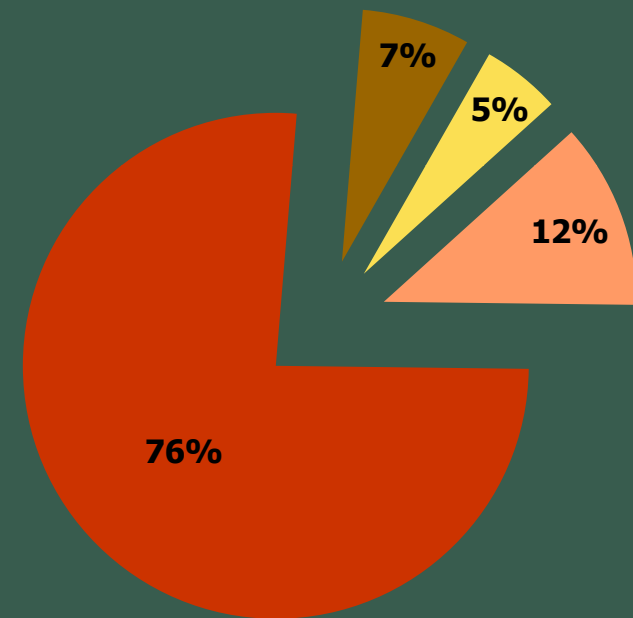


Ultra poor:  
Less than 50 cents  
162 million people

# The world's ultra poor: *Where do they live?*

- Three-fourths of the world's ultra poor live in Sub-Saharan Africa, the only region where ultra poverty predominates
- Most of Asia's poor live just below the dollar a day line—only a small minority is ultra poor

**Ultra poor: 162 million**



- East Asia & Pacific
- South Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Latin America & Caribbean

# Trends in ultra poverty rates: 1990-2004

## ➤ Sub-Saharan Africa:

17.9% in 1990

16.7% in 2004

## ➤ South Asia:

4.2% in 1990

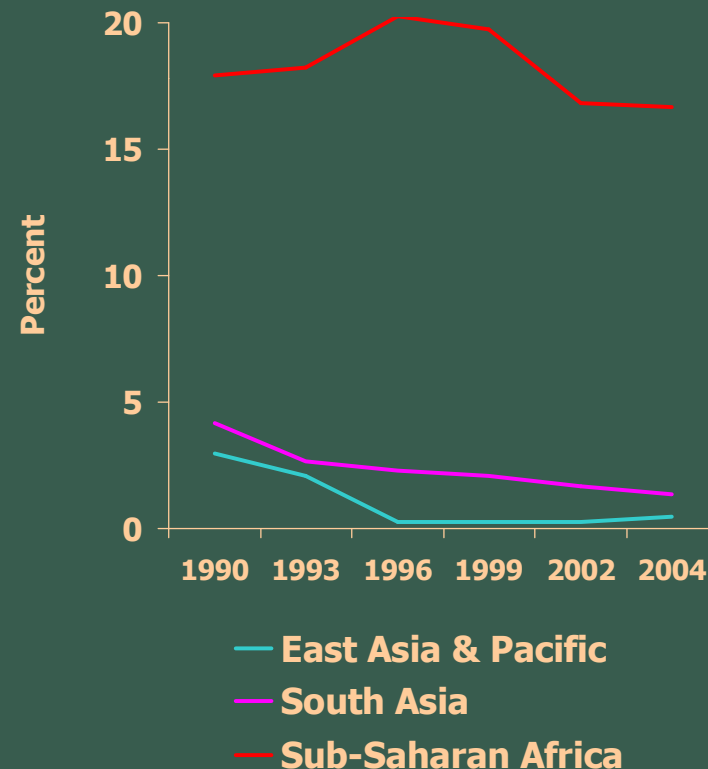
1.4% in 2004

## ➤ East Asia & Pacific:

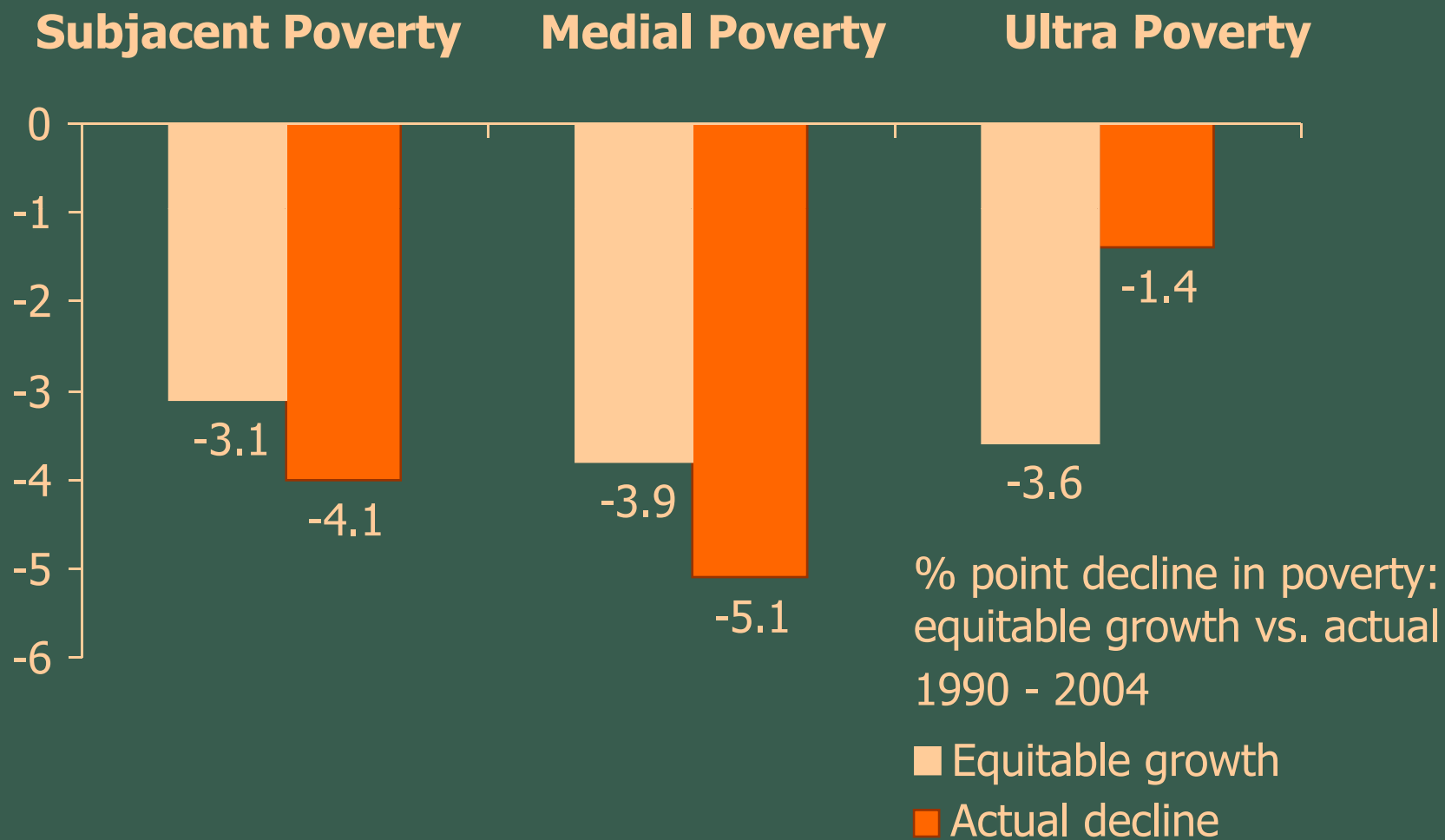
3.0% in 1990

0.5% in 2004

Percentage of regional population living on less than 50 cents a day



# Poverty declined more for the less poor



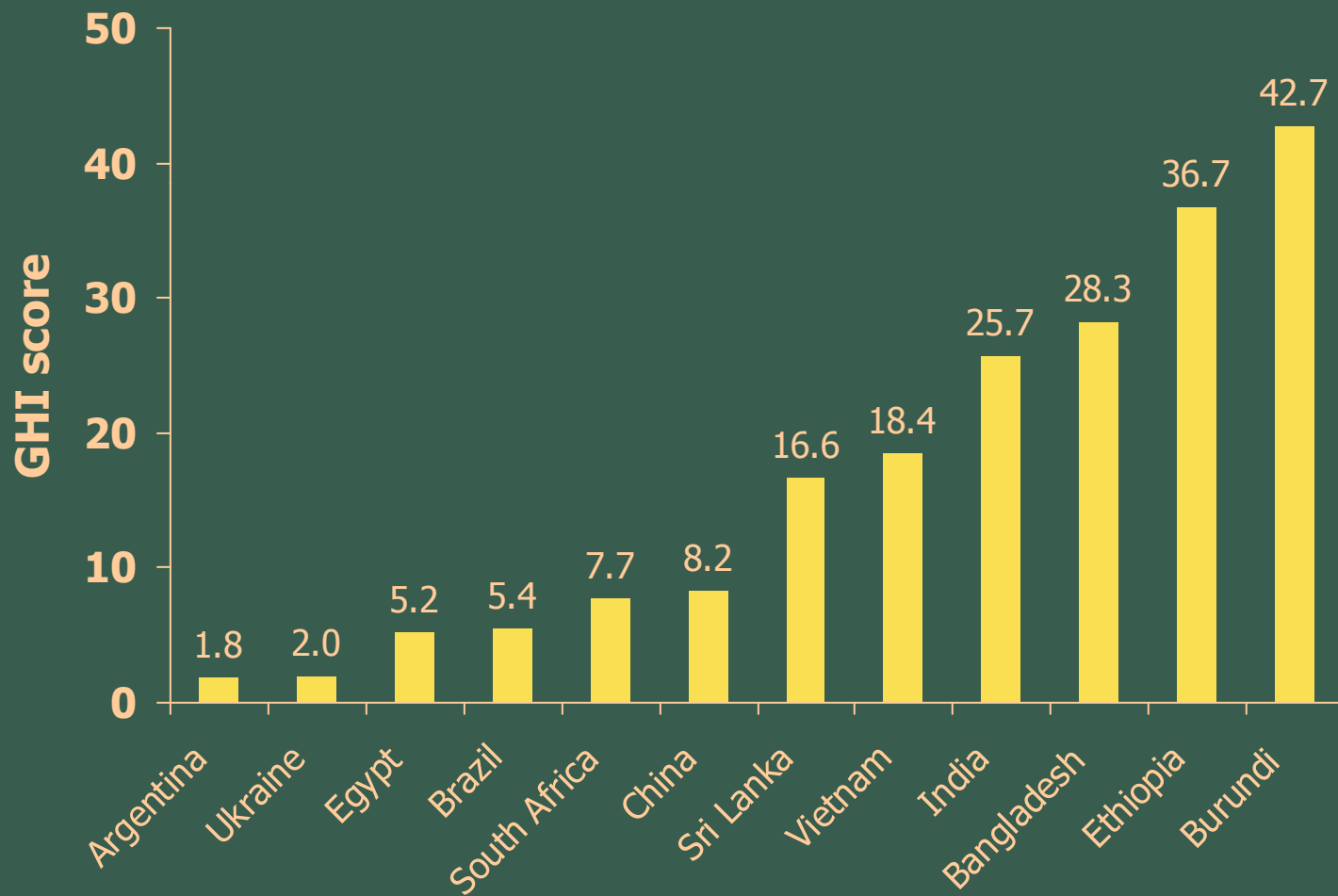
## Progress has been slowest for the poorest

- Income growth benefited those just below the poverty line most
- Ultra poverty rates decreased less than if everyone's income had grown equally
- East Asia and the Pacific: rapid economic growth benefited all groups nearly equally
- Sub-Saharan Africa & South Asia: ultra poor mostly left behind

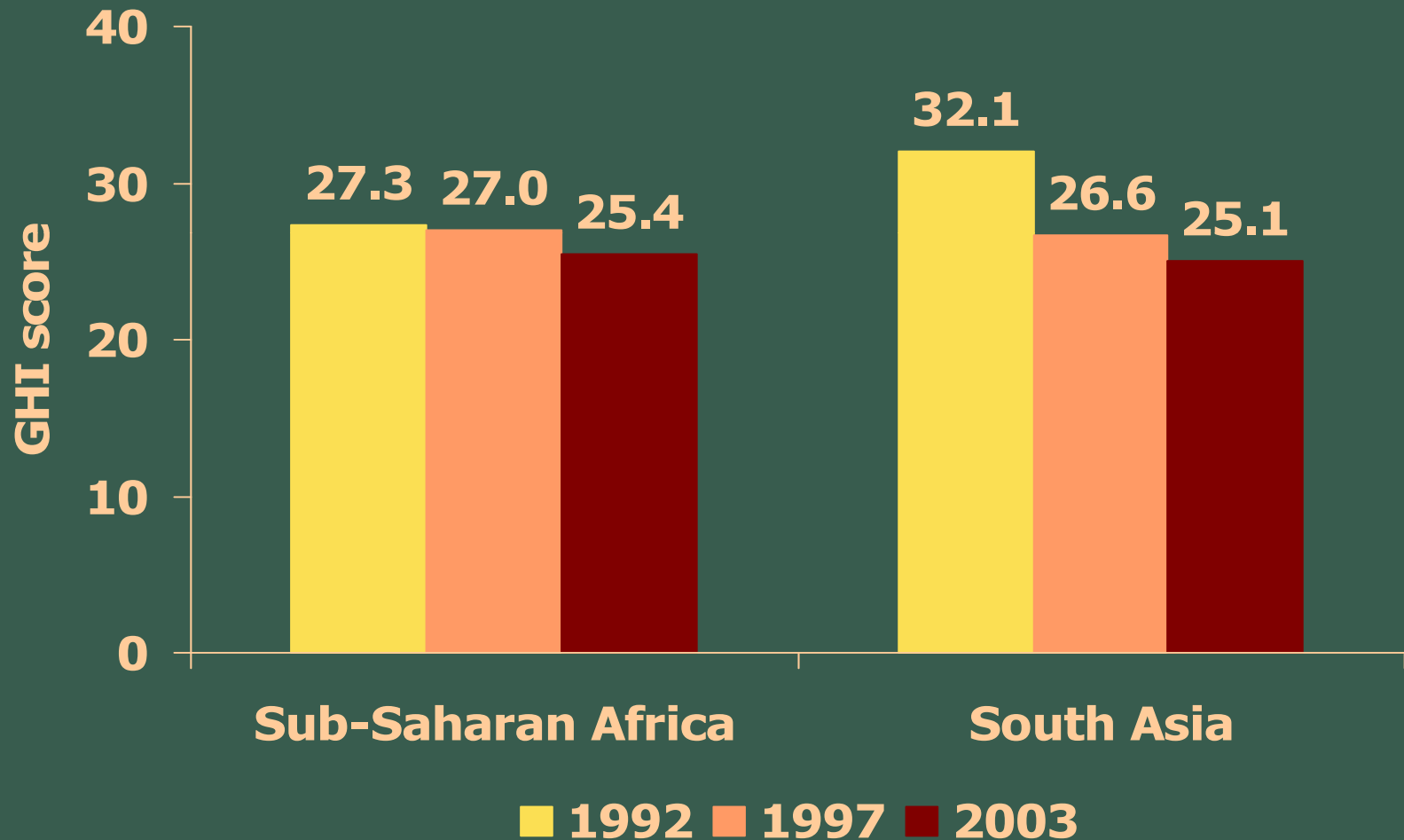
# IFPRI's Global Hunger Index

- Innovative tool—measures hunger and undernutrition in developing and transitional countries
- Combines three indicators into one index:
  1. proportion of people who are calorie deficient
  2. child underweight prevalence
  3. child mortality

# Global Hunger Index: Some country examples ...



# Global Hunger Index: South Asia made more progress than Sub-Saharan Africa



# Who are the world's poorest and hungry?

- Households in remote rural areas, located furthest from roads, markets, schools, and health services
- Those facing exclusion because of their ethnicity, gender or disability
- People with few assets or education, or access to credit

# Why those in ultra poverty stay poor?

- From poor area or born poor
- Belong to a disadvantaged group
- Effects of disasters or shocks can persist for years
- Lack of education, labor, assets, and access to credit can create a trap

## The road ahead

- “Business as usual” not sufficient to improve welfare of world’s most deprived
- New and different action required to help those living in extreme poverty and hunger

## To help the poorest move out of poverty

- Improve access to markets and basic services, particularly in remote rural areas
- Provide insurance against health shocks
- Prevent child malnutrition
- Invest in education for those with few assets
- Address exclusion of disadvantaged groups