

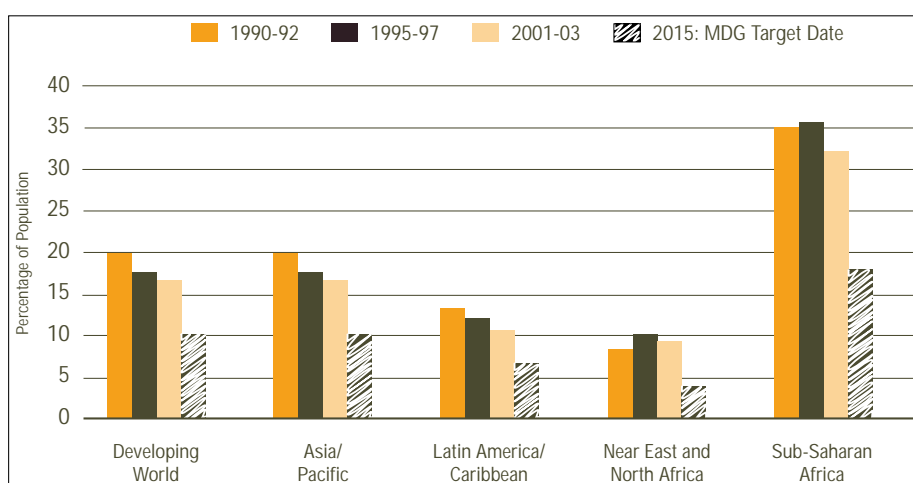
## The Millennium Development Goals: Reason for Hope, Call to Action

by Eric Muñoz

Bread for the World Institute provides policy analysis on hunger and strategies to end it. The Institute educates its advocacy network, opinion leaders, policy makers and the public about hunger in the United States and abroad.

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### Undernourished People and the Millennium Development Goal Target



## Key Points

## Abstract

## UN Millennium Development Goals for 2015

### Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

### Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

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

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

### Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

### Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

### Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

### Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

### Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries

Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

## Connecting Rights and Development

Many of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights relate directly to human development. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration commits countries to ensure the right to work. This right is reinforced by Goal 3 of the MDGs, which promotes gender equality and women's empowerment and uses the number of women employed in the formal (non-farm) sector of a country's economy as an indicator of success. Article 25 covers the right to a decent standard of living, including the right to food. Article 26 establishes the right to education. Holding leaders accountable depends on basic civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression (Article 19) and the right to take part in the civic life of the state (Article 21).

## Roadmap for Action

## Global Partnerships

*Millennium Progress Reports*  
*Global Monitoring Reports*

## An Interconnected Vision of Development

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## An Interconnected Set of Problems

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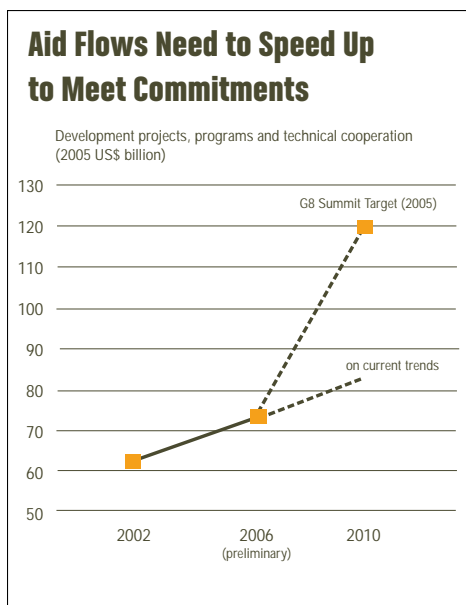
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## An Interconnected Set of Solutions

### Whose Millennium Development Goals?

Specific targets and time-bound commitments have helped to galvanize public support for the MDGs, but the targets have also come under criticism. William Easterly, for example, has raised the concern that the targets are inappropriate for areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, where difficult initial conditions will make reaching the MDGs unlikely.

Easterly argues that strictly applying the MDG indicators makes Africa look worse than it really is, painting an unfairly harsh and discouraging portrait of a region in which many countries are nevertheless demonstrating progress against hunger, poverty and disease.<sup>24</sup> Easterly concludes that the MDG targets should be tailored to match individual country conditions. This position has also been forcefully advocated by Jan Vandemoortele, a former co-chair of the U.N. Interagency Working Group that created the MDGs. Vandemoortele writes, “The content of the MDGs applies universally because they reflect fundamental social and economic rights. But their quantitative dimensions should not apply uniformly to all countries or regions.”<sup>25</sup> In his article “The MDGs: ‘M’ for Misunderstood,” Vandemoortele urges a flexible approach that uses the MDGs as a framework that countries adopt and modify to match their particular situations.

Others have raised concerns that the MDGs focus on poverty indicator outcomes rather than the core problems that make people impoverished in the first place. Armed conflict, weak government institutions, poor governance, economic inequality and lack of respect for human rights are all causes of poverty, yet these issues are scarcely raised in the MDGs.

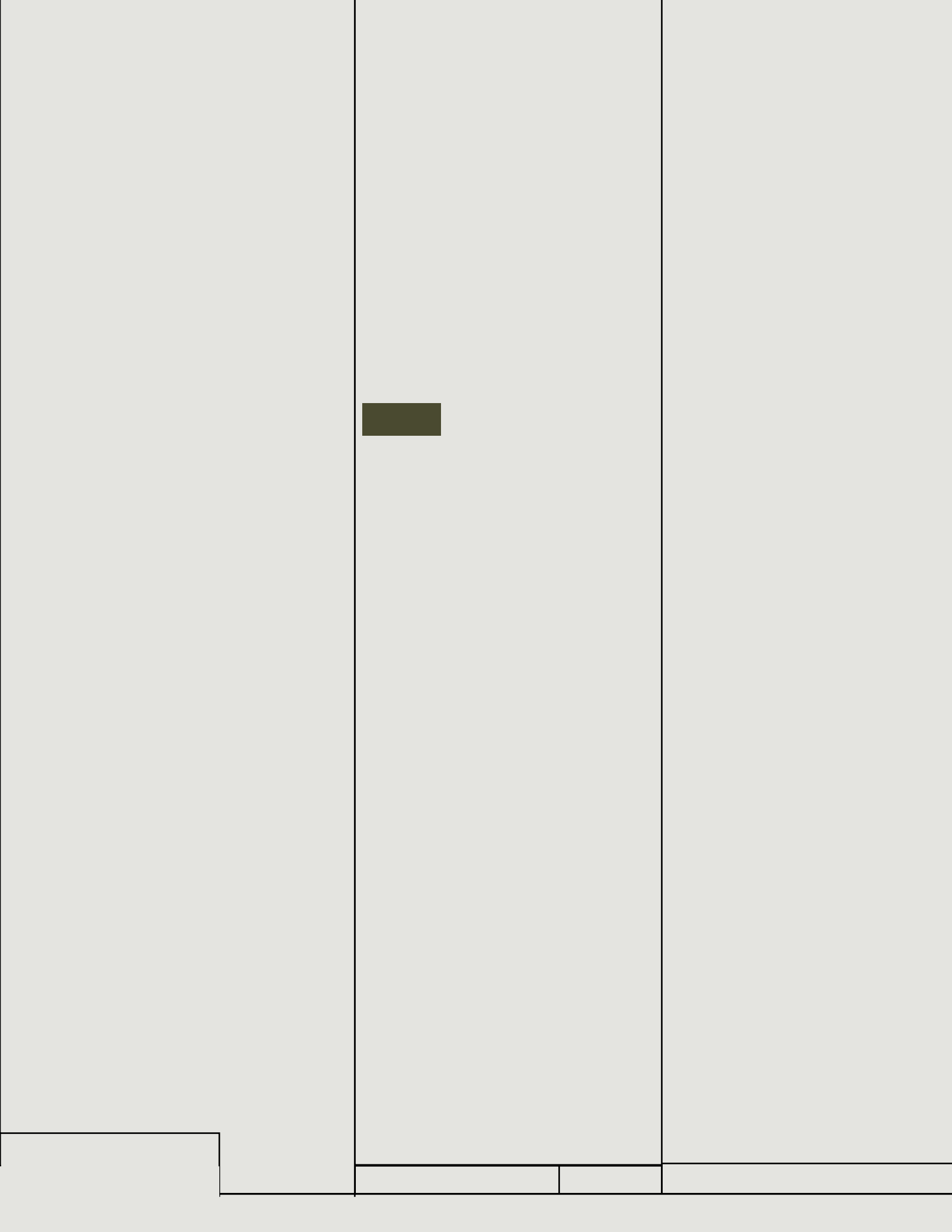
These criticisms have not stopped countries, institutions and individuals from making a commitment to the MDGs, nor should they. In fact, rather than undermining the credibility of the MDGs, such criticism enriches the debate about what is really needed to support people’s efforts to lift themselves out of poverty and protect themselves from hunger and disease.

A Reason for Hope

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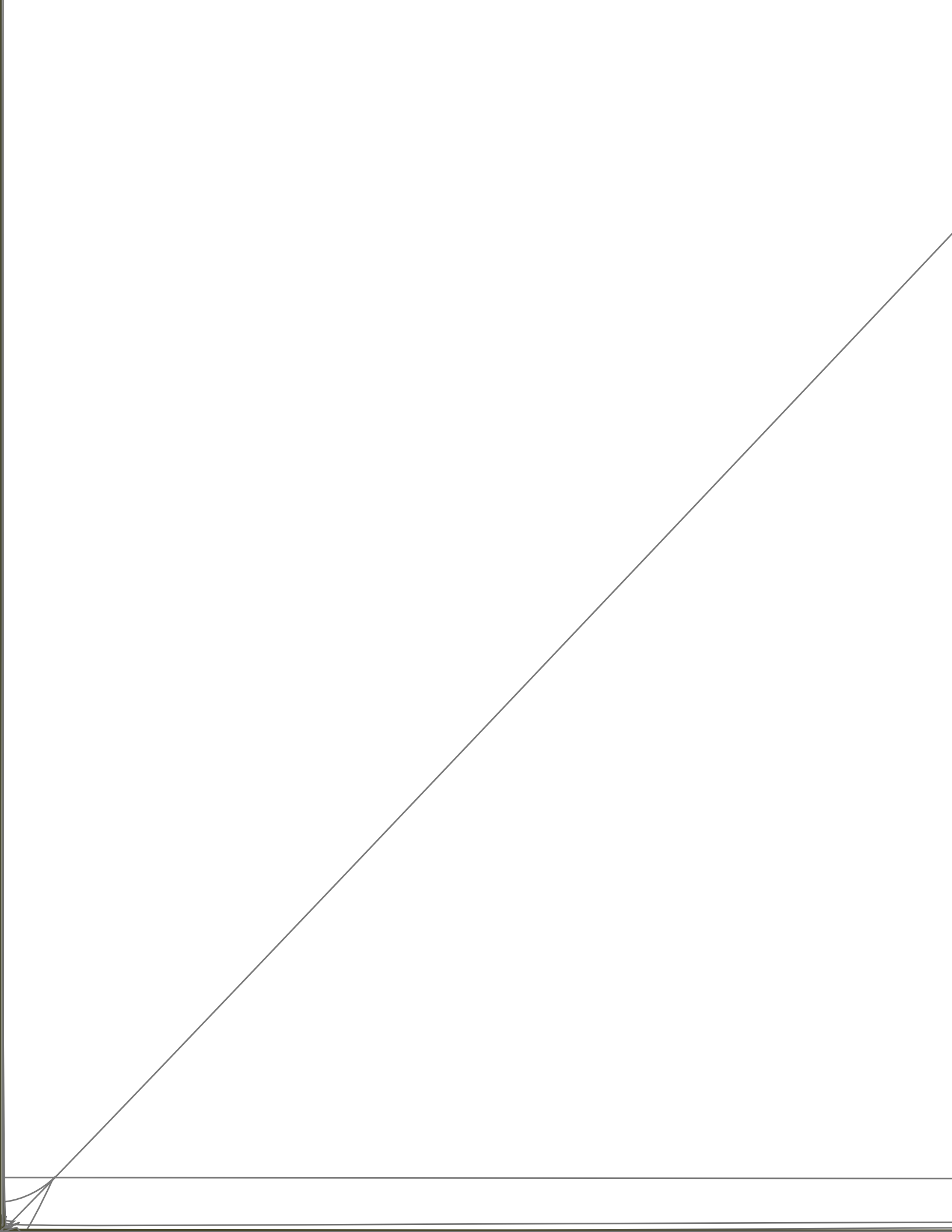
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