

The Millennium Development Goals Report

2012



UNITED NATIONS



This report is based on a master set of data that has been compiled by an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in response to the wishes of the General Assembly for periodic assessment of progress towards the MDGs. The Group comprises representatives of the international organizations whose activities include the preparation of one or more of the series of statistical indicators that were identified as appropriate for monitoring progress towards the MDGs, as reflected in the list below. A number of national statisticians and outside expert advisers also contributed.

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Foreword

This year's report on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) highlights several milestones. The target of reducing extreme poverty by half has been reached five years ahead of the 2015 deadline, as has the target of halving the proportion of people who lack dependable access to improved sources of drinking water. Conditions for more than 200 million people living in slums have been ameliorated—double the 2020 target. Primary school enrolment of girls equalled that of boys, and we have seen accelerating progress in reducing child and maternal mortality.

These results represent a tremendous reduction in human suffering and are a clear validation of the approach embodied in the MDGs. But, they are not a reason to relax. Projections indicate that in 2015 more than 600 million people worldwide will still be using unimproved water sources, almost one billion will be living on an income of less than \$1.25 per day, mothers will continue to die needlessly in childbirth, and children will suffer and die from preventable diseases. Hunger remains a global challenge, and ensuring that all children are able to complete primary education remains a fundamental, but unfulfilled, target that has an impact on all the other Goals. Lack of safe sanitation is hampering progress in health and nutrition, biodiversity loss continues apace, and greenhouse gas emissions continue to pose a major threat to people and ecosystems.

The goal of gender equality also remains unfulfilled, again with broad negative consequences, given that achieving the MDGs depends so much on women's empowerment and equal access by women to education, work, health care and decision-making. We must also recognize the unevenness of progress within countries and regions, and the severe inequalities that exist among populations, especially between rural and urban areas.

Achieving the MDGs by 2015 is challenging but possible. Much depends on the fulfilment of MDG-8—the global partnership for development. The current economic crises besetting much of the developed world must not be allowed to decelerate or reverse the progress that has been made. Let us build on the successes we have achieved so far, and let us not relent until all the MDGs have been attained.



BAN KI-MOON
Secretary-General, United Nations

Overview

Three years to the deadline, we can report broad progress on the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed to by world leaders over a decade ago have achieved important results. Working together, Governments, the United Nations family, the private sector and civil society have succeeded in saving many lives and improving conditions for many more. The world has met some important targets—ahead of the deadline.

- **Extreme poverty is falling in every region**

For the first time since poverty trends began to be monitored, the number of people living in extreme poverty and poverty rates fell in every developing region—including in sub-Saharan Africa, where rates are highest. The proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day fell from 47 per cent in 1990 to 24 per cent in 2008—a reduction from over 2 billion to less than 1.4 billion.

- **The poverty reduction target was met**

Preliminary estimates indicate that the global poverty rate at \$1.25 a day fell in 2010 to less than half the 1990 rate. If these results are confirmed, the first target of the MDGs—cutting the extreme poverty rate to half its 1990 level—will have been achieved at the global level well ahead of 2015.

- **The world has met the target of halving the proportion of people without access to improved sources of water**

The target of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water was also met by 2010, with the proportion of people using an improved water source rising from 76 per cent in 1990 to 89 per cent in 2010. Between 1990 and 2010, over two billion people gained access to improved drinking water sources, such as piped supplies and protected wells.

- **Improvements in the lives of 200 million slum dwellers exceeded the slum target**

The share of urban residents in the developing world living in slums declined from 39 per cent in 2000 to 33 per cent in 2012. More than 200 million gained access to either improved water sources, improved sanitation facilities, or durable or less crowded housing. This achievement exceeds the target of significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, well ahead of the 2020 deadline.

- **The world has achieved parity in primary education between girls and boys**

Driven by national and international efforts and the MDG campaign, many more of the world's children are enrolled in school at the primary level, especially since 2000. Girls

have benefited the most. The ratio between the enrolment rate of girls and that of boys grew from 91 in 1999 to 97 in 2010 for all developing regions. The gender parity index value of 97 falls within the plus-or-minus 3-point margin of 100 per cent, the accepted measure for parity.

- **Many countries facing the greatest challenges have made significant progress towards universal primary education**

Enrolment rates of children of primary school age increased markedly in sub-Saharan Africa, from 58 to 76 per cent between 1999 and 2010. Many countries in that region succeeded in reducing their relatively high out-of-school rates even as their primary school age populations were growing.

- **Child survival progress is gaining momentum**

Despite population growth, the number of under-five deaths worldwide fell from more than 12.0 million in 1990 to 7.6 million in 2010. And progress in the developing world as a whole has accelerated. Sub-Saharan Africa—the region with the highest level of under-five mortality—has doubled its average rate of reduction, from 1.2 per cent a year over 1990-2000 to 2.4 per cent during 2000-2010.

- **Access to treatment for people living with HIV increased in all regions**

At the end of 2010, 6.5 million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV or AIDS in developing regions. This total constitutes an increase of over 1.4 million people from December 2009, and the largest one-year increase ever. The 2010 target of universal access, however, was not reached.

- **The world is on track to achieve the target of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of tuberculosis**

Globally, tuberculosis incidence rates have been falling since 2002, and current projections suggest that the 1990 death rate from the disease will be halved by 2015.

- **Global malaria deaths have declined**

The estimated incidence of malaria has decreased globally, by 17 per cent since 2000. Over the same period, malaria-specific mortality rates have decreased by 25 per cent. Reported malaria cases fell by more than 50 per cent between 2000 and 2010 in 43 of the 99 countries with ongoing malaria transmission.

Inequality is detracting from these gains, and slowing advances in other key areas

Achievements were unequally distributed across and within regions and countries. Moreover, progress has slowed for some MDGs after the multiple crises of 2008-2009.

- **Vulnerable employment has decreased only marginally over twenty years**

Vulnerable employment—defined as the share of unpaid family workers and own-account workers in total employment—accounted for an estimated 58 per cent of all employment in developing regions in 2011, down only moderately from 67 per cent two decades earlier. Women and youth are more likely to find themselves in such insecure and poorly remunerated positions than the rest of the employed population.

- **Decreases in maternal mortality are far from the 2015 target**

There have been important improvements in maternal health and reduction in maternal deaths, but progress is still slow. Reductions in adolescent childbearing and expansion of contraceptive use have continued, but at a slower pace since 2000 than over the decade before.

- **Use of improved sources of water remains lower in rural areas**

While 19 per cent of the rural population used unimproved sources of water in 2010, the rate in urban areas was only 4 per cent. And since dimensions of safety, reliability and sustainability are not reflected in the proxy indicator used to track progress towards the MDG target, it is likely that these figures overestimate the actual number of people using safe water supplies. Worse, nearly half of the population in developing regions—2.5 billion—still lacks access to improved sanitation facilities. By 2015, the world will have reached only 67 per cent coverage, well short of the 75 per cent needed to achieve the MDG target.

- **Hunger remains a global challenge**

The most recent FAO estimates of undernourishment set the mark at 850 million living in hunger in the world in the 2006/2008 period—15.5 per cent of the world population. This continuing high level reflects the lack of progress on hunger in several regions, even as income poverty has decreased. Progress has also been slow in reducing child undernutrition. Close to one third of children in Southern Asia were underweight in 2010.

- **The number of people living in slums continues to grow**

Despite a reduction in the share of urban populations living in slums, the absolute number has continued to grow from a 1990 baseline of 650 million. An estimated 863 million people now live in slum conditions.

In the years ahead, we have the opportunity to achieve more and to shape the agenda for our future

The 2015 deadline is fast approaching. The contributions of national Governments, the international community, civil society and the private sector will need to intensify as we take on the longstanding and long-term challenge of inequality, and press forward on food security, gender equality, maternal health, rural development, infrastructure and environmental sustainability, and responses to climate change.

A new agenda to continue our efforts beyond 2015 is taking shape. The MDG campaign, with its successes as well as setbacks, provides rich experience on which this discussion can draw, as well as confidence that further success is feasible.

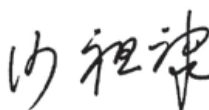
- **Gender equality and women's empowerment are key**

Gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government. Violence against women continues to undermine efforts to reach all goals. Further progress to 2015 and beyond will largely depend on success on these interrelated challenges.

- **MDG progress shows the power of global goals and a shared purpose**

The MDGs have been a fundamental framework for global development. A clear agenda, with measurable goals and targets, and a common vision have been crucial for this success.

There is now an expectation around the world that sooner, rather than later, all these goals can and must be achieved. Leaders will be held to this high standard. Sectors such as government, business, academia and civil society, often known for working at cross-purposes, are learning how to collaborate on shared aspirations. The comprehensive statistics and clear analysis in this year's MDG Report give us all a good idea of where our efforts should be directed.



SHA ZUKANG
Under-Secretary-General for Economic
and Social Affairs

Goal 1

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

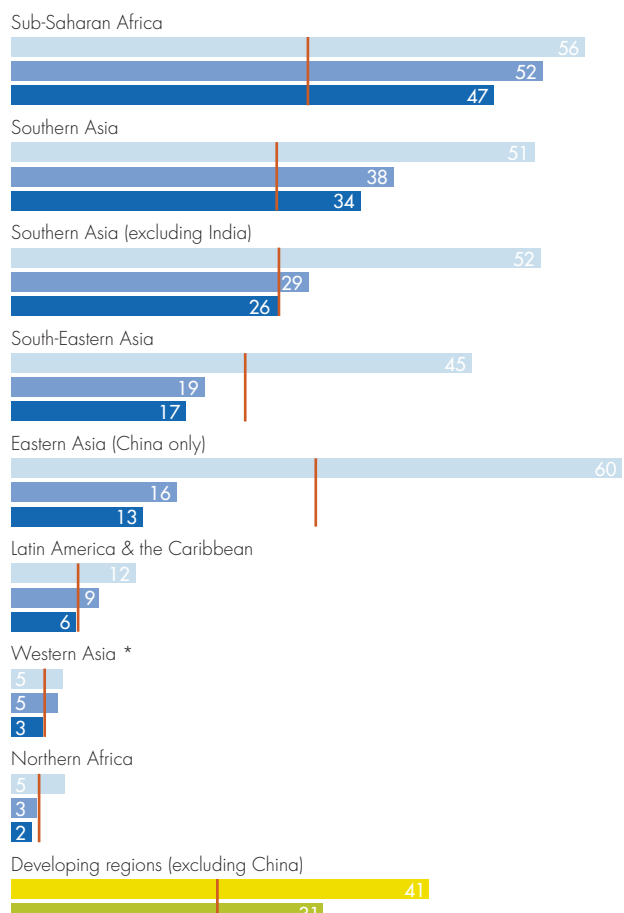


TARGET

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

Extreme poverty falls in every region

Proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day, 1990, 2005 and 2008 (Percentage)



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