

The Millennium Development Goals Report



UNITED NATIONS

2007



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

Since their adoption by all United Nations Member States in 2000, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals have become a universal framework for development and a means for developing countries and their development partners to work together in pursuit of a shared future for all.


We are now at the midpoint between the adoption of the MDGs and the 2015 target date. So far, our collective record is mixed. The results presented in this report suggest that there have been some gains, and that success is still possible in most parts of the world. But they also point to how much remains to be done. There is a clear need for political leaders to take urgent and concerted action, or many millions of people will not realize the basic promises of the MDGs in their lives.

The MDGs are still achievable if we act now. This will require inclusive sound governance, increased public investment economic growth, enhanced productive capacity, and the creation of decent work. Success in some countries demonstrates that rapid and large-scale progress towards the MDGs is feasible if we combine strong government leadership, good policies and practical strategies for scaling up public investments in vital areas with adequate financial and technical support from the international community.

To achieve the Goals, nationally-owned development strategies and budgets must be aligned with them. This must be backed up by adequate financing within the global partnership for development and its framework for mutual accountability.

The world wants no new promises. It is imperative that all stakeholders meet, in their entirety, the commitments already made in the Millennium Declaration, the 2002 Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, and the 2005 World Summit. In particular, the lack of any significant increase in official development assistance since 2004 makes it impossible, even for well-governed countries, to meet the MDGs. As this report makes clear, adequate resources need to be made available to countries in a predictable way for them to be able to effectively plan the scaling up of their investments. Yet, these promises remain to be fulfilled.

I commend this report as a key resource to help show what can be achieved and how much still needs to be done. Reliable and timely information is key to formulating the necessary policies and strategies to ensure progress, monitor development and make the MDGs achievable.


BAN KI-MOON
Secretary-General, United Nations

Overview

Progress at the MDG mid-point

The Millennium Declaration set 2015 as the target date for achieving most of the Goals. As we approach the midway point of this 15-year period, data are now becoming available that provide an indication of progress during the first third of this 15-year period.

This report presents the most comprehensive global assessment of progress to date, based on a set of data prepared by a large number of international organizations within and outside the United Nations system.

The results are, predictably, uneven. The years since 2000, when world leaders endorsed the Millennium Declaration, have seen some visible and widespread gains. Encouragingly, the report suggests that some progress is being made even in those regions where the challenges are greatest. These accomplishments testify to the unprecedented degree of commitment by developing countries and their development partners to the Millennium Declaration and to some success in building the global partnership embodied in the Declaration.

The results achieved in the more successful cases demonstrate that success is possible in most countries, but that the MDGs will be attained only if concerted additional action is taken immediately and sustained until 2015. All stakeholders need to fulfil, in their entirety, the commitments they made in the Millennium Declaration and subsequent pronouncements.

The following are some measures of the progress that has been achieved:

- The proportion of people living in extreme poverty fell from nearly a third to less than one fifth between 1990 and 2004. If the trend is sustained, the MDG poverty reduction target will be met for the world as a whole and for most regions.
- The number of extremely poor people in sub-Saharan Africa has levelled off, and the poverty rate has declined by nearly six percentage points since 2000. Nevertheless, the region is not on track to reach the Goal of reducing poverty by half by 2015.
- Progress has been made in getting more children into school in the developing world. Enrolment in primary education grew from 80 per cent in 1991 to 88 per cent in 2005. Most of this progress has taken place since 1999.
- Women's political participation has been growing, albeit slowly. Even in countries where previously only men were allowed to stand for political election, women now have a seat in parliament.
- Child mortality has declined globally, and it is becoming clear that the right life-saving interventions are proving effective in reducing the number of deaths due to the main child killers – such as measles.

- Key interventions to control malaria have been expanded.
- The tuberculosis epidemic, finally, appears on the verge of decline, although progress is not fast enough to halve prevalence and death rates by 2015.

By pointing to what has been achieved, these results also highlight how much remains to be done and how much more could be accomplished if all concerned live up fully to the commitments they have already made. Currently, only one of the eight regional groups cited in this report is on track to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals. In contrast, the projected shortfalls are most severe in sub-Saharan Africa. Even regions that have made substantial progress, including parts of Asia, face challenges in areas such as health and environmental sustainability. More generally, the lack of employment opportunities for young people, gender inequalities, rapid and unplanned urbanization, deforestation, increasing water scarcity, and high HIV prevalence are pervasive obstacles.

Moreover, insecurity and instability in conflict and post-conflict countries make long-term development efforts extremely difficult. In turn, a failure to achieve the MDGs can further heighten the risk of instability and conflict. Yet in spite of a technical consensus that development and security are mutually dependent, international efforts all too often treat them as independent from one another.

The following are some of the key challenges that have to be addressed:

- Over half a million women still die each year from treatable and preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth. The odds that a woman will die from these causes in sub-Saharan Africa are 1 in 16 over the course of her lifetime, compared to 1 in 3,800 in the developed world.
- If current trends continue, the target of halving the proportion of underweight children will be missed by 30 million children, largely because of slow progress in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- The number of people dying from AIDS worldwide increased to 2.9 million in 2006, and prevention measures are failing to keep pace with the growth of the epidemic. In 2005, more than 15 million children had lost one or both parents to AIDS.
- Half the population of the developing world lack basic sanitation. In order to meet the MDG target, an additional 1.6 billion people will need access to improved sanitation over the period 2005-2015. If trends since 1990 continue, the world is likely to miss the target by almost 600 million people.
- To some extent, these situations reflect the fact that the benefits of economic growth in the developing world have

been unequally shared. Widening income inequality is of particular concern in Eastern Asia, where the share of consumption of the poorest people declined dramatically between 1990 and 2004.

- Most economies have failed to provide employment opportunities to their youth, with young people more than three times as likely as adults to be unemployed.
- Warming of the climate is now unequivocal. Emissions of carbon dioxide, the primary contributor to global climate change, rose from 23 billion metric tons in 1990 to 29 billion metric tons in 2004. Climate change is projected to have serious economic and social impacts, which will impede progress towards the MDGs.

This report also points to disparities within countries, where particular groups of the population – often those living in rural areas, children of mothers with no formal education and the poorest households – are not making enough progress to meet the targets, even where the rest of the population is. This is particularly evident in access to health services and education. In order to achieve the MDGs, countries will need to mobilize additional resources and target public investments that benefit the poor.

Rapid and large-scale progress is feasible

Several developing countries are demonstrating that rapid and large-scale progress towards the MDGs is possible when strong government leadership and policies and strategies that effectively target the needs of the poor are combined with adequate financial and technical support from the international community.

In particular, impressive results have been achieved in sub-Saharan Africa in areas such as raising agricultural productivity (in Malawi, for example), boosting primary school enrolment (as in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania), controlling malaria (as in Niger, Togo, Zambia, Zanzibar), widening access to basic rural health services (Zambia), reforesting areas on a large scale (Niger), and increasing access to water and sanitation (Senegal and Uganda). These practical successes now need to be replicated and scaled-up.

With support from the United Nations, many developing countries – particularly in Africa – have advanced in preparing strategies to achieve the MDGs. As of mid-2007, 41 countries in sub-Saharan Africa had started the process of preparing national development strategies aligned with the MDGs and other development goals agreed upon through the United Nations. During this mid-point year, the international community needs to support the preparation of these strategies and to accelerate implementation of the MDGs.

In general, strategies should adopt a wide-ranging approach that seeks to achieve pro-poor economic growth, including through the creation of a large number of additional opportunities for decent work. This, in turn, will require comprehensive programmes for human development, particularly in education and health, as well as building productive capacity and improved physical infrastructure. In

each case, an effort should be made to quantify the resources required to implement these programmes. Implementation should be based on a medium-term approach to public expenditure. A sound national statistical system and enhanced public accountability are necessary to support all these efforts.

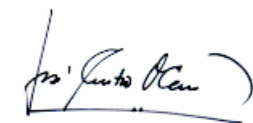
The MDGs should also be systematically integrated into post-conflict recovery strategies by coordinating security and humanitarian operations with long-term development efforts. The MDGs provide outcome objectives that countries can use as benchmarks for the transition from relief and recovery to long-term development.

Success in achieving the MDGs in the poorest and most disadvantaged countries cannot be achieved by these countries alone. Developed countries need to deliver fully on longstanding commitments to achieve the official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) by 2015. It requires, in particular, the Group of 8 industrialized nations to live up to their 2005 pledge to double aid to Africa by 2010 and European Union Member States to allocate 0.7 per cent of GNI to ODA by 2015. In spite of these commitments, ODA declined between 2005 and 2006 and is expected to continue to fall slightly in 2007 as debt relief declines.

Aid has to be improved by ensuring that assistance is aligned with the policies that recipient countries have adopted, and that flows to individual countries are continuous, predictable and assured and are not tied to purchases in the donor country. To this end, donors should reduce the present unpredictability of aid by providing multi-year schedules of aid flows to each recipient country. One of the uses of the additional resources should be to multiply, within and across countries, the number of “quick impact” initiatives that have proven their efficacy in the past few years.

As a further element of their development partnership, and as agreed to in Doha in 2001, all governments should redouble their efforts to reach a successful and equitable conclusion to the present trade negotiations – an outcome that ensures that the international trading system and global trading arrangements become more conducive to development in all developing countries.

Addressing the challenge of climate change has to be a new but integral element of each country's development strategy. More importantly, however, it should become an enhanced part of the international development agenda: All development partners should collaborate intensively in devising a shared global strategy to address this global problem.



JOSÉ ANTONIO OCAMPO
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

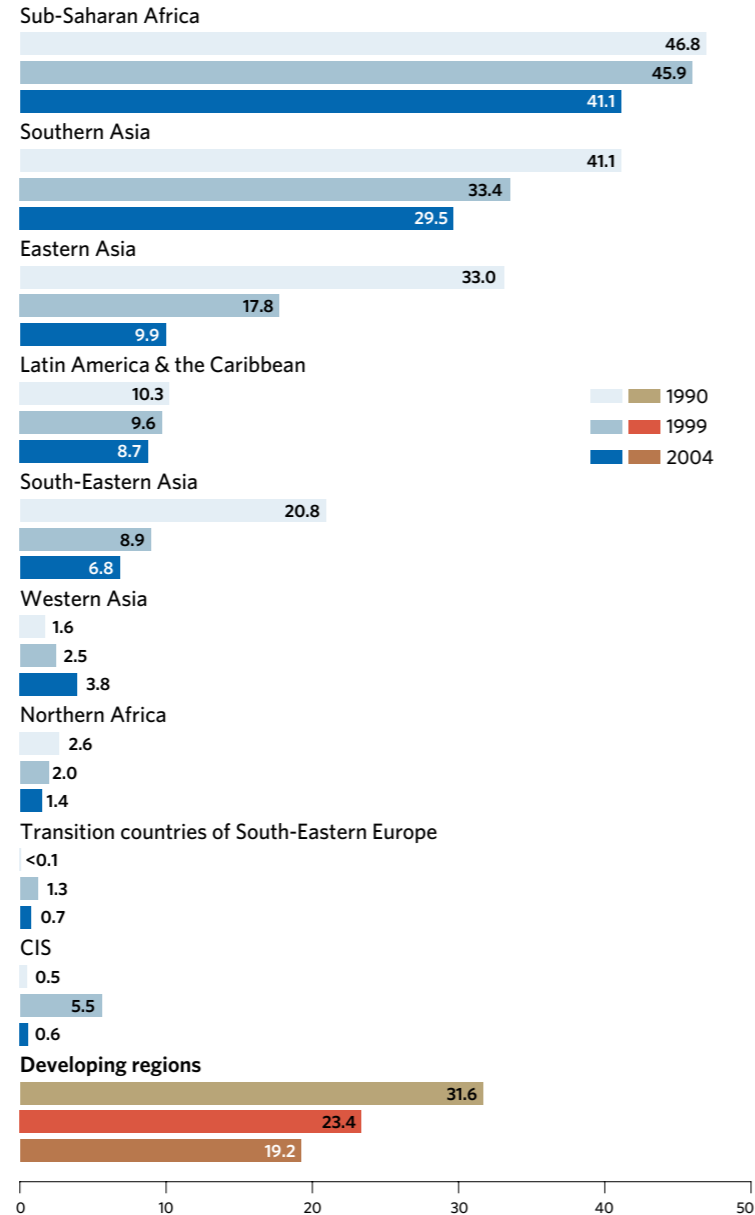
Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger

TARGET

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

Extreme poverty is beginning to fall in sub-Saharan Africa

Proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day, 1990, 1999 and 2004 (Percentage)



Worldwide, the number of people in developing countries living on less than \$1 a day fell to 980 million in 2004 – down from 1.25 billion in 1990. The

proportion of people living in extreme poverty fell from nearly a third to 19 per cent over this period. If progress continues, the MDG target will be met. However, success is unequally shared, since the decline in global poverty is mostly due to rapid economic growth in Asia. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, in particular, experienced impressive reductions in poverty, and accelerating growth in India has also put Southern Asia on track to achieve the goal.

In contrast, poverty rates in Western Asia more than doubled between 1990 and 2005. Extreme poverty rose sharply in the early 1990s in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the transition countries of South-Eastern Europe. Poverty rates in those regions are now dropping, however, and approaching the levels of the 1980s.

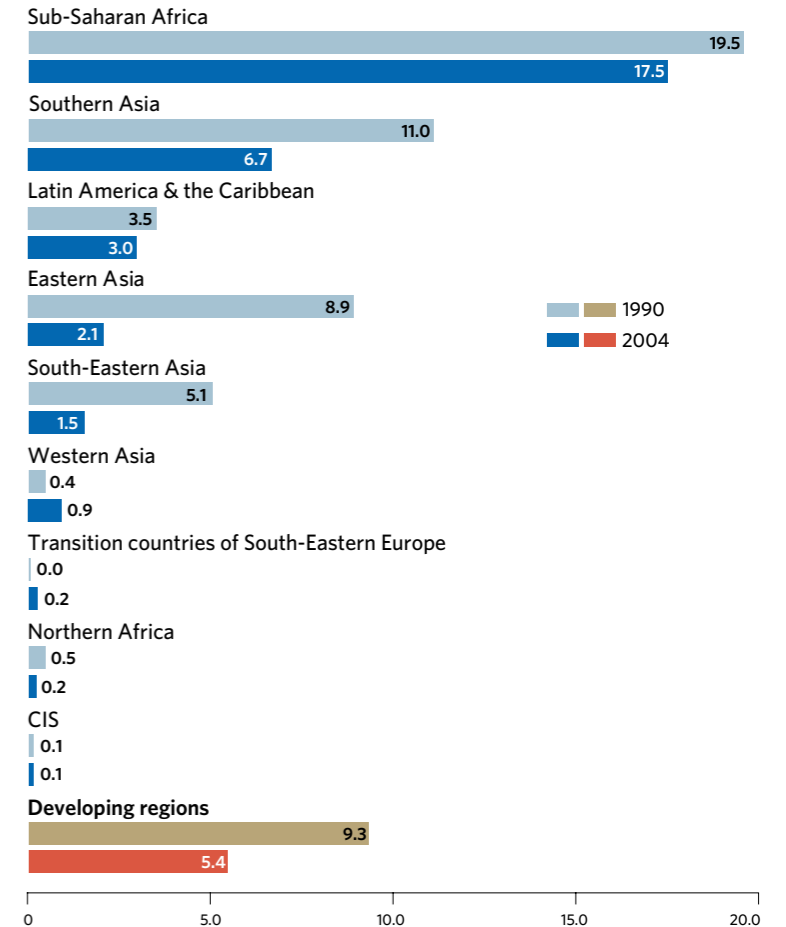
In sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty fell from 46.8 per cent in 1990 to 41.1 per cent in 2004. Most of this progress was achieved since 2000. The number of people living on less than \$1 a day is also beginning to level off, despite rapid population growth. The per capita income of seven sub-Saharan countries grew by more than 3.5 per cent a year between 2000 and 2005; another 23 had growth rates of more than 2 per cent a year over this period, providing a degree of optimism for the future.

The international poverty line is being redrawn

The latest estimates on poverty draw on over 500 household surveys from 100 developing countries, representing 93 per cent of the population of the developing world. The international poverty line is based on a level of consumption representative of the poverty lines found in low-income countries. Since 2000, the international poverty line has been set at \$1.08 a day, measured in terms of 1993 purchasing power parity (PPP). In the coming year, new estimates of PPP, based on 2005 prices, will be produced by the International Comparison Program. These new measures of the relative cost of living among countries will require a revision to the international poverty line and may change our understanding of the extent and distribution of global poverty.

The poorest are getting a little less poor in most regions

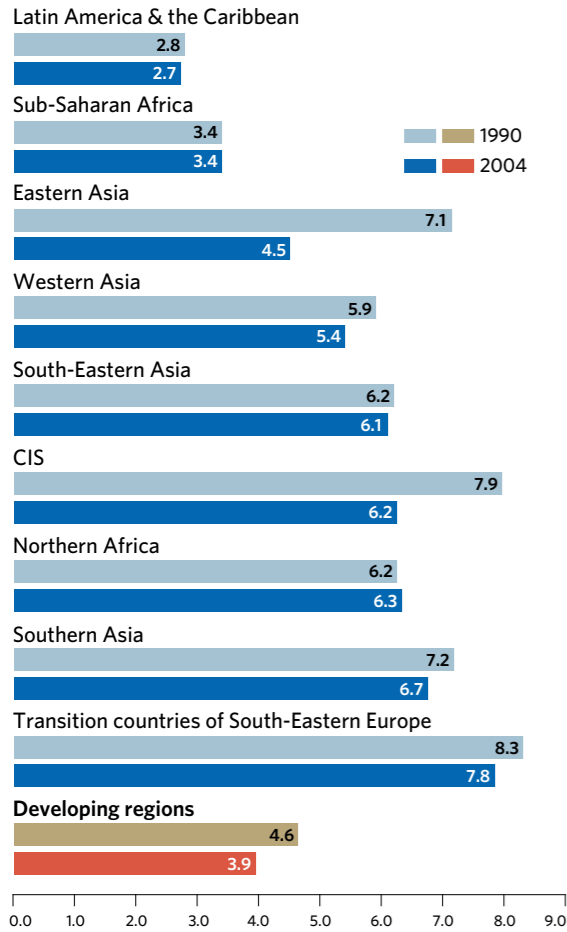
Poverty gap ratio, 1990 and 2004 (Percentage)



In most developing regions, the average income of those living on less than \$1 a day has increased. The poverty gap ratio, which reflects the depth of poverty as well as its incidence, has decreased in all regions except Western Asia, where the rising poverty rate has caused the poverty gap to increase, and in the transition countries in Europe and the CIS, where there has been marginal deterioration or no change. In contrast, the poor in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia have made important gains. In spite of some improvement, the poverty gap ratio in sub-Saharan Africa remains the highest in the world, indicating that the poor in that region are the most economically disadvantaged in the world.

Poverty reduction has been accompanied by rising inequality

Share of poorest quintile in national consumption, 1990 and 2004 (Percentage)



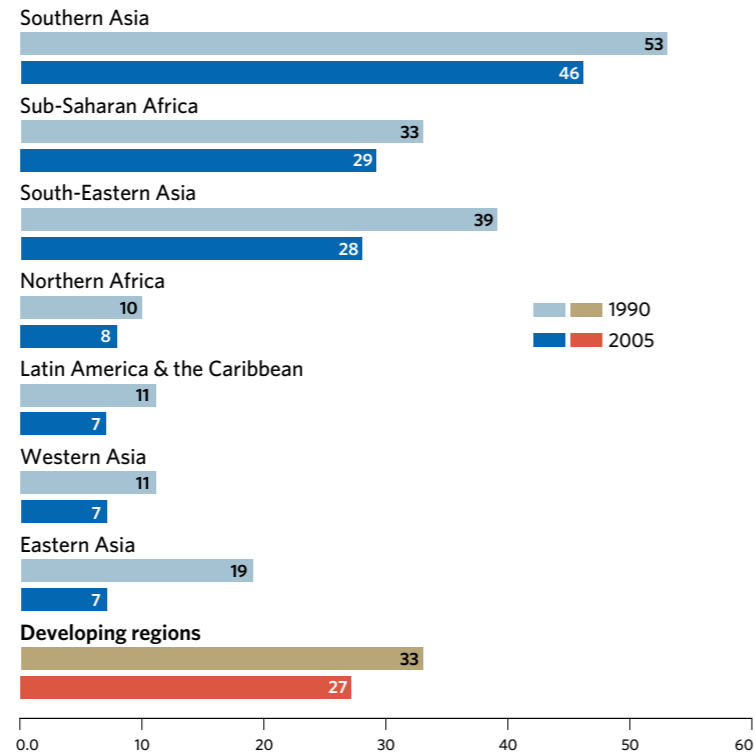
The benefits of economic growth in the developing world have been unequally shared, both within and among countries. Between 1990 and 2004, the share of national consumption by the poorest fifth of the population in developing regions decreased from 4.6 to 3.9 per cent (in countries where consumption figures were unavailable, data on income were used). Widening income inequality is of particular concern in Eastern Asia, where the share of consumption among the poorest people declined dramatically during this period. Still, inequality remains the highest in Latin America and the Caribbean and in sub-Saharan Africa, where the poorest fifth of the people account for only about 3 per cent of national consumption (or income).

TARGET

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Child hunger is declining in all regions, but meeting the target will require accelerated progress

Proportion of children under age five who are underweight, 1990 and 2005 (Percentage)



Globally, the proportion of children under five who are underweight declined by one fifth over the period 1990-2005. Eastern Asia showed the greatest improvement and is surpassing the MDG target, largely due to nutritional advances in China. Western Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean have also demonstrated significant progress, with underweight prevalence dropping by more than one third. The greatest proportions of children going hungry continue to be found in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Poor progress in these regions means that it is unlikely that the global target will be met. If current trends continue, the world will miss the 2015 target by 30 million children, essentially robbing them of their full potential.



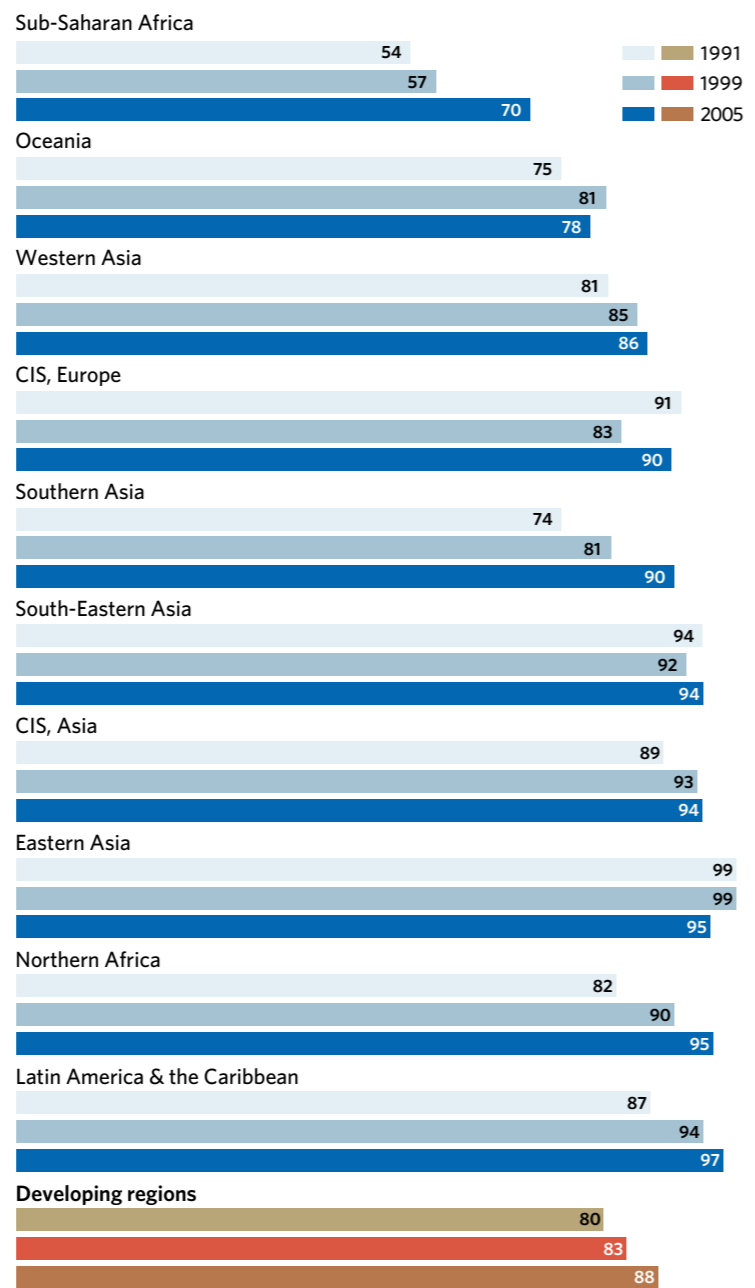
Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education



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

Sub-Saharan Africa is making progress towards universal enrolment, but has a long way to go

Total net enrolment ratio in primary education,* 1990/1991, 1998/1999 and 2004/2005 (Percentage)



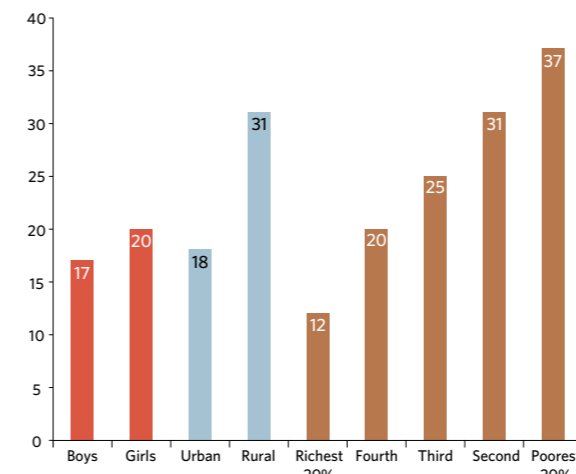
*Number of pupils of the theoretical school-age group for primary education, enrolled either in primary or secondary education, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.

The net enrolment ratio in primary education in the developing regions increased to 88 per cent in the school year 2004/2005, up from 80 per cent in 1990/1991. Two thirds of the increase occurred since 1999. Although sub-Saharan Africa has made significant progress over the last few years, it still trails behind other regions, with 30 per cent of its children of primary school age out of school. A strong push will be needed over the next few years to enrol all children in school and to fulfil their right to a quality education.

primary school age in rural areas of the developing world are out of school, compared with 18 per cent of children in the same age group living in cities. Girls are still excluded from education more often than boys, a pattern that is particularly evident in Western and Southern Asia.

Girls and children from poorer or rural families are least likely to attend school

Children of primary school age out of school, by sex, place of residence and household wealth, 2005 (Percentage)

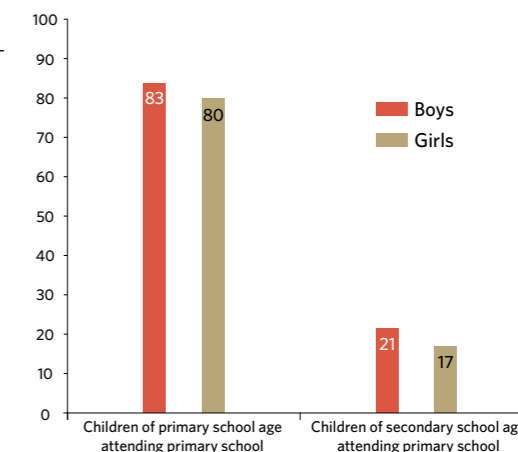


Progress has been made in reducing the number of children out of school. Still, the number is unacceptably high. Based on enrolment data, about 72 million children of primary school age were not in school in 2005; 57 per cent of them were girls. As high as this number seems, surveys show that it underestimates the actual number of children who, though enrolled, are not attending school. Moreover, neither enrolment nor attendance figures reflect children who do not attend school regularly. To make matters worse, official data are not usually available from countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. If data from these countries were reflected in global estimates, the enrolment picture would be even less optimistic.

The children most likely to drop out of school or to not attend at all are those from poorer households or living in rural areas. For example, nearly a third of children of

One child in five who is old enough to attend secondary school is still enrolled in primary school

Net school attendance in primary school by children of official age and by children of secondary school age in all developing regions, 2005 (Percentage)



When many children entering school are under or over the official age for enrolment, the net enrolment ratios for primary school do not accurately reflect the situation of children in school. Surveys indicate that attendance by over-age children is very common, especially in some regions. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, more children of secondary school age are attending primary school than secondary school. Though late enrolment is better than not enrolling at all, it represents a challenge for the education system and reflects the difficulties families face in sending their children to school. Late enrolment also puts children at a disadvantage by causing potential learning problems and lessening opportunities to advance to a higher level of education. Where the information is available, data show that children who start school at least two years later than the official age are more likely to be from poorer households and have mothers with no formal education.

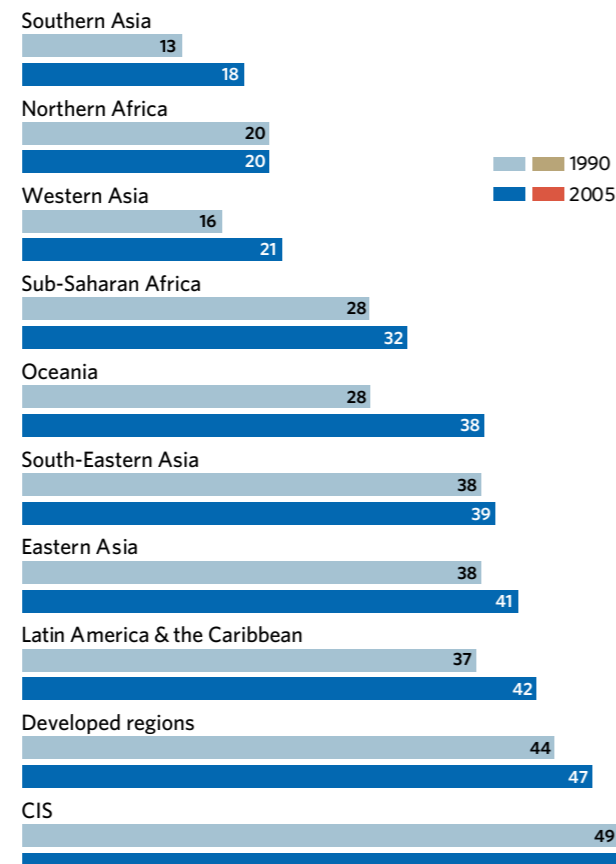
Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women



TARGET
Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015

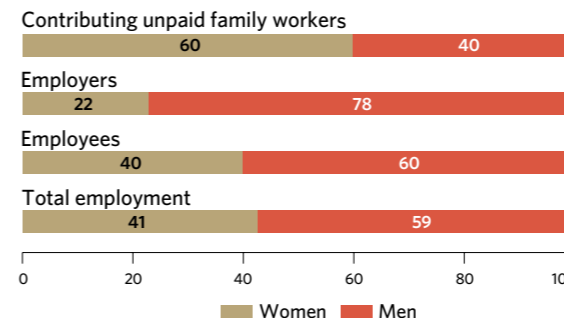
Doors are opening slowly for women in the labour market

Employees in non-agricultural wage employment who are women, 1990 and 2005 (Percentage)



Women's labour is more likely than men's to be unpaid

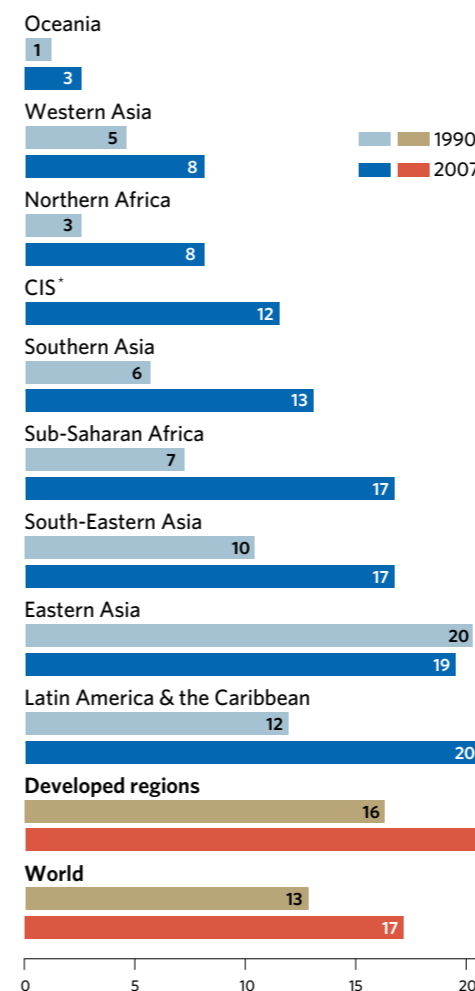
Share of women in total employment by job status, 1990-2005 (Percentage)



Wage employment in most of Africa and in many parts of Asia and Latin America is concentrated in urban areas. Outside cities and towns, most employment is in agriculture, and mainly for family subsistence. Women in developing regions are more likely than men to work in agriculture, and as contributing but unpaid family workers. Worldwide, over 60 per cent of unpaid family workers are women – meaning that women continue to lack access to job security and social protection.

Women gain ground politically, though men still wield control

Share of women in single or lower houses of parliament, 1990 and 2007 (Percentage)



Women's political participation is growing, albeit slowly. Globally, as of January 2007, women represented 17 per cent of single and lower houses of parliament, up from 13 per cent in 1990. However, women represented at least 30 per cent of parliamentarians in only 19 countries. Rwanda is still leading the way, and is close to parity with 49 per cent of parliamentary seats occupied by women, followed by Sweden and Costa Rica, where women's representation is 47 and 39 per cent, respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, women lawmakers are absent altogether in some countries. In 2006 elections in the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, no women were elected to the lower houses of parliament.

Encouraging signs, however, are coming from the Arab States. In 2006, for the first time, both women and men ran for election in Kuwait, where women obtained 2 parliamentary seats, and in the United Arab Emirates, where they won 23 per cent of seats. In Bahrain, a woman was elected to the lower house of parliament for the first time in that nation's history.

Worldwide, women's entry into political leadership positions is also widening. As of March 2007, 35 women were presiding officers in parliament – more than ever before – including, for the first time, in Gambia, Israel, Swaziland, Turkmenistan and the United States. In contrast, there is no clear positive trend in the number of women in the highest positions of state or government. Thirteen women were heads of state or government in 2006, compared to 9 in 2000 and 12 in 1995. A record number of women took up these top positions in 2006 – six in all – in Chile, Jamaica, Liberia, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland, and as acting president in Israel.

A number of factors are at play in determining women's political representation – including political will, the strength of national women's movements and continued emphasis by the international community on gender equality and women's empowerment. However, the most decisive factor remains gender quota systems. In 2006, countries with quotas nearly doubled the number of women elected, compared to countries without any form of gender quota system. Other countries have supported women's election bids through training and funding.

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