

# The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011



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

Since they were first adopted, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have raised awareness and shaped a broad vision that remains the overarching framework for the development activities of the United Nations.

At the September 2010 MDG Summit, world leaders put forward an ambitious action plan—a roadmap outlining what is needed to meet the goals by the agreed deadline of 2015. The information presented on the following pages demonstrates that this can be done if concrete steps are taken.

Already, the MDGs have helped to lift millions of people out of poverty, save lives and ensure that children attend school. They have reduced maternal deaths, expanded opportunities for women, increased access to clean water and freed many people from deadly and debilitating disease. At the same time, the report shows that we still have a long way to go in empowering women and girls, promoting sustainable development, and protecting the most vulnerable from the devastating effects of multiple crises, be they conflicts, natural disasters or volatility in prices for food and energy.

Progress tends to bypass those who are lowest on the economic ladder or are otherwise disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability or ethnicity.

Disparities between urban and rural areas are also pronounced and daunting. Achieving the goals will require equitable and inclusive economic growth—growth that reaches everyone and that will enable all people, especially the poor and marginalized, to benefit from economic opportunities.

We must also take more determined steps to protect the ecosystems that support economic growth and sustain life on earth. Next year's United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development—Rio + 20—is an opportunity to generate momentum in this direction, which is vital for achieving the MDGs.

Between now and 2015, we must make sure that promises made become promises kept. The people of the world are watching. Too many of them are anxious, angry and hurting. They fear for their jobs, their families, their futures. World leaders must show not only that they care, but that they have the courage and conviction to act.



BAN KI-MOON  
*Secretary-General, United Nations*

# Overview

## Lives have been saved or changed for the better

More than 10 years have passed since world leaders established goals and targets to free humanity from extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease. The Millennium Declaration and the MDG framework for accountability derived from it have inspired development efforts and helped set global and national priorities and focus subsequent actions. While more work lies ahead, the world has cause to celebrate, in part due to the continued economic growth of some developing countries and targeted interventions in critical areas. Increased funding from many sources has translated into the expansion of programmes to deliver services and resources to those most in need. Here are some of the highlights:

- **Poverty continues to decline in many countries and regions**

Despite significant setbacks after the 2008-2009 economic downturn, exacerbated by the food and energy crisis, the world is still on track to reach the poverty-reduction target. By 2015, it is now expected that the global poverty rate will fall below 15 per cent, well under the 23 per cent target. This global trend, however, mainly reflects rapid growth in Eastern Asia, especially China.

- **Some of the poorest countries have made the greatest strides in education**

Burundi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania have achieved or are nearing the goal of universal primary education. Considerable progress has also been made in Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique and Niger, where net enrolment ratios in primary school increased by more than 25 percentage points from 1999 to 2009. With an 18 percentage point gain between 1999 and 2009, sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the best record of improvement.

- **Targeted interventions have succeeded in reducing child mortality**

The number of deaths of children under the age of five declined from 12.4 million in 1990 to 8.1 million in 2009. This means that nearly 12,000 fewer children are dying each day. Between 2000 and 2008, the combination of improved immunization coverage and the opportunity for second-dose immunizations led to a 78 per cent drop in measles deaths worldwide. These averted deaths represent one quarter of the decline in mortality from all causes among children under five.

- **Increased funding and control efforts have cut deaths from malaria**

Through the hard work of governments, international partners, community health workers and civil society, deaths

from malaria have been reduced by 20 per cent worldwide—from nearly 985,000 in 2000 to 781,000 in 2009. This was accomplished through critical interventions, including the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, which, in sub-Saharan Africa alone, are sufficient to cover 76 per cent of the population at risk. The largest absolute drops in malaria deaths were in Africa, where 11 countries have reduced malaria cases and deaths by over 50 per cent.

- **Investments in preventing and treating HIV are yielding results**

New HIV infections are declining steadily, led by sub-Saharan Africa. In 2009, an estimated 2.6 million people were newly infected with HIV—a drop of 21 per cent since 1997, when new infections peaked. Thanks to increased funding and the expansion of major programmes, the number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV or AIDS increased 13-fold from 2004 to 2009. By end-2009, 5.25 million people were receiving such treatment in low- and middle-income countries—an increase of over 1.2 million people since December 2008. As a result, the number of AIDS-related deaths declined by 19 per cent over the same period.

- **Effective strategies against tuberculosis are saving millions of lives**

Between 1995 and 2009, a total of 41 million tuberculosis patients were successfully treated and up to 6 million lives were saved, due to effective international protocols for the treatment of tuberculosis. Worldwide, deaths attributed to the disease have fallen by more than one third since 1990.

- **Every region has made progress in improving access to clean drinking water**

An estimated 1.1 billion people in urban areas and 723 million people in rural areas gained access to an improved drinking water source over the period 1990-2008. Eastern Asia registered the largest gains in drinking water coverage—from 69 per cent in 1990 to 86 per cent in 2008. Sub-Saharan Africa nearly doubled the number of people using an improved drinking water source—from 252 million in 1990 to 492 million in 2008.

## Despite real progress, we are failing to reach the most vulnerable

Although many countries have demonstrated that progress is possible, efforts need to be intensified. They must also target the hardest to reach: the poorest of the poor and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, ethnicity or disability. Disparities in progress between urban and rural areas remain daunting.

- **The poorest children have made the slowest progress in terms of improved nutrition**

In 2009, nearly a quarter of children in the developing world were underweight, with the poorest children most

affected. In Southern Asia, a shortage of quality food and poor feeding practices, combined with inadequate sanitation, has contributed to making underweight prevalence among children the highest in the world. In that region, between 1995 and 2009, no meaningful improvement was seen among children in the poorest households, while underweight prevalence among children from the richest 20 per cent of households decreased by almost one third. Children living in rural areas of developing regions are twice as likely to be underweight as are their urban counterparts.

- **Opportunities for full and productive employment remain particularly slim for women**

Wide gaps remain in women's access to paid work in at least half of all regions. Following significant job losses in 2008-2009, the growth in employment during the economic recovery in 2010, especially in the developing world, was lower for women than for men. Women employed in manufacturing industries were especially hard hit.

- **Being poor, female or living in a conflict zone increases the probability that a child will be out of school**

The net enrolment ratio of children in primary school has only gone up by 7 percentage points since 1999, reaching 89 per cent in 2009. More recently, progress has actually slowed, dimming prospects for reaching the MDG target of universal primary education by 2015. Children from the poorest households, those living in rural areas and girls are the most likely to be out of school. Worldwide, among children of primary school age not enrolled in school, 42 per cent—28 million—live in poor countries affected by conflict.

- **Advances in sanitation often bypass the poor and those living in rural areas**

Over 2.6 billion people still lack access to flush toilets or other forms of improved sanitation. And where progress has occurred, it has largely bypassed the poor. An analysis of trends over the period 1995-2008 for three countries in Southern Asia shows that improvements in sanitation disproportionately benefited the better off, while sanitation coverage for the poorest 40 per cent of households hardly increased. Although gaps in sanitation coverage between urban and rural areas are narrowing, rural populations remain at a distinct disadvantage in a number of regions.

- **Improving the lives of a growing number of urban poor remains a monumental challenge**

Progress in ameliorating slum conditions has not been sufficient to offset the growth of informal settlements throughout the developing world. In developing regions, the number of urban residents living in slum conditions is now estimated at 828 million, compared to 657 million in 1990 and 767 million in 2000. Redoubled efforts will be needed to improve the lives of the urban poor in cities and metropolises across the developing world.

- **Progress has been uneven in improving access to safe drinking water**

In all regions, coverage in rural areas lags behind that of cities and towns. In sub-Saharan Africa, an urban dweller

is 1.8 times more likely to use an improved drinking water source than a person living in a rural area.

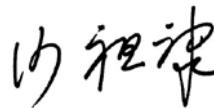
## Continued progress requires an active commitment to peace, equity, equality and sustainability

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At the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the MDGs and called for intensified collective action and the expansion of successful approaches. They acknowledged the challenges posed by multiple crises, increasing inequalities and persistent violent conflicts.

They called for action to ensure equal access by women and girls to education, basic services, health care, economic opportunities and decision-making at all levels, recognizing that achievement of the MDGs depends largely on women's empowerment. World leaders also stressed that accelerated action on the goals requires economic growth that is sustainable, inclusive and equitable—growth that enables everyone to benefit from progress and share in economic opportunities.

Finally, further and faster movement towards achievement of the MDGs will require a rejuvenated global partnership, expeditious delivery on commitments already made, and an agile transition to a more environmentally sustainable future.



SHA ZUKANG

*Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs*

# Goal 1

## Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

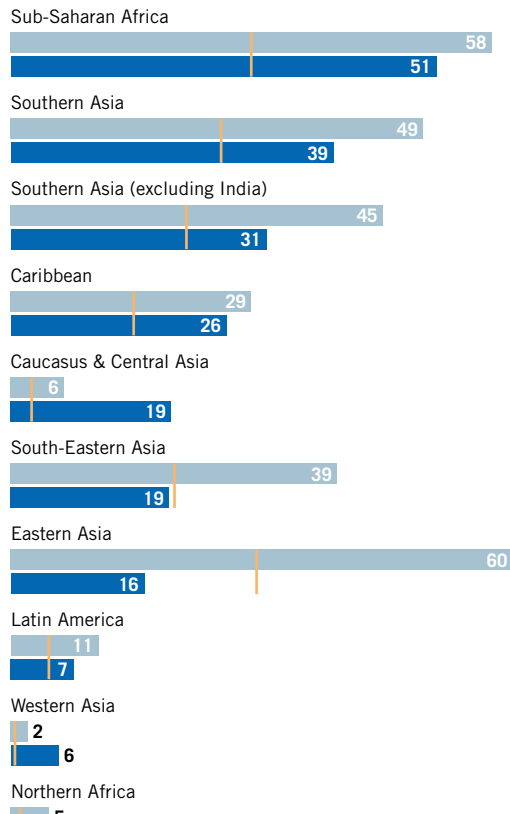


### TARGET

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

Sustained growth in developing countries, particularly in Asia, is keeping the world on track to meet the poverty-reduction target

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



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