

Progress on
Drinking Water
and Sanitation

2014
UPDATE



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FOREWORD

► As we approach the Millennium Development Goals deadline, the lessons, successes and remaining challenges are becoming increasingly clear. This report highlights what we have achieved on water and sanitation, and where we need to accelerate efforts.

► The good news is that since 1990 well over 2 billion people have gained access to improved sources of drinking water, and 116 countries have met the MDG target for water. Almost 2 billion people gained access to improved sanitation and 77 countries have met the MDG target. More than half the world's population, almost 4 billion people, now enjoy the highest level of water access: a piped water connection at their homes.

► But much remains to be done. More than 700 million people still lack ready access to improved sources of drinking water; nearly half are in sub-Saharan Africa. More than one third of the global population – some 2.5 billion people – do not use an improved sanitation facility, and of these 1 billion people still practice open defecation.

► These figures – and these realities demand that we break the silence and expand awareness of what needs

to be done. Where efforts are made, progress is possible. Between 1990 and 2012, open defecation decreased from 24 per cent to 14 per cent globally. South Asia saw the largest decline, from 65 per cent to 38 per cent. Some countries stand out as examples. Efforts undertaken in Ethiopia have seen a decrease from 92 per cent to 37 per cent. Cambodia and Nepal have experienced similar declines.

► But while we can record successes on open defecation, sanitation and water, this report highlights stark disparities across regions, between urban and rural areas, and between the rich and the poor and marginalized. The vast majority of those without sanitation are poorer people living in rural areas. Yet, progress on sanitation has often increased inequality by primarily benefitting wealthier people.

► Achieving a world of dignity for all requires that we fashion a post-2015 development framework that will eliminate these disparities. No one should lack safe water and a hygienic toilet. This report demonstrates that, with concerted efforts, water and sanitation for all is attainable.

Let us commit to work together for this most essential of objectives.

Jan Eliasson
Deputy Secretary-General
of the United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

► In 2012, 89% of the global population used an improved source of drinking water, and 64% used an improved

sanitation facility. One hundred and sixteen countries have already met the Millennium Development Goal (MDG)

drinking water target, and 77 have already met the MDG sanitation target [Table 1].

Fifty-six countries have already met the MDG target for both drinking water and sanitation

	Drinking water	Sanitation	Drinking water and sanitation
Met target	116	77	56
On track to meet target	31	29	30
Progress insufficient	5	10	-
Not on track to meet target	40	69	20

Table 1. Number of countries that have met the MDG target for drinking water and sanitation, that are on track to meet the target, whose progress is insufficient to meet the target and that are not on track to meet the target^{1,2}

► Even though progress towards the MDG target represents important gains in access for billions of people around the world, it has been uneven. Sharp geographic, sociocultural and economic inequalities in access persist and sometimes have increased. This report presents examples of unequal progress among marginalized and vulnerable groups.

► This 2014 update report of the World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, known as the JMP, is split into three sections. The first section presents the status of and trends in access to improved drinking water sources and sanitation. The second section provides a snapshot of inequalities in access to improved

drinking water sources and sanitation. The final section presents efforts to strengthen monitoring of access to safe drinking water and sanitation services under a post-2015 development agenda, as well as the challenges associated with these efforts. Annexes at the back of the report provide supplementary information on the JMP method, MDG regional groupings, data tables and trend figures.

Progress towards the target

► The MDG drinking water target coverage of 88% was met in 2010. Whereas 76% of the global population had access to an improved drinking

water source in 1990, 89% of the global population had access in 2012, an increase of 2.3 billion people. Fifty-six per cent of the global population,

almost four billion people, now enjoy the highest level of access: a piped drinking water connection on premises [Fig. 1].

¹ These assessments are preliminary; the final assessments will be made in 2015 for the final MDG report. Definitions are as follows: If 2012 estimate of improved drinking water or improved sanitation coverage is i) greater than or equal to the 2015 target or the 2012 coverage is greater than or equal to 99.5%: **Met target**; ii) within 3% of the 2012 coverage-when-on-track: **On track**; iii) within 3-7% of the 2012 coverage-when-on-track: **Progress insufficient**; iv) >7% of the 2012 coverage-when-on-track or 2012 coverage ≤1990 coverage: **Not on track**.

² Of a total of 225 countries - for 33 countries, there are insufficient data on improved drinking water sources; for 40 countries, there are insufficient data on improved sanitation.

The MDG drinking water target has already been surpassed

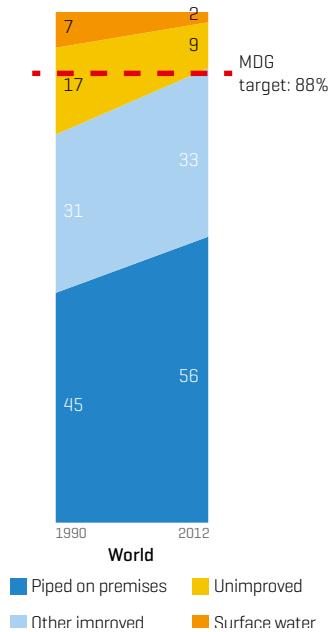


Fig. 1. Trends in global drinking water coverage [%], 1990–2012.

The world is unlikely to reach the MDG sanitation target of 75%

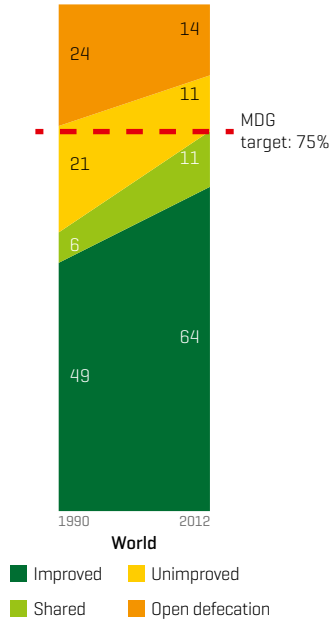


Fig. 2. Trends in global sanitation coverage [%], 1990–2012.

▶ The MDG sanitation target aims to reduce the proportion of the population without access to improved sanitation from 51% in 1990 to 25% in 2015. Coverage of improved sanitation increased from 49% in 1990 to 64% in 2012. Between 1990 and 2012, almost two billion people gained access to an improved sanitation facility, and open defecation decreased from 24% to 14% (Fig. 2).

▶ Although the world met the MDG drinking water target, 748 million people – mostly the poor and marginalized – still lack access to an improved drinking water source. Of these, almost a quarter [173 million] rely on untreated surface water, and over 90% live in rural areas. If current trends continue, there will still be 547 million people without an improved drinking water supply in 2015.

▶ Despite significant progress on sanitation, in 2012, 2.5 billion people did not have access to an improved sanitation facility, down from 2.7 billion in 1990, a decrease of only 7%. If current trends continue, there will still be 2.4 billion people without access to an improved sanitation facility in 2015, falling short of the MDG sanitation

target. Over the past 22 years, a large majority (70%) of those without access to an improved sanitation facility live in rural areas.

▶ Eliminating open defecation, a practice strongly associated with poverty and exclusion, is critical to accelerating progress towards the MDG sanitation target. Over the past 22

years, open defecation fell by a remarkable 21%, from 1.3 billion in 1990 to one billion in 2012. Those one billion people with no sanitation facility whatsoever continue to defecate in gutters, behind bushes or in open water bodies, with no dignity or privacy. Nine out of 10 people who practise open defecation live in rural areas, but the number in urban

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