

The Millennium Development Goals Report



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EMBARGOED UNTIL 7 JULY, 10AM EDT (GMT-4)

Progress on Millennium Development Goals continues across Asia, says UN report

EASTERN ASIA AND SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA HAVE MET MANY MDGs TARGETS AND ARE WITHIN REACH OF MOST OTHERS, BUT SOUTHERN ASIA IS IN JEOPARDY OF MISSING MANY TARGETS BY 2015

NEW DELHI, 16 JULY 2014 – Southern Asia has made great progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but requires greater efforts to achieve most targets by the end of 2015, according to a new UN report. Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia have met or are within reach of meeting most MDG targets.

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014, launched today by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in New York, finds millions of people's lives have improved across Asia, and in its sub-regions of Eastern Asia, South-Eastern Asia and Southern Asia. The eight MDGs, with a number of sub-targets covering a range of poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, education and environmental indicators, were agreed by all countries as an outgrowth of the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, most with a due date of 2015.

GAINS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS CONTINUE IN EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND JOBS

Asia continues to expand access to primary education. In Southern Asia, the adjusted net enrolment rate of children of primary school age increased from 80 per cent in 2000 to 94 per cent in 2012. About 19 per cent of out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict areas in Southern Asia. In 2012, Eastern Asia's adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education was 97 per cent, and South-Eastern Asia's was 94 per cent, but these two sub-regions have made little progress since 2000.

The three sub-regions achieved parity in primary education between girls and boys. However, in Southern Asia, gender parity is yet to be achieved in Afghanistan and Pakistan—where there are at most nine girls for every ten boys enrolled—and Bangladesh and Nepal—where the gender disparity favours girls. Gender disparities persist in secondary and tertiary education in Southern Asia.

Women in Southern Asia and South-Eastern Asia are gaining more influence in politics. Between 2000 and 2014, the proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of national parliament increased from 7 to 16 per cent in Southern Asia and from 12 to 18 per cent in South-Eastern Asia. In Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, parity in the number of women and men holding wage-earning jobs has been nearly achieved. But Southern Asia has one of the lowest shares of women in non-agricultural wage employment, with women holding only 20 out of every 100 wage-earning jobs in the non-agricultural sector.

MATERNAL AND CHILD MORTALITY CONTINUES TO DECLINE ACROSS ASIA

Asia has made impressive progress in reducing maternal mortality. However, Southern Asia accounted for 24 per cent of all maternal deaths worldwide in 2013. Compared to the universal attendance of skilled health personnel at births in Eastern Asia, only 51 per cent of deliveries were attended by skilled health personnel in Southern Asia. In 2012, only 36 per cent of pregnant women in Southern Asia received the recommended minimum of four antenatal care visits during their last pregnancy.

Eastern Asia met the target of reducing the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds ahead of 2015. The mortality rate for children under five in South-Eastern Asia dropped more than half from 71 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 30 in 2012. In 2012, Southern Asia accounted for 2.1 million of the 6.6 million deaths in children under five worldwide. In 2012, with 1.4 million children dying before reaching their fifth birthday, India had the highest child mortality rate worldwide.

MORE ASIANS GAIN ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION, BUT OPEN DEFECACTION REMAINS WIDESPREAD

The MDG drinking water target was met five years ahead of schedule in the three sub-regions. The greatest progress in improving access to improved sanitation facilities was made in Eastern Asia, where sanitation coverage increased from 27 per cent in 1990 to 67 per cent in 2012, and the region has met the MDG target ahead of the deadline. In South-Eastern Asia, the proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility increased from 47 percent to 71 per cent between 1990 and 2012. South-Eastern Asia should meet the MDG sanitation target soon.

In Southern Asia, the proportion increased from 23 percent to 42 per cent, which, if prevailing trends continue, is insufficient to meet the MDG target by 2015. Southern Asia has one of the highest levels of open defecation, which is a practice that needs to be brought to an end, as it poses a huge risk to communities that are often poor and vulnerable already. Nearly 60 per cent of the one billion people practicing open defecation live in India.

POVERTY AND HUNGER REMAIN PROMINENT EVEN WITH TARGETS ACHIEVED

Extreme poverty rates of people living on less than \$1.25 per day halved in Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia, but Southern Asia needs more time. China leads the way in global poverty reduction, with extreme poverty dropping from 60 per cent in 1990 to 16 per cent in 2005 and 12 per cent in 2010. Yet, China is home to about 13 per cent of the world's extreme poor.

The poverty rate in South-Eastern Asia fell from 45 per cent in 1990 to 14 per cent in 2010. Although poverty remains widespread in Southern Asia, progress in the region has been substantial. In Southern Asia, poverty rates fell from 51 per cent in 1990 to 30 per cent in 2010. However, the World Bank projects that 40 per cent of the estimated 970 million people living on less than \$1.25 a day will be in Southern Asia in 2015.

Marked differences in reducing hunger persist across Asia. In South-Eastern Asia, the proportion of undernourished people in the total population fell from 31.1 per cent in 1990-1992 to 10.7 per cent in 2011-2013. Eastern Asia is on track to meet the MDG hunger target, with the proportion of undernourished people falling from 22.2 per cent to 11.4 per cent over the same period. However, in Southern Asia, the proportion of undernourished people fell from 25.7 per cent in 1990-1992 to 16.8 per cent to in 2011-2013, which is insufficient to meet the MDG target by the end of 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals Report, an annual assessment of global and regional progress towards the Goals, reflects the most comprehensive, up-to-date data compiled by over 28 UN and international agencies and is produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A complete set of the data used to prepare the report is available at mdgs.un.org

For more information, press materials and an inter-agency media contact list, see www.un.org/millenniumgoals

MEDIA CONTACTS

New Delhi: United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan
Mrs. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, unicindia@unicindia.org, 91-11-4653-2242

New York: UN Department of Public Information
Wynne Boelt, boelt@un.org, +1 212 963 8264