

The Millennium Development Goals Report



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Sub-Saharan Africa Continues Steady Progress on Millennium Development Goals

BUILDING ON IMPRESSIVE STRIDES ON HEALTH AND EDUCATION,
ACCELERATED ACTION NEEDED TOWARDS ANTI-POVERTY TARGETS

NAIROBI, 1 JULY – Building on impressive strides made, sub-Saharan Africa must continue to ramp up efforts towards achieving many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by their 2015 target date, a new UN report says.

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013 launched today by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Geneva, finds that sub-Saharan Africa has made steady progress for its 1 billion people, with fewer mothers and children dying, growing numbers of women in power and broadened access to health and education services, alongside sharp drops in malaria and tuberculosis deaths.

The eight Millennium Development Goals, 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.

The *MDG Report 2013* emphasizes that progress for all children in sub-Saharan Africa is “within our grasp.” The region doubled its average rate of reduction of child deaths from 1.5 per cent a year in 1990-2000 to 3.1 per cent a year in 2000-2011, although it still has the highest child mortality rate in the world. From 1990 to 2011 for children under age five, the mortality rate dropped by 39 per cent (from 178 deaths per 1,000 live births to 109) and the proportion of those who are underweight dropped from 29 to 21 per cent. Some countries with high under-five death rates, including Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger and Rwanda, reported reductions of at least 60 per cent.

The report says steady progress has been made in expanding access to primary education in the region, with primary school enrolment rates increasing from 60 per cent to 77 per cent between 2000 and 2011.

Efforts to combat diseases are paying off in lives saved, as the region is on its way to halting the spread and reversing the incidence of tuberculosis and is making substantial progress battling malaria. One-third of children were sleeping under insecticide-treated nets in 2011, up from less than 5 per cent in 2000. Among developing regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the second highest access to HIV treatment – 56 per cent of people living with HIV received antiretroviral therapy in 2011. However, sub-Saharan Africa remains the most severely affected area by HIV.

Indicators for women are also improving. Despite having the highest maternal mortality ratio among all regions, sub-Saharan Africa saw mortality ratios fall by 41 per cent over the past two decades, from 850 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 500 in 2010.

The report says the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women increased from 13 per cent in 2000 to 21 per cent in 2013, the second highest among all developing regions. Globally, one of the highest electoral gains for women in 2012 was seen in Senegal, where women took 43 per cent of parliamentary seats.

The proportion of the region's population using an improved water source increased from 49 per cent to 63 per cent between 1990 and 2011, according to the report. New sanitation policies adopted in recent years throughout the developing world have shown remarkable success in ending open defecation, a practice that poses serious health and environmental risks to individuals and entire communities. In almost 100 countries, many in sub-Saharan Africa, new approaches to sanitation have taken root and the number of declared 'open-defecation-free villages' is rising. The proportion of the world's population resorting to open defecation declined from 24 per cent in 1990 to 15 per cent in 2011.

BUILDING MDG MOMENTUM

Work to boost MDG achievement must continue to tackle some of the greatest challenges for the region, the report says. That includes bolstering development efforts to further reduce the poverty rate, which fell only 8 percentage points over the last two decades, and addressing the needs of 414 million people still living on less than \$1.25 a day.

Accelerated efforts are also needed to continue gains in combating HIV and to build on the momentum in fighting malaria through the use of insecticide-treated nets. The region had the world's highest child mortality rate and the second highest prevalence of underweight children among all regions in 2011. That year, one in nine children died before age five, more than 16 times the average for developed regions, accounting for 3.4 million of the 6.9 million under-five deaths worldwide. The pace of change must accelerate even further if the MDG target is to be met, the report says, and efforts must concentrate on countries with the highest number of under-five deaths, such as Nigeria, and countries with the highest under-five death rates, such as Sierra Leone and Somalia, with rates of 180 or more per 1,000 live births.

With the region continuing to face rising demands for education from a growing population, the report says 32 million more children were of primary school age in 2011 than in 2000. Sub-Saharan Africa is also home to more than half the world's out-of-school children of primary school age (32 million out of 57 million) and it has the highest rate worldwide of children leaving school early. Slightly more than two out of five students who started primary school in 2010 will not make it to the last grade.

The report also calls for action to improve access to sanitation and the lives of slum dwellers. Between 1990 and 2011, the proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility increased marginally from 26 per cent to 30 per cent, and the high proportion of slum dwellers dropped slightly—from 65 per cent in 2000 to 62 per cent in 2012.

At a time when renewed sets of commitments to the MDGs are being made, the report says aid is unfortunately lagging. The report states that bilateral net official development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa amounted to \$26.2 billion in 2012, an 8 per cent drop from 2011. The current shift in aid away from the poorest countries and Africa, and towards middle-income countries, will continue, the recent survey suggests, with a greater share of aid being offered in the form of soft loans rather than grants.

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 27 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.

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