

# The world is making big strides towards achieving the MDGs



*Several important targets of the Millennium Development Goals have or will be met by the 2015 deadline, but progress in many areas is far from sufficient, according to this year's Millennium Development Goals Report launched today by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.*

“The Millennium Development Goals have been the most successful global anti-poverty push in history,” Mr. Ban said. “The MDGs have proven that focused global development objectives can make a profound difference.” The eight goals were agreed by all countries as an outgrowth of the UN Millennium Summit in 2000.

The analysis in this report, based on a wide range of statistics, shows [that the actions of national governments, the international community, civil society and the private sector are coalescing in the achievement of many of the MDGs](#). At the same time, many items on the agenda remain incomplete. Redoubled efforts are urgently needed, in particular in regions most behind to jumpstart advancement and achieve maximum gains. The report also reveals that our attention needs to focus on disparities across geographical areas and social groups. The results of this report give us a clear indication where our efforts must be directed in the days remaining before the 2015 deadline.

The Millennium Development Goals Report is an annual assessment of global and regional progress towards the Goals. It is produced by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and reflects the most comprehensive, up-to-date data and analysis compiled by over 27 UN and international agencies.

## **Important MDG targets already met or within close reach**

The [proportion of people living in extreme poverty has been halved at the global level](#) and the world reached the poverty reduction target five years ahead of schedule. About [700 million fewer people lived in conditions of extreme poverty in 2010 than in 1990](#). Also, MDG drinking water target was met five years ahead of the target date with over [2 billion people having gained access to improved sources of drinking water since 1990](#).

Over 200 million slum dwellers benefitted from improved water sources, sanitation facilities, durable housing or sufficient living space between 2000 and 2010, thereby exceeding the 100 million MDG target. Given reinvigorated efforts, the target of halving the percentage of people suffering from hunger by 2015 appears to be within reach.

Remarkable gains have also been made in the fight against malaria and tuberculosis. [Mortality rates from malaria fell by more than 25 per cent globally between 2000 and 2010](#). Between 1995 and 2011, a cumulative total of [51 million tuberculosis patients were successfully treated, saving 20 million lives](#).

## **Accelerated progress and bolder action needed in many areas**

Environmental sustainability is under severe threat, demanding a new level of global cooperation: The growth in global greenhouse gases is accelerating, and **emissions of carbon dioxide today are more than 46 per cent higher than their 1990 level**. Forests continue to be lost at an alarming rate. Overexploitation of marine fish stocks is resulting in diminished yields. More of the earth's land and marine areas are under protection, but birds, mammals and other species are heading for extinction at an ever faster rate, with declines in both populations and distribution.

Worldwide, the **mortality rate for children under five dropped by 41 per cent**—from 87 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 51 in 2011. Despite this enormous accomplishment, more rapid progress is needed to meet the 2015 target of a two-thirds reduction in child deaths. Most maternal deaths are preventable, but progress in this area is falling short. Globally, the **maternal mortality ratio declined by 47 per cent over the last two decades**, from 400 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births to 210 between 1990 and 2010. Meeting the MDG target of reducing the ratio by three quarters will require accelerated interventions and stronger political backing for women and children.

Also in other areas progress has not been sufficient: Access to antiretroviral therapy and knowledge about HIV prevention must expand. In 2011, **57 millions primary school age children were still denied their right to primary education**. From 1990 to 2011, **1.9 billion people gained access to a latrine, flush toilet or other improved sanitation facility** but more rapid progress is needed to meet the MDG sanitation target.

A low debt burden and an improved climate for trade are levelling the playing field for developing countries. However, there is less aid money overall, with the poorest countries most adversely affected. In 2012, bilateral official development assistance to least developed countries fell by 13 per cent, to about \$26 billion.

## **Global attention needs to focus on disparities**

Progress towards the eight MDGs has been uneven – not only among regions and countries, but also between rural and urban areas, men and women, and among other population groups within countries. In 2011, only 53 per cent of births in rural areas were attended by skilled health personnel, versus 84 per cent in urban areas. Eighty-three per cent of the population without access to an improved drinking water source lives in rural communities. Also, **gender-based inequalities in decision-making power persist**.

## **Creating a stable foundation for future development action**

The United Nations is working with governments, civil society and other partners to build on the momentum generated by the MDGs, to craft an ambitious, yet realistic, post-2015 agenda. A successful conclusion to the MDGs will be an important building block for a successor development agenda, and volumes of experience and lessons learned from the MDGs will benefit prospects for continued progress.

“Through accelerated action, the world can achieve the MDGs and generate momentum for an ambitious and inspiring post-2015 development framework,” Mr. Ban said. “Now is the time to step up our efforts to build a more just, secure and sustainable future for all.”

**For more information:**

United Nations Millennium Development Goals Indicators (<http://mdgs.un.org/>)

United Nations Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>)

Document obtained from

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/newsletter/desanews/feature/2013/07/index.html#7815>

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