

The Millennium Development Goals Report



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REGIONAL BACKGROUNDER

Oceania

Countries in Oceania face common challenges resulting from their small size, geographic isolation and natural disaster vulnerability. The region is experiencing high levels of poverty and slow economic growth and is in danger of missing critical MDG targets.

The hunger reduction target remains distant for the region. Oceania made limited progress on reducing the prevalence of undernourishment from 1990–1992 to 2014–2016. The proportion of undernourished people in the total population decreased from 15.7 per cent in 1990–1992 to 14.2 per cent in 2014–2016. Oceania has demonstrated the least progress in improving child undernutrition of all regions, with the proportion of underweight children under age five increasing from 18 per cent to 19 per cent from 1990 to 2015.

Progress in Oceania has been slow because of heavy dependence on food imports by the small islands that constitute the majority of countries in that region. Food security in this region is also hampered by natural and human-caused disasters, which often result in volatile prices and sudden and unpredictable changes in the availability of important staple foods.

Oceania made substantial progress in expanding access to primary education between 1990 and 2015 with an increase in enrolment rates from 69 per cent to 95 per cent. However, the achievement of universal primary education requires both enrolment in, and completion of, the full cycle of primary school education. The region has made no progress in keeping children in school. Fewer than one in two pupils in Oceania are able to complete primary school, the lowest among all developing regions.

Despite progress in improving gender parity in education, girls continue to face high barriers to schooling in all levels of education. In Oceania, it is projected that only 86 girls are enrolled in secondary schools for every 100 boys in 2015.

Women's access to paid employment in the non-agricultural sector has been increasing over the past two decades, with an increase of 6 percentage points over the period 1990–2015, from 33 to 39 per cent.

Women in Oceania lag far behind in equal participation in political decision-making, with the smallest representation of women in national parliament. The proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of national parliament increased slightly from 3.6 per cent in 2000 to 4.4 per cent in 2015.

Oceania made the least progress in improvements in child survival and is not on track to meet the target of a two thirds reduction in the under-five mortality rate. The under-five mortality rate reduced only by 31 per cent between 1990 and 2015, dropping from 74 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 51 in 2015.

The maternal mortality ratio declined by 51 per cent in Oceania over the past two decades, from 390 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 190 in 2013, still the second highest among all regions.

Oceania has made some progress in adolescent childbearing since 1990, with the number of births per 1000 adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 reduced from 84 in 1990, to 65 in 2000 and further to 53 in 2015.

New HIV infections fell by 25 per cent in Oceania. The tuberculosis (TB) death rate has fallen by two thirds in the region.

In Oceania, there were no coastal or marine protected areas in 1990, but 7.4 per cent of such areas were protected in 2014. Terrestrial and marine protected areas help to prevent loss of biodiversity, maintain food security and water supplies,



strengthen climate resilience and provide services for human well-being. Protecting these areas aims to conserve and nurture biological diversity, ensuring areas are safeguarded and maintained for future generations.

Oceania has made some progress in improving access to improved drinking water but no progress in improving access to basic sanitation. The proportion of the population using an improved water source increased from 50 per cent to 56 per cent between 1990 and 2015. The proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility has remained around 35 per cent since 1990.

Globally over the past decade, the lives of millions of slum dwellers have been improved. The decline in the proportion of slum dwellers was observed across most regions. However, Oceania has shown no improvement in reducing the proportion of urban population living in slums, with the proportion of slum dwellers remaining around 24 per cent since 1990.

