

The Millennium Development Goals Report



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Sub-Saharan Africa advances on many Millennium Development Goals, but still faces tough challenges

GAINS IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION, BUT URGENT PROGRESS NEEDED ON CHILD AND MATERNAL DEATHS, NUTRITION AND GENDER EQUALITY, UN REPORT SAYS

NAIROBI/JOHANNESBURG, 7 JULY 2011 — Sub-Saharan Africa has made rapid progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but reaching all Goals by 2015 remains challenging, a UN report says.

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, launched today by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Geneva, finds that sub-Saharan Africa improved the fastest among all developing regions in many areas, especially those related to health.

The MDG Report 2011 says sub-Saharan Africa leads the world in steadily reducing new HIV infections. In addition, treatment for HIV and AIDS has expanded quickly. The proportion of people living with HIV receiving antiretroviral treatment increased from 3 per cent in 2004 to 37 per cent in 2009. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region most heavily affected by HIV and AIDS, accounting for 69 per cent of new HIV infections, 68 per cent of all people living with HIV and 72 per cent of AIDS deaths in 2009.

The report says that between 2000 and 2009, sub-Saharan Africa had the largest decreases in malaria deaths of any region. Since 2000, Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Madagascar, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia reduced the number of confirmed malaria cases and deaths by more than 50 per cent. The report notes that between 2008 and 2010, 290 million insecticide-treated nets to prevent malaria were distributed in the region, enough to cover 76 per cent of the 765 million people at risk.

The number of people in the region with access to safe drinking water increased from 252 million to 492 million between 1990 and 2008, according to the MDG Report, growing from 49 to 60 per cent of the population. But there are wide disparities: in cities, the poorest 20 per cent of households are 12 times less likely to enjoy piped drinking water at home than the richest 20 per cent. Sixty-two per cent of the urban population lives in slums, the highest rate of any region.

Regarding education, the report says that with an 18-percentage-point gain between 1999 and 2009, sub-Saharan Africa improved the most of any region in primary school enrolment. Burundi, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania have achieved or are nearing the goal of universal primary education. In Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique and Niger, net enrolment ratios in primary school increased by more than 25 percentage points from 1999 to 2009.

Still, almost half of the world's out-of-school children (32 million) live in sub-Saharan Africa, the report says. Girls' school enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa is the second lowest of all regions at the primary education level and the lowest at the secondary and tertiary education levels.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN SUFFERING MOST

Although major inroads are being made in reducing child mortality in the region – with four countries achieving more than a 50 per cent reduction between 1990 and 2009 – the highest levels of under-five mortality continue to be found in sub-Saharan Africa. One in eight children died before the age of five in 2009, nearly twice the average in the developing regions and around 18 times the average in the developed regions. And despite advances in many countries in reducing maternal deaths, sub-Saharan Africa also has the highest maternal mortality level in the world – 640 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008, which is more than twice the average in the developing regions and 38 times the average in the developed regions.

The report says that in sub-Saharan Africa, child underweight prevalence only decreased from 27 per cent in 1990 to 22 per cent in 2009, which means the region may not reach the MDGs' hunger-reduction target. Using the latest poverty data available, the report says, sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to meet the poverty-reduction target. In 2005, 51 per cent of its population lived in extreme poverty (living on less than \$1.25 a day), down only seven points from 58 per cent in 1990. But recent World Bank projections are slightly more upbeat, forecasting that the extreme poverty rate in the region will fall below 36 per cent by 2015, based on economic growth performance and trends.

Although aid to developing countries reached a record high in 2010, the report notes, only \$11 billion has been received of the \$25 billion increase promised to sub-Saharan Africa at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit, owing mainly to shortfalls from some European donors that give large shares of their aid to Africa.

First agreed at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, the eight MDGs set worldwide objectives for reducing extreme poverty and hunger, improving health and education, empowering women and ensuring environmental sustainability by 2015. At the UN MDG Summit in September 2010, world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the Goals and called for intensified collective action and the expansion of successful approaches; a Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health was launched and garnered over \$40 billion in commitments.

The Millennium Development Goals Report, an annual assessment of regional progress towards the Goals, reflects the most comprehensive, up-to-date data compiled by over 25 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

In Nairobi:

Eshila Hazel Maravanyika, Tel: +254 20 762 1102; e-mail: maravanyika@un.org

In Pretoria / Johannesburg:

Sudeshan Reddy, Tel: +27 12 354 8507; e-mail: sudeshan.reddy@unic.org

In New York | UN Department of Public Information

Wynne Boelt, Tel. +1 212 963 8264; e-mail boelt@un.org

Newton Kanhema, Tel. +1 212 963 5602; e-mail kanhema@un.org