



UNITED NATIONS

WE CAN END POVERTY

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND BEYOND 2015

FACT SHEET

GOAL 7

Ensure environmental sustainability

TARGETS

1. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
2. Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
3. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
4. Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

FAST FACTS

- ◇ More than 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water sources since 1990, exceeding the MDG target.
- ◇ While almost 2 billion more people now have access to proper sanitation than in 1990, 2.5 billion still do not have access to toilets or latrines.
- ◇ An estimated 863 million people reside in slums in developing countries.
- ◇ Global carbon dioxide emissions have increased by more than 46 per cent since 1990.
- ◇ Nearly one-third of marine fish stocks have been overexploited and the world's fisheries can no longer produce maximum sustainable yields.
- ◇ More species are at risk of extinction despite an increase in protected areas.
- ◇ Forests, particularly in South America and Africa, are disappearing at an alarming rate.

WHERE WE STAND

More than 240,000 people a day—1.9 billion people—gained access to a latrine, toilet or other improved sanitation facilities from 1990 to 2011. The greatest progress has been made in Eastern Asia, where sanitation coverage increased from 27 per cent in 1990 to 67 per cent in 2011. However, a strong push is needed to increase this number globally by another 1 billion people by 2015. Stopping open defecation—a practice that poses serious health and environmental risks to entire communities—is a key factor in continued progress in sanitation.

An estimated 863 million people reside in slums in the developing world. Between 2000 and 2010, more than 200 million slum dwellers gained access to improved water, sanitation or durable and less crowded housing, thereby achieving twice-over the MDG target of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers. Between 2010 and 2012 alone, conditions improved to the point where an additional 44 million people were no longer considered to be living in slums.

Although the MDG slum target has been reached, the number of slum dwellers, in absolute terms, continues to grow, due in part to the fast pace of urbanization. The number of urban residents in the developing world living in slum conditions was estimated at 863 million in 2012, compared to 650 million in 1990 and 760 million in 2000. Stronger, more focused efforts are needed to improve the lives of the urban poor in cities and metropolises across the developing world.

Although more land and marine areas are under protection, many species of birds, mammals and others are heading for extinction at a fast pace.

Significant progress has been made in increasing the coverage of protected areas dedicated to safeguarding and maintaining biological diversity and natural resources. 14.6 per cent of the world's land surface is now protected, while marine protection has more than doubled since 1990, from 4.6 per cent to 9.7 per cent in coastal waters. At the same time, species are moving towards extinction at an ever-faster pace, and reduced biodiversity will have serious consequences for the ecosystem services upon which all people depend.

Forests are disappearing at a rapid pace, despite the establishment of forest policies and laws supporting sustainable forest management in many countries. The largest net loss of forests has occurred in South America –around 3.6 million hectares per year from 2005 to 2010. Deforestation is not only a serious threat to achieving sustainability, but also to progress towards hunger and poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods, as forests provide food, water, wood, fuel and other services used by millions of the world's poorest people.

Marine fish stocks globally are now below the level at which they can produce maximum sustainable yields. More stocks have become overfished due to continuing expansion of the fishing industry in many countries.

The [Montreal Protocol](#) has led to a 98 per cent reduction in the consumption of ozone-depleting substances since 1986. Because most of these substances are greenhouse gases, the Protocol contributes to the protection of the global climate system. The success of the Montreal Protocol has set a precedent for effective action against climate change.

Global carbon dioxide emissions have increased by more than 46 per cent since 1990, with a five per cent increase between 2009 and 2010. Growth in global emissions has accelerated, rising 33 per cent from 2000 to 2010. Containing this growth demands bold, coordinated national and international action. The goal is to complete negotiations on a new international agreement by 2015 and begin implementation in 2020, thereby taking decisive steps towards averting irreversible changes in the global climate system.

WHAT'S WORKING?

Brazil: Shifting from coal to crops promotes agro-ecology. The north-east of Brazil is the most densely populated semi-arid region in the world. Scant rainfall and cyclic drought force many of its 22 million residents to resort to illegal charcoal production, stripping the region of its forests. A project by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to promote agro-ecology is showing farmers how to make a living from the land while conserving the environment.

Panama: Safe water saves lives. A joint programme between three UN agencies, Panama's Ministry of Health and Ministry of Economy and Finance, and traditional communities in the Ngöbe-Buglé indigenous territory has brought safe water to nine indigenous communities in Panama. People in each community have participated in the design and construction of water infrastructure, and water management committees have been strengthened, trained and provided with technical equipment to maintain and ensure the sustainability of the system's infrastructure.

Vietnam: Largest lagoon gets a sustainable future. The largest lagoon ecosystem in South-East Asia was in biological, social and economic disarray in 2005,

with illegally constructed ponds, razed mangroves and unregulated fishing that threatened the food, nutrition and income security of the 300,000 people who rely on it. Now, local action under the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Integrated Management of Lagoon Activities project has set targets for reducing the number of aquaculture ponds. Mangroves and other essential habitats are being replanted and fishery associations have developed plans that enable locals to manage activities.

West Africa: Biosphere reserves are fostering the sustainable use of biodiversity. To better manage the sustainable use of biodiversity, biosphere reserves in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Senegal have been set up with funding from the Global Environment Facility, working with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNESCO. Africa's first transboundary biosphere reserve, established in 2002 and covering areas in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger, is hailed as a bastion against desertification and a model for testing sustainable economies while integrating local communities.

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

To boost sanitation efforts and end open defecation, which causes diseases that kill thousands of children every day, UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson launched a [Call to Action on Sanitation](#) in March 2013 to mobilize governments, UN agencies and partners to accelerate progress on MDG 7. On 24 July 2013, UN Member States adopted the '[Sanitation for All](#)' resolution designating 19 November as World Toilet Day and calling for increased efforts to improve access to proper sanitation.

[Sanitation and Water for All](#) is a partnership of governments, donors, civil society and multilateral organizations aiming to ensure that all people have access to basic sanitation and safe drinking water. The partnership is particularly concerned with those countries where the needs are greatest.

Improving the lives of the urban poor in sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia has been the focus of scientists currently finding solutions through a five-year project at the [UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education](#), supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Between 2002 and 2012, the [FAO National Forest Programme Facility](#) allocated some 900 small grants in 80 countries to NGOs, academia, government agencies, forest-user associations and indigenous communities. The grants, averaging \$25,000, aimed to foster and strengthen country leadership in developing and implementing national forest programmes.

Sources: *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*, United Nations; UN Deputy Secretary-General's [Call to Action on Sanitation](#); GEF/UNEP/UNESCO (Biosphere), FAO ([National Forest Programme Facility](#)); [Vietnam](#); IFAD ([Brazil](#)); [UNESCO](#).



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