

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015



UNITED NATIONS

Summary



This report is based on a master set of data that has been compiled by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in response to the wishes of the General Assembly for periodic assessment of progress towards the MDGs. The Group comprises representatives of the international organizations whose activities include the preparation of one or more of the series of statistical indicators that were identified as appropriate for monitoring progress towards the MDGs, as reflected in the list below. A number of national statisticians and outside expert advisers also contributed.

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UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK, 2015



Foreword

The global mobilization behind the Millennium Development Goals has produced the most successful anti-poverty movement in history. The landmark commitment entered into by world leaders in the year 2000—to “spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty”—was translated into an inspiring framework of eight goals and, then, into wide-ranging practical steps that have enabled people across the world to improve their lives and their future prospects. The MDGs helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger, to enable more girls to attend school than ever before and to protect our planet. They generated new and innovative partnerships, galvanized public opinion and showed the immense value of setting ambitious goals. By putting people and their immediate needs at the forefront, the MDGs reshaped decision-making in developed and developing countries alike.

Yet for all the remarkable gains, I am keenly aware that inequalities persist and that progress has been uneven. The world’s poor remain overwhelmingly concentrated in some parts of the world. In 2011, nearly 60 per cent of the world’s one billion extremely poor people lived in just five countries. Too many women continue to die during pregnancy or from childbirth-related complications. Progress tends to bypass women and those who are lowest on the economic ladder or are disadvantaged because of their age, disability or ethnicity. Disparities between rural and urban areas remain pronounced.

Experiences and evidence from the efforts to achieve the MDGs demonstrate that we know what to do. But further progress will require an unswerving political will, and collective, long-term effort. We need to tackle root causes and do more to integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The emerging post-2015 development agenda, including the set of Sustainable Development Goals, strives to reflect these lessons, build on our successes and put all countries, together, firmly on track towards a more prosperous, sustainable and equitable world.

Reflecting on the MDGs and looking ahead to the next fifteen years, there is no question that we can deliver on our shared responsibility to put an end to poverty, leave no one behind and create a world of dignity for all.



BAN KI-MOON
Secretary-General, United Nations

Overview

At the beginning of the new millennium, world leaders gathered at the United Nations to shape a broad vision to fight poverty in its many dimensions. That vision, which was translated into eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has remained the overarching development framework for the world for the past 15 years.

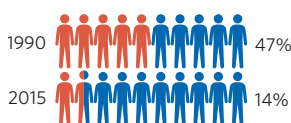
As we reach the end of the MDG period, the world community has reason to celebrate. Thanks to concerted global, regional, national and local efforts, the MDGs

have saved the lives of millions and improved conditions for many more. The data and analysis presented in this report prove that, with targeted interventions, sound strategies, adequate resources and political will, even the poorest countries can make dramatic and unprecedented progress. The report also acknowledges uneven achievements and shortfalls in many areas. The work is not complete, and it must continue in the new development era.

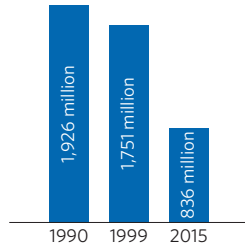
Unprecedented efforts have resulted in profound achievements

GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Extreme poverty rate in developing countries



Global number of extreme poor



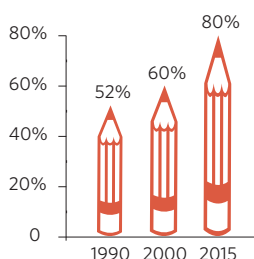
- Extreme poverty has declined significantly over the last two decades. In 1990, nearly half of the population in the developing world lived on less than \$1.25 a day; that proportion dropped to 14 per cent in 2015.
- Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. Most progress has occurred since 2000.
- The number of people in the working middle class—living on more than \$4 a day—has almost tripled between 1991 and 2015. This group now makes up half the workforce in the developing regions, up from just 18 per cent in 1991.
- The proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions has fallen by almost half since 1990, from 23.3 per cent in 1990-1992 to 12.9 per cent in 2014-2016.

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Global out-of-school children of primary school age



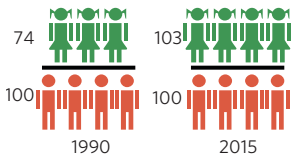
Primary school net enrolment rate in sub-Saharan Africa



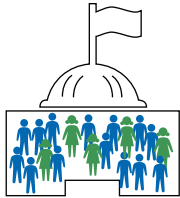
- The primary school net enrolment rate in the developing regions has reached 91 per cent in 2015, up from 83 per cent in 2000.
- The number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen by almost half, to an estimated 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000.
- Sub-Saharan Africa has had the best record of improvement in primary education of any region since the MDGs were established. The region achieved a 20 percentage point increase in the net enrolment rate from 2000 to 2015, compared to a gain of 8 percentage points between 1990 and 2000.
- The literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 has increased globally from 83 per cent to 91 per cent between 1990 and 2015. The gap between women and men has narrowed.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Primary school enrolment ratio in Southern Asia



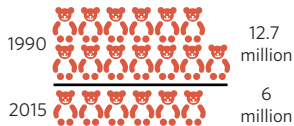
90% of countries have more women in parliament since 1995



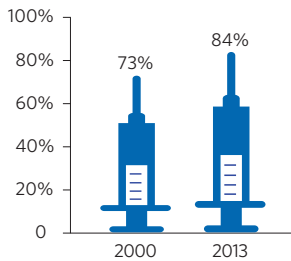
- Many more girls are now in school compared to 15 years ago. The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- In Southern Asia, only 74 girls were enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys in 1990. Today, 103 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys.
- Women now make up 41 per cent of paid workers outside the agricultural sector, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990.
- Between 1991 and 2015, the proportion of women in vulnerable employment as a share of total female employment has declined 13 percentage points. In contrast, vulnerable employment among men fell by 9 percentage points.
- Women have gained ground in parliamentary representation in nearly 90 per cent of the 174 countries with data over the past 20 years. The average proportion of women in parliament has nearly doubled during the same period. Yet still only one in five members are women.

GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Global number of deaths of children under five



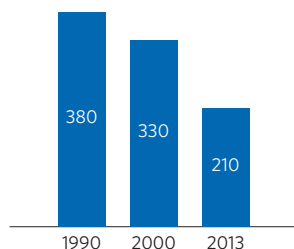
Global measles vaccine coverage



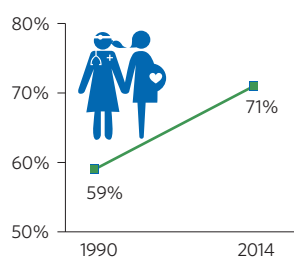
- The global under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2015.
- Despite population growth in the developing regions, the number of deaths of children under five has declined from 12.7 million in 1990 to almost 6 million in 2015 globally.
- Since the early 1990s, the rate of reduction of under-five mortality has more than tripled globally.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the annual rate of reduction of under-five mortality was over five times faster during 2005-2013 than it was during 1990-1995.
- Measles vaccination helped prevent nearly 15.6 million deaths between 2000 and 2013. The number of globally reported measles cases declined by 67 per cent for the same period.
- About 84 per cent of children worldwide received at least one dose of measles-containing vaccine in 2013, up from 73 per cent in 2000.

GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Global maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)



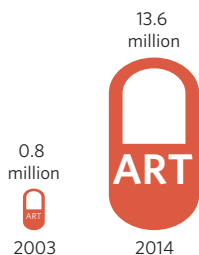
Global births attended by skilled health personnel



- Since 1990, the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45 per cent worldwide, and most of the reduction has occurred since 2000.
- In Southern Asia, the maternal mortality ratio declined by 64 per cent between 1990 and 2013, and in sub-Saharan Africa it fell by 49 per cent.
- More than 71 per cent of births were assisted by skilled health personnel globally in 2014, an increase from 59 per cent in 1990.
- In Northern Africa, the proportion of pregnant women who received four or more antenatal visits increased from 50 per cent to 89 per cent between 1990 and 2014.
- Contraceptive prevalence among women aged 15 to 49, married or in a union, increased from 55 per cent in 1990 worldwide to 64 per cent in 2015.

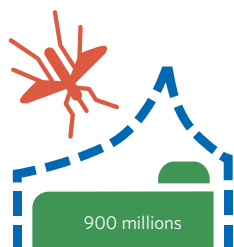
GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Global antiretroviral therapy treatment



- New HIV infections fell by approximately 40 per cent between 2000 and 2013, from an estimated 3.5 million cases to 2.1 million.
- By June 2014, 13.6 million people living with HIV were receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) globally, an immense increase from just 800,000 in 2003. ART averted 7.6 million deaths from AIDS between 1995 and 2013.
- Over 6.2 million malaria deaths have been averted between 2000 and 2015, primarily of children under five years of age in sub-Saharan Africa. The global malaria incidence rate has fallen by an estimated 37 per cent and the mortality rate by 58 per cent.

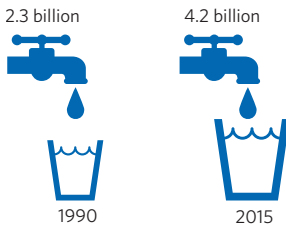
Number of insecticide-treated mosquito nets delivered in sub-Saharan Africa, 2004-2014



- More than 900 million insecticide-treated mosquito nets were delivered to malaria-endemic countries in sub-Saharan Africa between 2004 and 2014.
- Between 2000 and 2013, tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment interventions saved an estimated 37 million lives. The tuberculosis mortality rate fell by 45 per cent and the prevalence rate by 41 per cent between 1990 and 2013.

GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

1.9 billion people have gained access to piped drinking water since 1990



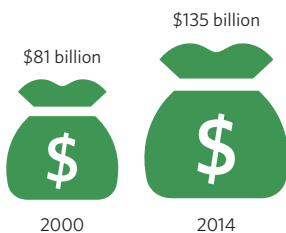
98% of ozone-depleting substances eliminated since 1990



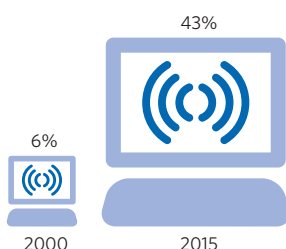
- Ozone-depleting substances have been virtually eliminated since 1990, and the ozone layer is expected to recover by the middle of this century.
- Terrestrial and marine protected areas in many regions have increased substantially since 1990. In Latin America and the Caribbean, coverage of terrestrial protected areas rose from 8.8 per cent to 23.4 per cent between 1990 and 2014.
- In 2015, 91 per cent of the global population is using an improved drinking water source, compared to 76 per cent in 1990.
- Of the 2.6 billion people who have gained access to improved drinking water since 1990, 1.9 billion gained access to piped drinking water on premises. Over half of the global population (58 per cent) now enjoys this higher level of service.
- Globally, 147 countries have met the drinking water target, 95 countries have met the sanitation target and 77 countries have met both.
- Worldwide, 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved sanitation. The proportion of people practicing open defecation has fallen almost by half since 1990.
- The proportion of urban population living in slums in the developing regions fell from approximately 39.4 per cent in 2000 to 29.7 per cent in 2014.

GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Official development assistance



Global Internet penetration



- Official development assistance from developed countries increased by 66 per cent in real terms between 2000 and 2014, reaching \$135.2 billion.
- In 2014, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom continued to exceed the United Nations official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income.
- In 2014, 79 per cent of imports from developing to developed countries were admitted duty free, up from 65 per cent in 2000.
- The proportion of external debt service to export revenue in developing countries fell from 12 per cent in 2000 to 3 per cent in 2013.
- As of 2015, 95 per cent of the world's population is covered by a mobile-cellular signal.
- The number of mobile-cellular subscriptions has grown almost tenfold in the last 15 years, from 738 million in 2000 to over 7 billion in 2015.
- Internet penetration has grown from just over 6 per cent of the world's population in 2000 to 43 per cent in 2015. As a result, 3.2 billion people are linked to a global network of content and applications.

Despite many successes, the poorest and most vulnerable people are being left behind

Although significant achievements have been made on many of the MDG targets worldwide, progress has been uneven across regions and countries, leaving significant gaps. Millions of people are being left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability, ethnicity or geographic location. Targeted efforts will be needed to reach the most vulnerable people.

► Gender inequality persists

Women continue to face discrimination in access to work, economic assets and participation in private and public decision-making. Women are also more likely to live in poverty than men. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the ratio of women to men in poor households increased from 108 women for every 100 men in 1997 to 117 women for every 100 men in 2012, despite declining poverty rates for the whole region.

Women remain at a disadvantage in the labour market. Globally, about three quarters of working-age men participate in the labour force, compared to only half of working-age women. Women earn 24 per cent less than men globally. In 85 per cent of the 92 countries with data on unemployment rates by level of education for the years 2012-2013, women with advanced education have higher rates of unemployment than men with similar levels of education. Despite continuous progress, today the world still has far to go towards equal gender representation in private and public decision-making.

► Big gaps exist between the poorest and richest households, and between rural and urban areas

In the developing regions, children from the poorest 20 per cent of households are more than twice as likely to be stunted as those from the wealthiest 20 per cent. Children in the poorest households are four times as likely to be out of school as those in the richest households. Under-five mortality rates are almost twice as high for children in the poorest households as for children in the richest. In rural areas, only 56 per cent of births are attended by skilled health personnel, compared with 87 per cent in urban areas. About 16 per cent of the rural population do not use improved drinking water sources, compared to 4 per cent of the urban population. About 50 per cent of people living in rural areas lack improved sanitation facilities, compared to only 18 per cent of people in urban areas.

► Climate change and environmental degradation undermine progress achieved, and poor people suffer the most

Global emissions of carbon dioxide have increased by over 50 per cent since 1990. Addressing the unabated rise in greenhouse gas emissions and the resulting likely impacts of climate change, such as altered ecosystems, weather extremes and risks to society, remains an urgent, critical challenge for the global community.

An estimated 5.2 million hectares of forest were lost in 2010, an area about the size of Costa Rica. Overexploitation of marine fish stocks led to declines in the percentage of stocks within safe biological limits, down from 90 per cent in 1974 to 71 per cent in 2011. Species are declining overall in numbers and distribution. This means they are increasingly threatened with extinction. Water scarcity affects 40 per cent of people in the world and is projected to increase. Poor people's livelihoods are more directly tied to natural resources, and as they often live in the most vulnerable areas, they suffer the most from environmental degradation.

► Conflicts remain the biggest threat to human development

By the end of 2014, conflicts had forced almost 60 million people to abandon their homes—the highest level recorded since the Second World War. If these people were a nation, they would make up the twenty-fourth largest country in the world. Every day, 42,000 people on average are forcibly displaced and compelled to seek protection due to conflicts, almost four times the 2010 number of 11,000. Children accounted for half of the global refugee population under the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2014. In countries affected by conflict, the proportion of out-of-school children increased from 30 per cent in 1999 to 36 per cent in 2012. Fragile and conflict-affected countries typically have the highest poverty rates.

► Millions of poor people still live in poverty and hunger, without access to basic services

Despite enormous progress, even today, about 800 million people still live in extreme poverty and suffer from hunger. Over 160 million children under age five have inadequate height for their age due to insufficient food. Currently, 57 million children of primary school age are not in school. Almost half of global workers are still working in vulnerable conditions, rarely enjoying the benefits associated with decent work. About 16,000 children die each day before celebrating their

fifth birthday, mostly from preventable causes. The maternal mortality ratio in the developing regions is 14 times higher than in the developed regions. Just half of pregnant women in the developing regions receive the recommended minimum of four antenatal care visits. Only an estimated 36 per cent of the 31.5 million people living with HIV in the developing regions were receiving

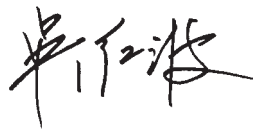
ART in 2013. In 2015, one in three people (2.4 billion) still use unimproved sanitation facilities, including 946 million people who still practise open defecation. Today over 880 million people are estimated to be living in slum-like conditions in the developing world's cities.

With global action, these numbers can be turned around.

The successes of the MDG agenda prove that global action works. It is the only path to ensure that the new development agenda leaves no one behind

The global community stands at a historic crossroads in 2015. As the MDGs are coming to their deadline, the world has the opportunity to build on their successes and momentum, while also embracing new ambitions for the future we want. A bold new agenda is emerging to transform the world to better meet human needs and the requirements of economic transformation, while protecting the environment, ensuring peace and realizing human rights. At the core of this agenda is sustainable development, which must become a living reality for every person on the planet.

This is the final MDG report. It documents the 15-year effort to achieve the aspirational goals set out in the Millennium Declaration and highlights the many successes across the globe, but acknowledges the gaps that remain. The experience of the MDGs offers numerous lessons, and they will serve as the springboard for our next steps. Leaders and stakeholders in every nation will work together, redoubling efforts to achieve a truly universal and transformative agenda. This is the only way to ensure a sustainable future and a dignified life for all people everywhere.



WU HONGBO
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Measure what we treasure: sustainable data for sustainable development

As the post-2015 development agenda is being established, strengthening data production and the use of better data in policymaking and monitoring are becoming increasingly recognized as fundamental means for development. The MDG monitoring experience has clearly demonstrated that effective use of data can help to galvanize development efforts, implement successful targeted interventions, track performance and improve accountability. Thus sustainable development demands a data revolution to improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of data to support the implementation of the new development agenda at all levels.

The monitoring of the MDGs taught us that data are an indispensable element of the development agenda

► What gets measured gets done

The MDG framework strengthened the use of robust and reliable data for evidence-based decision-making, as many countries integrated the MDGs into their own national priorities and development strategies. Using reliable data to monitor progress towards the MDGs also allowed governments at national and subnational levels to effectively focus their development policies, programmes and interventions.

Data at the local level proved extremely helpful. Subnational monitoring of net enrolment ratios in primary and secondary education revealed large disparities between the arid and semi-arid areas of northern Kenya. In response, the Kenyan government targeted these deprived areas by establishing a specific school feeding programme, low-cost boarding primary schools and mobile schools. In Colombia, data at the subnational level showed sharply uneven rates of progress, which motivated local governments to implement key interventions according to local priorities. The Nariño region, for instance, focused on Goal 3, aiming to reduce the large gender gaps in employment and political participation. In Cundinamarca, the focus was on accelerating progress on Goal 1 in the poorest municipalities.

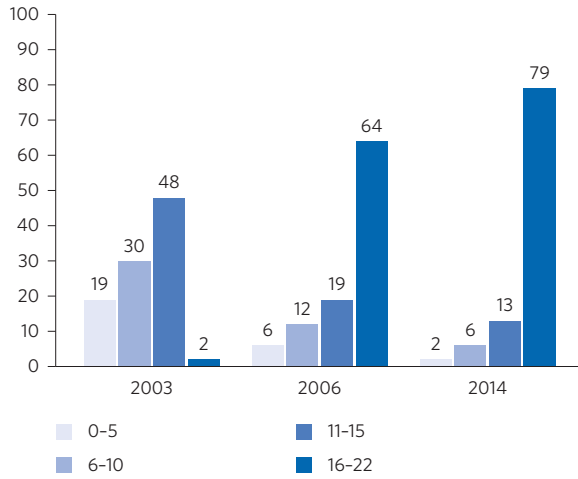
► Real data improvement occurs when demand and policy support meet

The MDGs energized efforts to increase the production and use of development data. Their monitoring requirements drew attention to the need for strengthening statistical capacity and improving statistical methodologies and information systems at both national and international levels. Over time, this increased the availability of more and better data, while improving coordination within national statistical systems and leading to new statistical methodologies.

To support MDGs monitoring in the Philippines, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) was designated as the national custodian of MDG indicators. The Board formulated an MDGs statistical development programme, which enabled data compilation from different sources and formulation of programmes and policies to support the collection, dissemination and improvement of data for policymaking. A community-based monitoring system was also developed to provide data to monitor and evaluate local development plans.

Global monitoring of the MDGs improved dramatically, assisted by a close collaboration between international agencies and country experts. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of surveys and censuses in the database of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation has increased six-fold. Country coverage for a subset of 22 official MDG indicators improved significantly between 2003 and 2014. While in 2003, only 2 per cent of developing countries had at least two data points for 16 or more of the 22 indicators, by 2014 this figure had reached 79 per cent. This reflects the increased capacity of national statistical systems to address monitoring requirements and improvements in data-reporting mechanisms. It also shows the benefits of better access to national sources by international agencies.

Proportion of countries and territories in the developing regions with at least two data points for 22 selected MDG indicators, 2003, 2006 and 2014 (percentage)



▶ Despite improvement, critical data for development policymaking are still lacking

Large data gaps remain in several development areas. Poor data quality, lack of timely data and unavailability of disaggregated data on important dimensions are among the major challenges. As a result, many national and local governments continue to rely on outdated data or data of insufficient quality to make planning and decisions.

A World Bank study shows that about half of the 155 countries lack adequate data to monitor poverty and, as a result, the poorest people in these countries often remain invisible. During the 10-year period between 2002 and 2011, as many as 57 countries (37 per cent) had none or only one poverty rate estimate. In sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty is most severe, 61 per cent of countries have no adequate data to monitor poverty trends.

Lack of well-functioning civil registration systems with national coverage also results in serious data gaps, especially for vital statistics. According to the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, only around 60 countries have such systems; the others rely mostly on household surveys or censuses to estimate child mortality.

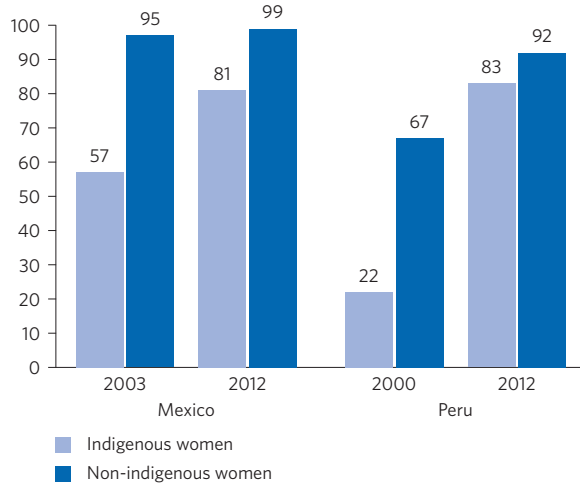
Better data are needed for the post-2015 development agenda

▶ Only by counting the uncounted can we reach the unreached

High-quality data disaggregated by key dimensions beyond the basics of age and sex, including migrant status, indigenous status, ethnicity and disability among others, are key to making decisions and monitoring progress towards achieving sustainable development for all. Estimating the size and exploring the attributes of small population groups requires large sample sizes or full population counts. National population and housing censuses provide an important data source and sampling frame for estimating the size of vulnerable minority groups.

Remarkable progress has been made, for instance, in the availability of detailed data on indigenous peoples in Latin America. In the 2010 census round, 17 of 20 countries in Latin America included questions on indigenous people to provide detailed data for this group. Data on maternal care revealed that around 2000, the proportion of births attended by health professionals was 38 percentage points lower among indigenous women than non-indigenous women in Mexico, and 45 percentage points lower in Peru. The availability of these disaggregated data led to the adoption of more effective interventions to reduce inequality. By 2012, more than 80 per cent of births to indigenous women were attended by health personnel in both countries.

Births attended by skilled personnel in Mexico and Peru, by indigenous status, selected years (percentage)



► **Real-time data are needed to deliver better decisions faster**

In today's rapidly changing world, real-time information is needed to prepare and respond to economic, political, natural and health crises. However, most development data have a time lag of two to three years. Recent innovations are helping to circumvent this problem. For example, UNICEF and partners have used text messaging (SMS) technology to facilitate real-time collection and sharing of information about the Ebola outbreak. In Liberia, hundreds of health workers have used mHero (Mobile Health Worker Ebola Response and Outreach) and in Guinea and Sierra Leone, thousands of young people are using U-Report. This real-time information has helped rapidly locate new cases, determined what supplies are needed and disseminated lifesaving messages.

► **Geospatial data can support monitoring in many aspects of development, from health care to natural resource management**

Knowing where people and things are and their relationship to each other is essential for informed decision-making. Comprehensive location-based information is helping Governments to develop strategic priorities, make decisions, and measure and monitor outcomes. Once the geospatial data are created, they can be used many times to support a multiplicity of applications. A geodetic reference frame allows precise observations and 'positioning' of anything on the Earth and can be used for many social, economic and environmental purposes, such as precision agriculture and monitoring changes in sea level rise.

For example, geospatial information was used to support health care and design social intervention measures during the chikungunya virus (chick-V) outbreak across the Caribbean. In Trinidad and Tobago, geospatial applications for smart phones assisted the Ministry of Health to identify the location of infected persons and use the information to contain the outbreak.

Strong political commitment and significantly increased resources will be needed to meet the data demand for the new development agenda

► **Strengthening statistical capacity is the foundation for monitoring progress of the new development agenda**

To improve the availability, reliability, timeliness and accessibility of data to support the post-2015 development agenda, sustainable investments are needed in statistical capacity at all levels, especially the national level. The scaling-up of national statistical capacities and the strengthening and modernization of statistical systems will require ensuring effective institutional arrangements and internal coordination, sustainable human resources, sustainable financial resources (internal and external) and technical cooperation. National statistical offices should have a clear mandate to lead the coordination among national agencies involved and to become the data hub for monitoring.

For instance, improving a country's civil registration and vital statistics system requires strong commitment from the government and long-term efforts in strengthening administrative infrastructure. Progress in the past 20 years has been very slow, but a few countries have made great strides. In South Africa, for example, 85 per cent of births in 2012 were registered compared to 56 per cent of births in 2003. In Thailand, thanks to efforts begun in 1996, more than 95 per cent of births and deaths are now registered.

► **New technology is changing the way data are collected and disseminated**

New information and communication technologies provide unprecedented opportunities for data collection, analysis and dissemination. Today, 95 per cent of the global population is covered by a cellular network, while mobile-cellular subscriptions have grown to over 7 billion. Internet penetration has increased to 43 per cent of the world's population, linking 3.2 billion people to a global network of content and applications. New data collection technologies, such as Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and mobile text surveys (SMS), and new data sources, such as social media posts, online search records and mobile phone call records, allow faster data collection and provide near real-time information.

The 2010 Brazilian Census introduced several innovations in its operation. Digital census mapping was developed and integrated with the National Address File, which made the census data collection more efficient and more accurate. Field operations through CAPI devices equipped with a Global Positioning System receiver allowed better monitoring of the field operation and real-time data editing.

To cover difficult-to-reach populations, Brazil also used Internet data collection as a complementary system.

However, new data sources and new data collection technologies must be carefully applied to avoid a reporting bias favouring people who are wealthier, more educated, young and male. The use of these innovative tools might also favour those who have greater means to access technology, thus widening the gap between the “data poor” and the “data rich”.

► **Global standards and an integrated statistics system are key elements for effective monitoring**

International standards are important for building national statistical capacity. One of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics states that “the use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels”. The Secretary-General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development also highlighted in its report the need for a “Global consensus on data” to adopt principles concerning legal, technical, privacy, geospatial and statistical standards that facilitate openness and information exchange while promoting and protecting human rights.

Measuring sustainability is a highly technical task that requires capturing complex economic, societal and environmental interactions. Therefore, an integrated framework of indicators is needed to cover these three dimensions cohesively. Integration benefits not only data users, but also data producers and providers by reducing the respondents’ burden, the likelihood of errors and the long-term costs. Harnessing the benefits of statistical integration requires investment in the adoption of statistical standards, developing and re-engineering of statistical production processes, and changing institutional arrangements.

► **Promoting open, easily accessible data and data literacy is key for effective use of data for development decision-making**

Data for development are public goods and should be made available to the public in open formats. Open data supports government transparency and accountability, enables the use of collective intelligence to make smarter policy decisions, increases citizen engagement and promotes government efficiency and effectiveness. Besides data, information on definitions, data quality, methods used in collecting data and other important metadata also need to be made widely available. In addition to opening up data, great efforts need to be made to release data in machine-readable formats and to provide free visualization and analysis tools.

With an increasing volume of data available, people will also need the skills to use and interpret them correctly. Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders should support implementation of data literacy programmes, provide e-learning opportunities and include data literacy as a part of school curriculum.

► **Together we can measure what we treasure**

Data, as the basis for evidence-based decision-making and accountability, are a crucial pillar of the post-2015 development agenda. The necessary data revolution is a joint responsibility of governments, international and regional organizations, the private sector and civil society. Building a new partnership will be essential to ensure that data are available to inform the post-2015 development agenda and support development decision-making for the next 15 years.

“2015 is a milestone year. We will complete the Millennium Development Goals. We are forging a bold vision for sustainable development, including a set of sustainable development goals. And we are aiming for a new, universal climate agreement.”

— UN SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON