

Africa and the Millennium Development Goals



UNITED NATIONS

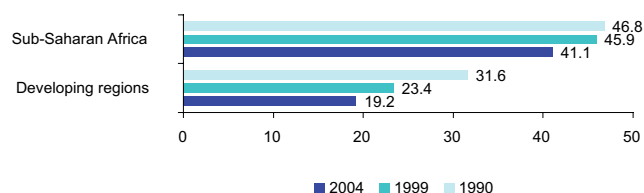
2007 UPDATE

At the midway point between their adoption in 2000 and the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to achieve any of the Goals. Although there have been major gains in several areas and the Goals remain achievable in most African nations, even the best governed countries on the continent have not been able to make sufficient progress in reducing extreme poverty in its many forms.

POVERTY & HUNGER

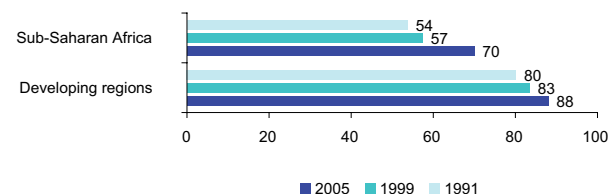
- While the proportion of people living on one dollar a day or less has declined from 45.9 per cent to 41.1 per cent since 1999, reaching the MDG target of halving the extent of extreme poverty by 2015 requires that the current pace is nearly doubled.
- At the same time, despite a high regional population growth rate of 2.3 per cent a year, the rising number of extreme poor has levelled off, increasing only marginally from 296 million in 1999 to 298 million in 2004.
- Progress for children has been excruciatingly slow towards the target of halving the extent of hunger, as the proportion of under-fives who are underweight declined by not much more than one tenth between 1990 and 2005, from 33 per cent to 29 per cent.

Proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day, 1990, 1999 and 2004 (Percentage)



In 2007, there are 348 million youngsters in sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 14, up from 237 million in 1990. The number is expected to reach 403 million in 2015.

Total net enrolment ratio in primary education, 1990/1991, 1998/1999 and 2004/2005 (Percentage)



Photos by Adam Rogers/UNCDF

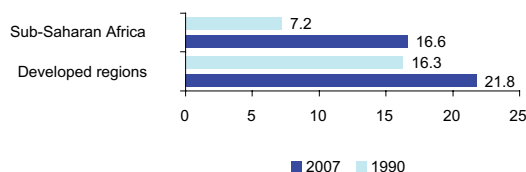
EDUCATION

- There has been progress towards universal primary education, with enrolment increasing from 57 per cent in 1999 to 70 per cent in 2005 – but a gap of 30 per cent remains, and the number of school age children is increasing daily.

GENDER EQUALITY

- Although the share of parliamentary seats held by women has increased substantially, from 7 per cent in 1990 to 17 per cent this year, the share of women who earn a salary, aside from farming, still stood at less than one-third in 2005.

Share of women in single or lower houses of parliament, 1990 and 2007 (Percentage)



CHILD MORTALITY

- Under-five mortality rates dropped from 185 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 166 per 1,000 in 2005 – hardly making a dent in the objective of a two-thirds reduction by 2015, and now at twice the rate in the developing world as a whole. One positive step: due to extensive vaccination campaigns, measles cases and deaths on the sub-continent fell by nearly 75 per cent between 1999 and 2005.

MATERNAL HEALTH

- Maternal health remains a regional and global scandal, with the odds that a sub-Saharan African woman will die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth during her life at 1 in 16, compared to 1 in 3,800 in the developed world.

AIDS & OTHER DISEASES

- The number of people dying from AIDS continues to mount, reaching 2 million in 2006. Although prevalence rates have leveled off, the number of new cases, especially among women, as well as the number of people with advanced HIV infection continues to grow and is rising faster than treatment services are being scaled up.
- There is no evidence that the very high rate of new TB cases in sub-Saharan Africa is starting to level off.

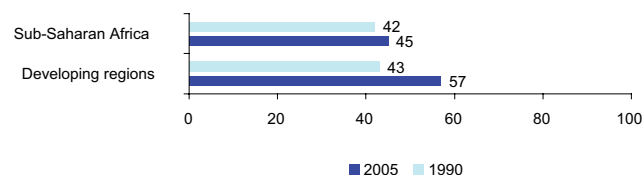
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Only 42 per cent of people in rural areas had access to clean water, according to the latest 2004 data, and 63 per cent of the

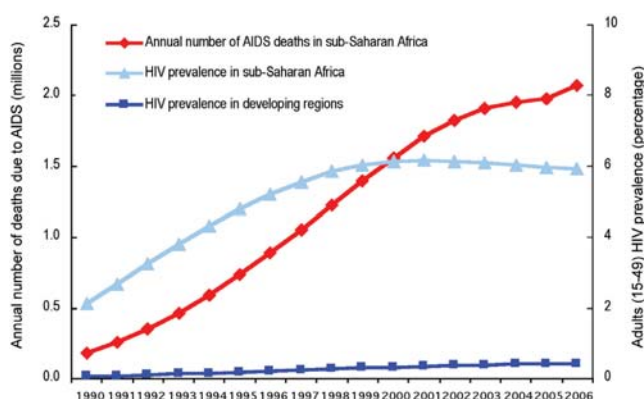


Photo by Adam Rogers/UNCDF

Maternal health: Proportion of deliveries attended by skilled health care personnel, 1990 and 2005



HIV prevalence in adults aged 15-49 in sub-Saharan Africa and all developing regions (Percentage) and number of AIDS deaths in sub-Saharan Africa (Millions), 1990-2006



entire population lacked access to basic sanitation facilities – down only barely from 68 per cent in 1990, and far from the target of cutting this proportion in half by 2015.

- The effects of climate change, which are already being felt, will only make achievement of the MDGs on the sub-continent more difficult. According to projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change between 75 and 250 million people will be exposed to an increase of water stress. Without adequate preparation, the impact could be devastating to rural economies and the livelihoods of the poor.

UN photo by Fred Noy



A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

While it is well known that the continent is the only region in the world where the number of extreme poor has risen over the past fifteen years, it may be less well known that African countries have experienced major improvements in key development fundamentals.

- Fuelled by improved economic policies and rising commodity prices, annual economic growth has averaged close to 6 per cent for the last three years. This growth has been spread fairly evenly among countries, and the IMF now envisages a short-term trend rate moving toward 7 per cent per year.
- There is a downward trend in the number of civil conflicts.
- Export receipts have improved current-account balances in many countries, and recently granted debt relief has reduced macroeconomic imbalances in the poorest nations.
- African enterprises are generating stronger domestic investment and productivity gains.
- Many governments in the region have continued to become more transparent, less corrupt and more democratic.
- Yet this progress remains fragile, as it is driven in large measure by a boom in commodity prices. African countries continue to depend on few primary commodities for export and lack the essential public investments in agriculture, health, education and infrastructure that are needed to strengthen capacity for production and trade, sustain high growth rates and create employment.

SOME SUCCESS STORIES

Countries across Africa are demonstrating that rapid and large-scale progress towards the MDGs is possible when strong government leadership and good policies are combined with adequate financial and technical support from the international community. Recent examples include:

- In one year Malawi's voucher programme for fertilizers and seeds has led to a doubling of agricultural productivity during the 2006/7 growing season.
- Ghana is successfully implementing a national school feeding programme using locally produced foods.

- Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and many other countries have abolished fees for primary schools resulting in dramatic increases in enrolment during the space of a few years.
- In 2006 Zambia cancelled fees for basic rural health services and Burundi introduced free medical care for mothers and children.
- With support from the Red Cross Red Crescent, WHO, UNICEF and the US Centers for Disease Control, African countries such as Niger, Togo and Zambia have successfully launched national campaigns for measles vaccination and distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated anti-malaria bed nets. These campaigns were rolled out nation-wide within a period of two weeks and led to at least a halving of malaria incidence.
- In Niger, hundreds of thousands of people in rural communities greatly improved their livelihoods and reduced their vulnerability to droughts through large-scale reforestation driven by national policy reforms.
- Senegal is on track to achieving the water and sanitation goals through a national investment programme financed with donor support.
- Many African governments, with growing donor support, are now taking to national scale the lessons of the Millennium Villages – that local leadership and a combination of interventions can transform poor communities in a short period of time.

Percentage of children 12-23 months old who received at least one dose of measles vaccine

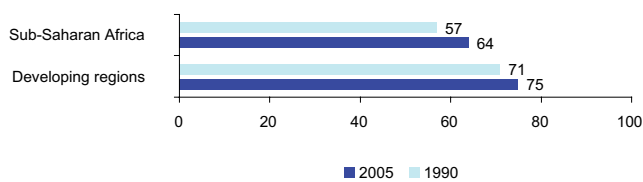


Photo by Adam Rogers/UNCDF

MEETING COMMITMENTS: THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Most African countries are ready to replicate and scale-up these successes, but they require more and better-quality official development assistance to finance public investments in the MDGs. Yet, while aid to sub-Saharan Africa increased during the first few years of the Millennium, it has remained virtually unchanged since 2004, if one excludes one-off debt relief and humanitarian assistance.

Donors need to accelerate their plans to scale up assistance, to maintain the credibility of their 2005 pledge to double aid to Africa by 2010. Moreover, donors need to issue country-by-country timelines for how they are going to increase aid, so that African governments can plan for essential investments and prepare supporting macroeconomic frameworks.

Not only the developed but also many developing countries are granting duty free access to least developed countries in Africa, in accord with the Millennium Declaration principle of creating an environment “conducive to development and the elimination of poverty”. But even the African LDCs suffer from supply-side constraints and often unreasonable rules of origin on their products. On a broader scale, progress on the Doha round of talks to create a development-friendly world trade regimen has stalled and must move forward.

Despite the lack of progress towards the MDGs, the Goals remain achievable in most African countries. Yet time is running out to make the needed practical investments. Existing commitments made and reaffirmed by world leaders at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles and the 2005 World Summit are sufficient to meet the Goals. At the midway point of 2007, these commitments must be urgently translated into practical plans with systematic follow-through.

UN photo by Eskinder Debebe



The Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

2. Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

3. Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

4. Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five.

5. Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

7. Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020.

8. Develop a global partnership for development

- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.
- Address the special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing States.
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt.
- In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies.

Statistical analysis and charts in this publication are an advance excerpt from The Millennium Development Goals Report 2007, based on the most up-to-date and comprehensive statistics available on global and regional MDG progress. More than 20 UN funds, programmes and agencies and other international organizations, including the World Bank and the OECD, contribute to this annual report, which is coordinated and published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division.

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