

Millennium Development Goals status report issued as poverty takes centre stage in global negotiations UN sees gains on poverty worldwide, but huge gaps remain in meeting vital human needs

(NEW YORK, 9 June) A UN report out today profiles a world that has achieved unprecedented gains against poverty in Asia, but also one where mothers and children in many parts of the world are dying from causes which are treatable and preventable, and where half of the developing world lacks access to simple sanitation.

At a moment when poverty and the possibility of its eradication has returned to near the top of the world's agenda, the assessment of progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) feeds into ongoing talks at the United Nations on international action for development, security and human rights, and into preparations for the Africa-oriented Group of 8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland.

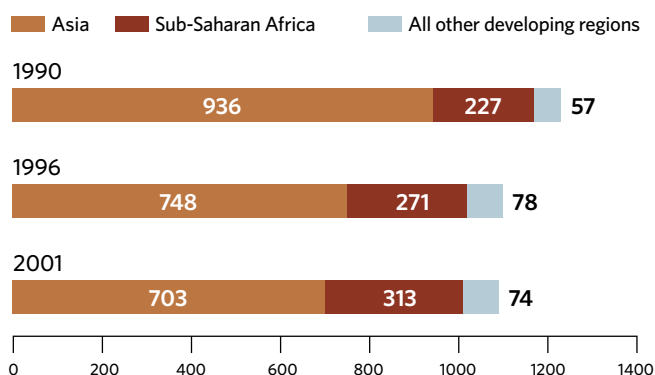
"The year 2005 is crucial in our work to achieve the Goals," UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan says in his foreword to the report. "Instead of setting targets, this time world leaders must decide how to achieve them."

Five years after adoption of the Millennium Declaration, where the MDGs were first enunciated, and a decade before most of the goals and targets come due, the UN General Assembly will review progress on all areas of the Millennium Declaration at a summit to be held in September.

The number of people living in extreme poverty has fallen off by 130 million worldwide since 1990, according to *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2005*, even with overall population growth of more than 800 million in the developing regions since then.

This reduction of humanity's ancient enemy, on an order of magnitude dwarfing that of any other period in history, was led by countries of Eastern, South Eastern and Southern Asia, where extreme poverty was cut back by more than 230 mil-

Number of people living on less than \$1 a day, 1990, 1996 and 2001 (Millions)



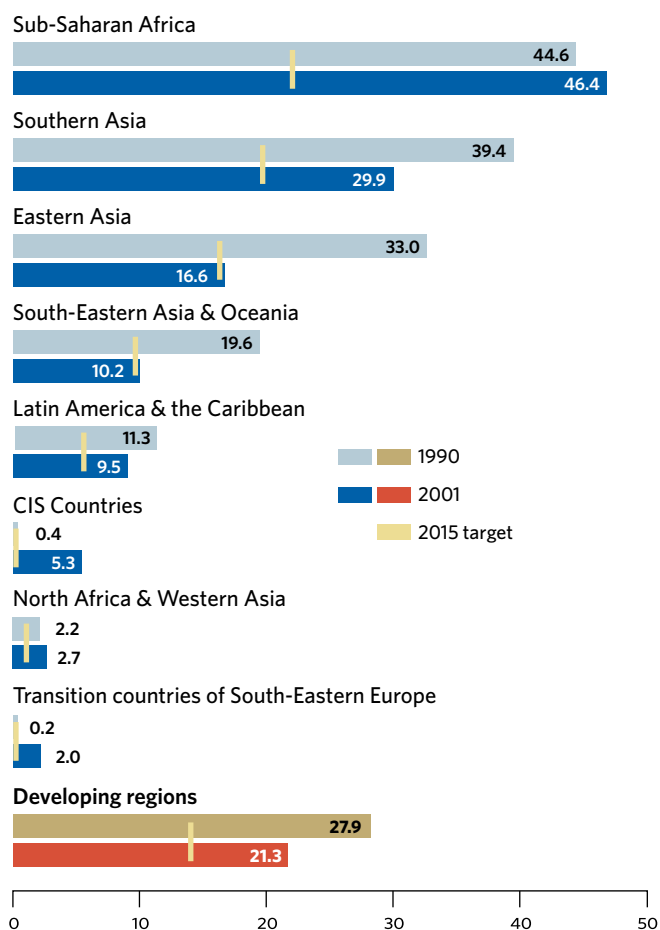
lion since 1990, with the Latin American–Caribbean region also contributing.

But these improvements were offset by increases in the number of the extreme poor in other areas, notably sub-Saharan Africa, from 227 million in 1990 to 313 million in 2001. In all, an estimated one billion people—one in five people in the developing world—still live below the extreme poverty line of a dollar a day in income (1993 US dollars). For the very poor in sub-Saharan Africa, the average income actually fell, from 62 cents a day in 1990 to 60 cents in 2001.

Still, the decline of the extreme poor, from 28 per cent of the developing world population in 1990 to 21 per cent in 2001, means that the target of cutting the proportion of the very poor by half is expected to be met globally before the target year 2015, if post-1990 trends persist.



Proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day, 1990 and 2001 (Percentage)



Deaths of mothers and children

The UN finds that progress in reducing mortality rates of children and mothers is unacceptable by any reasonable standard.

While rapid strides were made from 1960 to 1990 in keeping children in developing countries alive past their fifth birthday, improvement has slowed since, placing in jeopardy possibilities for reaching the target of further reducing the under-five mortality rate by two thirds by 2015. Vaccinations and a range of other low-cost prevention and treatment measures could save millions of young lives a year (*see chart*).

Data indicate that fewer women are dying during childbirth in many developing countries, but maternal mortality rates are among those for which it is most difficult to obtain accurate statistics. In developing countries, the rate is about 450 maternal deaths out of 100,000 births, while in the developed world it is 14. In countries where women have many children, most women face this risk many times. Over a lifetime, a woman in a developing country is 63 times more likely to die due to childbirth than one in the developed countries. The presence of a skilled attendant substantially improves the chances of

survival; only 57 per cent of births were so attended in 2003, although up from 41 per cent in 1990.

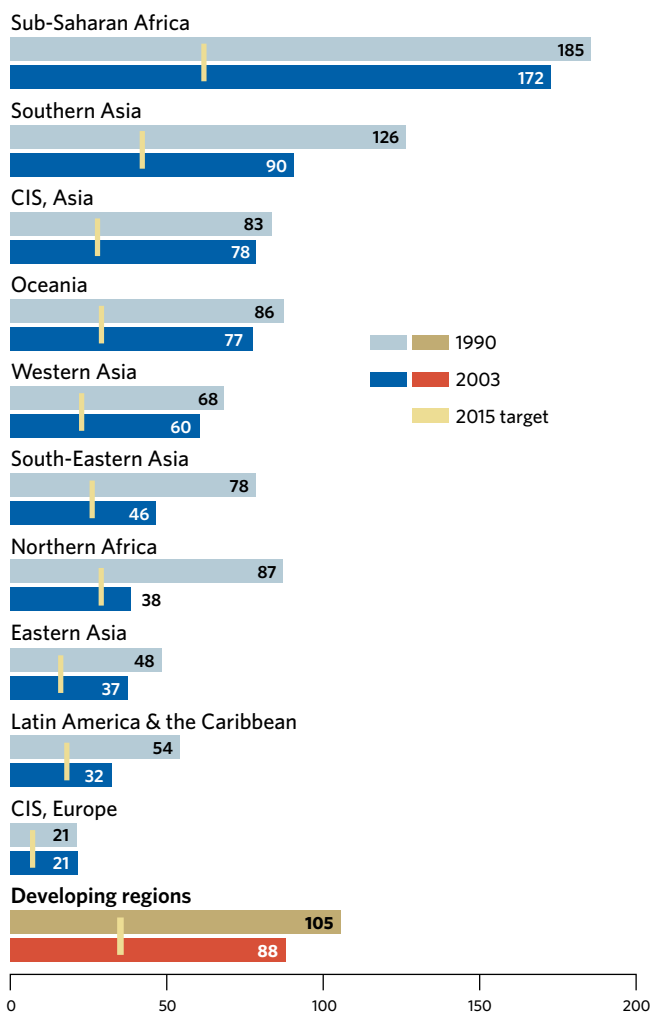
Another under-addressed concern is that half of the developing world lacks access to improved sanitation. Vulnerability to disease is not the only result. Girls are dropping out of school, for instance, due to lack of access to sanitary facilities. Slow improvement regarding sanitation is in contrast to much better results in improving access to clean water.

2005 a year of decision

Twenty-five UN agencies and global organizations collaborated to compile the most comprehensive and up-to-date statistics on targets and indicators associated with the Millennium Development Goals, covering income poverty, health, education and gender equality; environmental sustainability and slums; and trade, aid and debt.

The considerable progress recorded in numerous areas of human welfare since the UN global development conferences of the 1990s can be taken as an indication that revamped

Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 1990 and 2003



policies at the national level, along with international cooperation and development assistance, can produce results. The fact that life-or-death needs are still going unmet is an indication of the extent of missed opportunities and the price of insufficient commitment.

Agreement on the means to reach the MDG targets, including via trade, aid and debt relief, is now being negotiated among UN Member States in preparation for the 2005 World Summit in September. Their talks respond to the proposals of the Secretary-General regarding the linked challenges of development, security and human rights, as outlined in his 2005 report, *In larger freedom* (<http://www.un.org/larger-freedom/>). The Secretary-General's report in turn draws in part on *Investing in development*, the 2005 publication of the Millennium Project, which outlines the means needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Progress on the MDGs, especially in Africa, tops the agenda of the Group of 8 meeting to be hosted in July by the United Kingdom. Urgency regarding fulfilment of the MDGS was cited as the major rationale for the pledge made three weeks ago by 15 European Union countries to reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent of national income devoted to aid by 2015.

The *Millennium Development Goals Report* will also provide input to the 27-28 June high-level dialogue in the UN General Assembly, on financing for development and follow-up on the 2002 Monterrey Consensus. ■

Media Contacts:

United Nations Department of Public Information:
 Tim Wall, wallt@un.org, (212) 963-5851
 Mabel Brodrick-Okereke, brodrick-okereke@un.org, (212) 963-3771

United Nations Children's Fund:
 Kate Donovan, kdonovan@unicef.org, (212) 326-7452

United Nations Development Programme:
 Mattias Johansson, mattias.johansson@undp.org, (212) 906-5344

United Nations Population Fund:
 Abubakar Dungus, dungus@unfpa.org, (212) 297-5031

Websites:

Full UN Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals:
<http://millenniumindicators.un.org/>

United Nations Millennium Campaign Office:
<http://www.millenniumcampaign.org/>

United Nations Millennium Project:
<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/>

Webcast of Press Conference: <http://www.un.org/webcast/>

B-Roll Requests:

Christian Delsol, United Nations Population Fund,
 delson@unfpa.org, (212) 297-5032

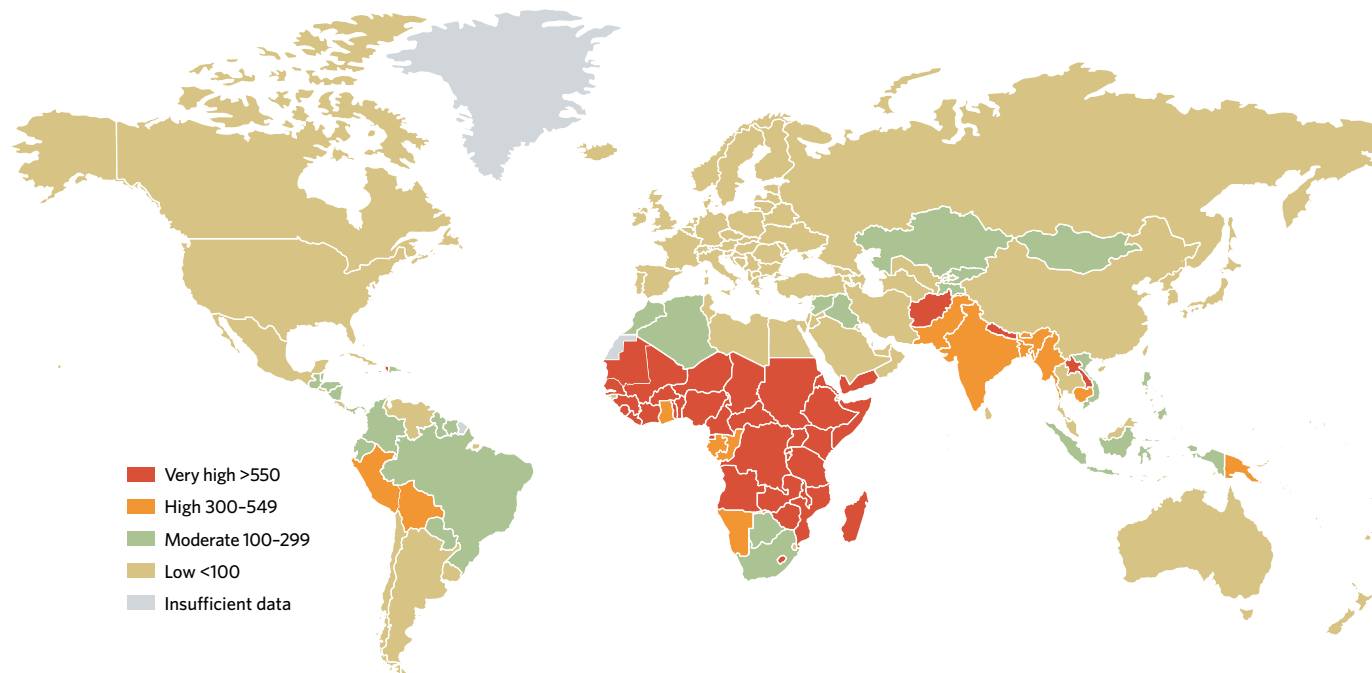
For a live feed of the 9 June press conference please call United Nations Television at (212) 963-7650.

For a videotape of the press conference please call the United Nations Visual Library at (212) 963-1561. Please try to place orders in advance.

To view a cut package of the press conference go to www.un.org/unifeed. To request a dub of a cut package of the press conference please call (212) 963-7885.

Reporters without UN credentials who wish to attend should fax a letter of assignment to 212-963-4642, and follow-up with a call to UN Media Accreditation, at 212-963-7164 or 963-6934.

Maternal mortality ratios per 100,000 live births, 2000



UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS TIMELINE

- SEPTEMBER 2000** Adoption of the Millennium Declaration by 189 Member States at the UN Millennium Summit in New York
- SEPTEMBER 2001** The Secretary-General presents to the General Assembly a “Road Map”, the first UN statistical framework for monitoring progress on the Millennium Development Goals.
- DECEMBER 2001** The General Assembly requests that the Secretary-General prepare an annual report on progress by the UN system and Member States in implementing the Millennium Declaration.
- MARCH 2002** The International Conference on Financing for Development approves the Monterrey Consensus, which is dedicated to a partnership for meeting the MDGs and other internationally agreed development objectives. The US and EU pledge increased ODA.
- OCTOBER 2002** The Secretary-General presents the first annual report on the Millennium Declaration. It includes a statistical annex that tracks the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
- DECEMBER 2004** The report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change assesses poverty alleviation and achievement of the MDGs to be an essential pillar of “A more secure world”.
- JANUARY 2005** *Investing in the Development*, the report of the Millennium Project, sets out a detailed plan for achieving the MDGs and argues for the UN target of 0.7 per cent of donor country national income for ODA.
- MARCH 2005** *In larger freedom*, a report of the Secretary-General, charts a plan for development, security and human rights for all, including through implementation of the MDGs and the 0.7 per cent target.
- MAY 2005** EU ministers pledge that the 15 richest members will reach the 0.7 per cent target by 2015.
- JUNE 2005** The General Assembly will meet on Financing for Development and the MDGs (27-28 June), and development objectives will be theme of the ECOSOC high-level segment (29-30 June, 1 July), both in New York. Informal hearings of the General Assembly with NGOs, civil society and the private sector on Millennium Declaration issues, including the MDGs.
- 6-8 JULY 2005** The MDGs, with a focus on Africa and on global warming, will top the agenda of the Group of 8, meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland.
- 14-16 SEPT. 2005** The 2005 World Summit in New York will conduct a five-year review of progress on the Millennium Declaration and MDGs, and the Secretary-General’s proposals detailed by *In larger freedom*.
- 2005** MDG target on eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education comes due.
- 2015** Deadline for other Millennium Development Goals and targets