

XI. ACCESS TO SANITATION

International goals

All countries should give priority to measures that improve the quality of life and health by ensuring a safe and sanitary living environment for all population groups through measures aimed at ..., ensuring access to ... sanitation, ... (para. 8.10 of ICPD Programme of Action).

... Providing ... proper sanitation for all (para. 36(l) of WSSD Programme of Action).

... Ensure the availability of and universal access to ... sanitation (para. 106(x) of FWCW Platform for Action).

... Promoting access for all people to ... sanitation and other basic services, facilities and amenities, especially for people living in poverty, women and those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (para. 40(c) of the Habitat Agenda).

The Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000 set an international target for this indicator of 100 per cent by the year 2000. The more recent Ninth General Programme of Work for 1996-2001 established a target of 75 per cent by the year 2001.

The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990, was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1980. It was also a component of the WHO Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000.

The World Summit for Children and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development also adopted goals on universal access to sanitation.

DEFINITION

Access to sanitation is measured by the percentage of population with access to *a sanitary facility* for disposal of human excreta in the user's dwelling or located within *a convenient distance* of the user's dwelling. Under the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme, the words in italics were defined at the country level. "Access" is interpreted as actual use by the population.

RECENT SITUATION

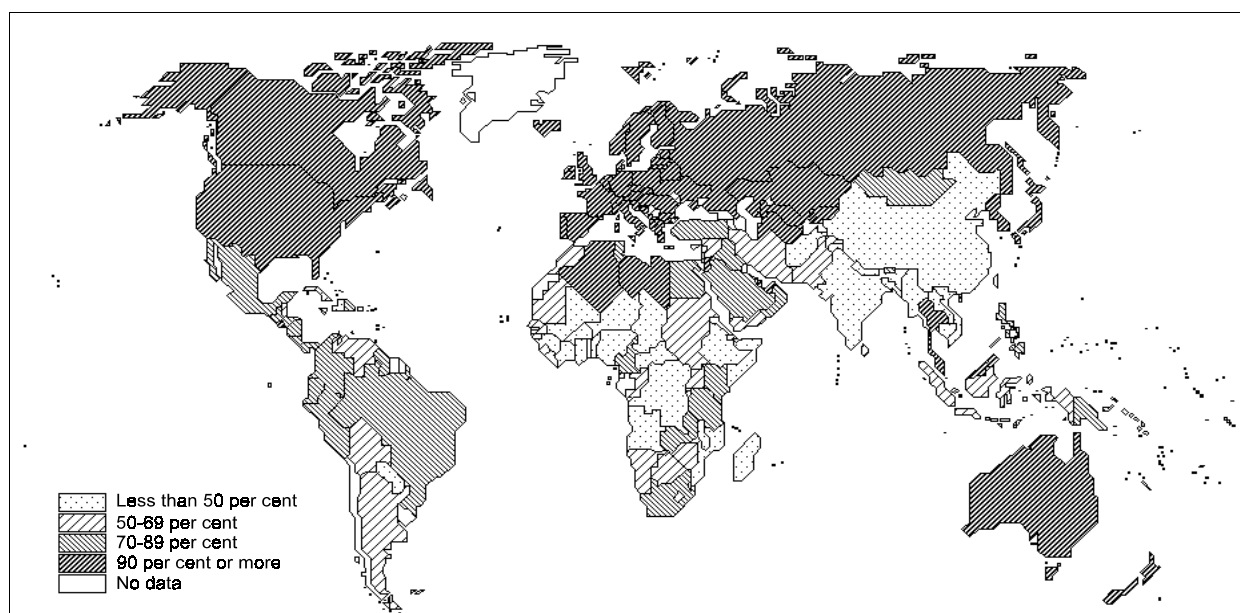
Data on access to sanitation has almost the same country coverage as the previous indicator, access to safe water. However, access to sanitation is generally found to be more limited. When compared with figure X.1 on safe water, figure XI.1 shows much wider areas with a dot pattern, indicating access to sanitation less than 50 per cent. For example, countries such as Bangladesh, India and Nepal, which have more than 70 per cent access to safe water, have less than 50 per cent access to sanitation.

In more than one third of the countries (39 out of the 112 with data available), the majority of the population do not have access to sanitation (table XI.1). As compared with access to safe water, this is 10 percentage points higher. In 76 per cent of the least developed countries, most people lack access to sanitation. Thus, substantial investment in sanitation facilities is needed in order to achieve the goal of universal access to sanitation, especially in the poorest countries.

In over half of the African countries and more than one quarter of the Asian and Oceanic countries, the majority of the population lacks access to sanitation. Figure XI.2 shows that there are still a number of countries where less than one fourth of the population has access to sanitation. In Latin America and the Caribbean the situation is much better, with only two countries (Haiti and Paraguay) in the lowest category (less than 50 per cent) and over two thirds of the countries having at least 70 per cent access. Although many Asian and Oceanic countries have low or moderate levels of access, around one third of the region's countries have near-universal (90 per cent or more) access to sanitation, a higher proportion than in the other less developed regions.

In all regions, access to sanitation is more limited than access to safe water. When access to sanitation is weighted by population (fig. XI.3), the result is strikingly different from that on access to safe water (fig. X.3): about one quarter of the population of the less developed regions lack access to safe water, but more than half have no access to sanitation.

Figure XI.1. Percentage of population with access to sanitation, 1990-1998



Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children, 2000* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000).

NOTE: Estimates are not presented for countries or areas with populations under 150,000. Countries from the more developed regions are assumed to have access to sanitation at more than 90 per cent.

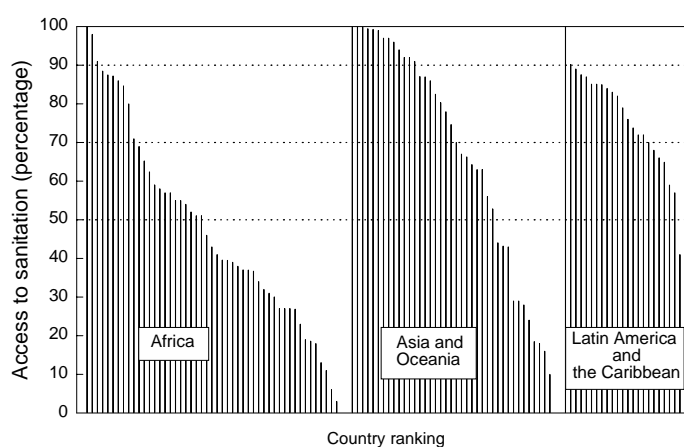
Table XI.1. Distribution of countries according to percentage of population with access to sanitation, 1990-1998

	Percentage of countries with access to sanitation of:					Number of countries	
	90 per cent or more	70-89 per cent	50-69 per cent	Less than 50 per cent	Total	With data available	Total
Less developed regions	16	27	22	35	100	112	141
Least developed countries	0	7	17	76	100	42	45
Africa	6	14	27	53	100	49	53
Asia and Oceania ^a	33	21	18	28	100	39	57
Latin America and the Caribbean	8	63	21	8	100	24	31

Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children, 2000* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000).

NOTE: Excludes countries and areas with populations under 150,000. Due to rounding, the sum of the subcategories may not be equal to 100 per cent.

^a Excluding Japan, Australia and New Zealand, which are included in the more developed regions.

Figure XI.2. Percentage of population with access to sanitation, 1990-1998, by country ranking and region

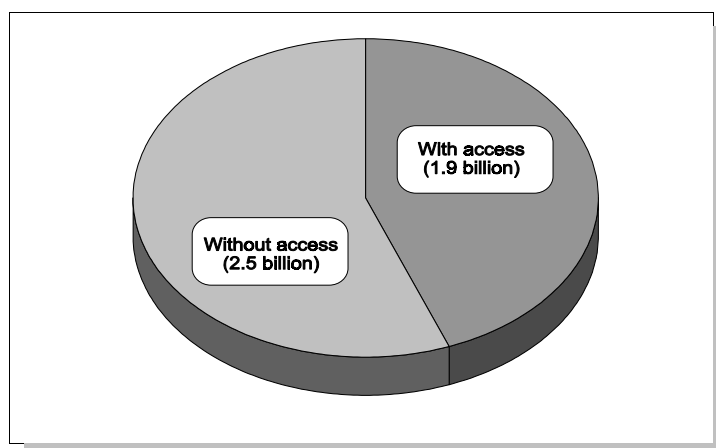
Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children, 2000* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000).

NOTE: Bars show level of access to sanitation for individual countries.

Figure XI.3. Distribution of population in the less developed regions, by access to sanitation, 1990-1998

Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children, 2000* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000).

NOTE: For countries with data on access to sanitation, representing approximately 96 per cent of the population of the less developed regions.



SOURCES OF DATA, COVERAGE AND QUALITY

Data are collected by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund under the Joint Monitoring Programme and are published in the *Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Monitoring Report* series; an updated review will be released in 2000. The most recent data currently available appear in *The State of the World's Children, 2000* (UNICEF, 2000). Data are available for 1990-1998, depending on the country, and for 112 countries or areas in the less developed regions. Data for a few countries in the more developed regions are included in the annex.

Most countries have a variety of data sources from which to estimate sanitation indicators, such as administrative records, population censuses and household surveys. However, a review by WHO/UNICEF of the sanitation data indicates considerable variation in national estimates over a short period of two years or less, suggesting that the estimates are sometimes based on uncertain data (WHO/UNICEF, 1993).

The critical elements of the indicator are "sanitary facility" and "convenient distance". Censuses have been used to determine the type of facility used by a household, but rarely the distance to it. For household surveys the situation is similar to that for water, where added flexibility in survey questions increases the number of different classifications of sanitary facilities. For the current indicator, definitions of these two concepts are determined at the country level.

When no definition is available at the country level, the following definitions from WHO (1996b) may be used:

(a) *Sanitary facility*: A unit for disposal of human excreta which isolates faeces from contact with people, animals, crops and water sources. Suitable facilities range from simple but protected pit latrines to flush toilets with sewerage. All facilities, to be effective, must be correctly constructed and properly maintained;

(b) *Convenient distance*: A maximum of 50 metres from the dwelling.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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