

The Millennium Development Goals Report



UNITED NATIONS

2015

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6 JULY, 10:15 AM EDT (GMT-4)

REGIONAL BACKGROUNDER

Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean reached the target of halving the extreme poverty rate, with the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day falling from 13 per cent in 1990 to 4 per cent in 2015. However, disparities remain large among the two subregions. The extreme poverty rate was 22 per cent in the Caribbean and 4 per cent in Latin America.

The region has reached the hunger reduction target. The proportion of undernourished people in the total population has decreased from 15 per cent in 1990–1992 to 6 per cent in 2014–2016. However, disparities remain large in the percentage of people suffering from hunger among the two subregions. In 2014–2016, the prevalence of undernourishment in Latin America is projected to be less than 5 per cent, while in the Caribbean it is 20 per cent. The pace of reduction in the Caribbean has been too slow to achieve the target. The region as a whole reached the target of halving the proportion of undernourished children, with the proportion of underweight children under age five declining from 7 to 2 per cent from 1990 to 2015.

In the area of expanding access to primary education, Latin America and the Caribbean have made impressive strides, with the adjusted net enrolment rate growing from 87 per cent in 1990 to 94 per cent in 2015. However, most of the progress was made before 2000. Disparities remain large among the two subregions. In 2015, the projected adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education is 82 per cent in the Caribbean and 95 per cent in Latin America.

The region has achieved parity in primary education between boys and girls. In secondary and tertiary education, more girls than boys are enrolled. In 2015, Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region where the gender disparity in secondary education favored girls.

The MDG Report 2015 finds that women in Latin America and the Caribbean participate in paid employment nearly as much as men, with women holding 45 out of every 100 wage-earning jobs in the non-agricultural sector in 2015, the highest among all developing regions.

The share of women in parliament is also the highest among all developing regions and even higher than the average share in developed regions. The proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of national parliament increased from 15 per cent in 2000 to 27 per cent in 2015, higher than the average share of 26 per cent in developed regions in 2015. In the Caribbean, the share of women in single or lower houses of national parliament reached 33 per cent.

Latin America and the Caribbean has reduced its under-five mortality rate by 69 per cent between 1990 and 2015. The mortality rate for children under five dropped from 54 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 17 in 2015. The region reached the target of a two-thirds reduction in the under-five mortality rate.

Maternal mortality in the Caribbean remains high, with 190 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013. Latin America has a much lower maternal mortality ratio, with 77 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013.

Coverage of antenatal care in Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the highest among all developing regions: in 2014, as many as 97 per cent of pregnant women received at least four antenatal care visits during their last pregnancy, a big increase from 75 per cent in 1990.

Latin America and the Caribbean have made slow progress in reducing adolescent childbearing, with the adolescent birth rate remaining high, at 73 births per 1,000 girls in 2015, and had only recently begun to decline.



The Caribbean region witnessed the sharpest decline in the number of people newly infected with HIV, with new infections dropping by 56 per cent from 2000 to 2013. In contrast, Latin America showed a slow decline in the number of new infections. In 2013, 44 per cent of people living with HIV in the whole region received antiretroviral treatment therapy, the highest among all developing regions.

In the area of environmental sustainability, the Report finds that 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 over the period from 2005 to 2010.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, coverage of terrestrial protected areas—areas dedicated to safeguarding and maintaining biological diversity and natural resources, with their associated cultural value—rose from 8.8 per cent to 23.4 per cent between 1990 and 2014.

Latin America and the Caribbean reached the MDG drinking water target five years ahead of schedule. The proportion of the population using an improved water source increased from 85 per cent to 95 per cent between 1990 and 2015.

The region is also very close to reaching the target of halving the proportion of population without basic sanitation. The proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility increased from 67 per cent to 83 per cent between 1990 and 2015.

Progress can also be seen in improving the lives of slum dwellers. Latin America and the Caribbean was one of the regions with the lowest prevalence of slum conditions. The proportion of slum dwellers dropped from 29 per cent in 2000 to 20 per cent in 2014.