

# The Millennium Development Goals Report



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## Northern Africa makes gains in maternal health and achieves several Millennium Development Goals

### CHALLENGES PERSIST WITH PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY, SAYS UN REPORT

CAIRO, 1 JULY – Northern Africa has successfully halved extreme poverty rates, reduced the proportion of undernourished children and improved access to proper sanitation, according to a new UN report. The region is also making important strides in expanding access to primary education and access to clean water, the UN says.

*The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*, launched today by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Geneva, finds that the goal of reducing the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day by half has been met in Northern Africa and important gains have been made in fighting hunger. The proportion of underweight children under age five declined from 10 per cent to 5 per cent from 1990 to 2011. Globally, according to the report, the target of reducing by half those suffering from hunger is within reach.

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with many sub-targets, were agreed by all countries as an outgrowth of the UN Millennium Summit in the year 2000, with a target date of 2015.

Northern Africa has met the target of reducing the mortality rate for children under five by two-thirds ahead of the 2015 deadline. The mortality rate for under-five children dropped from 77 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 25 in 2011—a 68 per cent reduction.

Among developing regions, Northern Africa recorded one of the highest reductions in the maternal mortality ratio, which is represented by maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. In the last 20 years, maternal deaths fell by 66 per cent.

In the area of primary education, Northern Africa has made impressive strides. The adjusted net enrolment rate grew from 80 per cent in 1990 to 97 per cent in 2011. Northern Africa also observed one of the greatest increases in youth literacy rates between 1990 and 2011, with literacy rates jumping from 68 to 89 per cent.

In another positive trend, the region is close to meeting the target of halving the proportion of the population without access to safe drinking water and has already met the target of halving the proportion of people without improved sanitation. The proportion of people using an improved water source increased from 87 per cent to 92 per cent between 1990 and 2011, and the proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility, such as latrines or toilets, increased from 72 per cent to 90 per cent between 1990 and 2011.

### GENDER INEQUALITIES PERSIST

“In every developing region, women tend to hold less secure jobs than men, with fewer social benefits,” the MDG Report says. Findings from the report further show that the gender gap in employment is notably acute in Northern Africa and women’s access to paid employment has not improved in the last two decades. The latest data from 2011 shows that fewer than 20 per cent of jobs outside the agricultural sector were held by women.

Although considerable progress has been made over time in primary education, girls continue to face barriers to primary schooling in Northern Africa. The report shows that 94 girls are enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys.

Women in the region are gaining more power in politics. The proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of national parliament increased from 3 per cent in 2000 to 18 per cent in 2013.

While Northern Africa has made great progress on the MDGs and met several of the targets, some uncertainties remain with regard to political stability and risks of renewed violence that could have cascade effects for development in the region.

*The Millennium Development Goals Report*, an annual assessment of global and regional progress towards the Goals, reflects the most comprehensive, up-to-date data compiled by over 27 UN and international agencies and is produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A complete set of the data used to prepare the report is available at [mdgs.un.org](http://mdgs.un.org)

For more information, press materials and an inter-agency media contact list, see [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals).

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

*Cairo:* UN Information Service

Mr. Fethi Debbabi, [fethi.debbabi@unic-eg.org](mailto:fethi.debbabi@unic-eg.org), 2010 6147530 or 2018 1447227

*New York:* UN Department of Public Information

Wynne Boelt, [boelt@un.org](mailto:boelt@un.org), +1 212 963 8264

Mohsin Mohi-Ud-Din, [mohi-ud-din@un.org](mailto:mohi-ud-din@un.org), +1 212 963 1044

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