

# The Millennium Development Goals Report



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## Asian countries build on achievements, making big progress on Millennium Development Goals

MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN NUTRITION, EDUCATION,  
LITERACY AND HEALTH, SAYS UN REPORT

NEW DELHI, 1 JULY – Southern Asia has made remarkable progress in achieving some Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but increased efforts are needed to meet others, according to a new UN report. Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia have met or are on track to meet most of the MDG targets, the report finds.

*The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*, launched today by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Geneva, finds some challenges remain, but overall momentum is building for the Asia region to reach many of the MDGs by their 2015 target date.

The eight Millennium Development Goals, with a number of sub-targets covering a range of poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, education and environmental indicators, were agreed by all countries as an outgrowth of the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, most with a due date of 2015.

### POVERTY AND HUNGER RATES FALLING

Extreme poverty rates have been halved for Eastern Asia, South-Eastern Asia and Southern Asia, excluding India, five years ahead of the deadline. The report says that although poverty remains widespread in India, progress has been substantial. In India, the poverty rate fell from 49 per cent in 1994 to 42 per cent in 2005 and to 33 per cent in 2010. If the current pace continues, India will meet the poverty reduction target by 2015.

The report says that South-Eastern Asia is the only developing region that reached the hunger reduction target ahead of the 2015 deadline. The proportion of undernourished people in the total population has decreased from 29.6 per cent in 1990-1992 to 10.9 per cent in 2010-2012. Eastern Asia is on track to meet the hunger target, with the proportion of undernourished people in the total population decreasing from 20.8 per cent to 11.5 per cent over the same period. However, in Southern Asia, the proportion of undernourished people has fallen from 26.8 per cent to 17.6 per cent during the past two decades, which is insufficient to meet the MDG target.

Regarding child nutrition, the report says that the prevalence of underweight children in 2011 was highest in Southern Asia among all regions, with 31 per cent of children under age five, or 57 million children, underweight. Eastern Asia reached the target of halving the proportion of undernourished children and South-Eastern Asia is close to meeting the target, with the proportion of underweight children declining from 15 per cent to 3 per cent and from 31 per cent to 17 per cent, respectively, from 1990 to 2011.

### EDUCATION AND LITERACY RATES GET THE GRADES

According to the report, Asia has made impressive strides in expanding access to primary education. Among developing regions, Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia had the highest and the third highest enrolment rate in primary education (98 per cent and 96 per cent) in 2011. Considerable progress has also been made in Southern Asia, where primary school enrolment

increased from 78 per cent to 93 per cent between 2000 and 2011. Almost half the reduction in the global number of children out of school can be attributed to Southern Asia, where the number of such children fell from a high of 38 million in 2000 to 12 million in 2011.

The greatest increases in youth literacy rates between 1990 and 2011 were observed in Southern Asia (from 60 to 81 per cent). The literacy rate among young women is growing at a faster pace than that of young men: in Southern Asia, the literacy rate for young women and young men grew by 26 and 17 percentage points, respectively, from 1990 to 2011.

### BIG IMPROVEMENTS IN CHILD SURVIVAL AND REDUCING MATERNAL MORTALITY

The report says Eastern Asia met the target of reducing by two-thirds the mortality rate for children under five ahead of the deadline, with the mortality rate dropping by 69 per cent—from 48 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 15 in 2011, the lowest rate among all developing regions. Over the same period, South-Eastern Asia has achieved a reduction 58 per cent and is on track to meet the MDG target. The mortality rate for children under five in South-Eastern Asia dropped from 69 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 29 in 2011.

Eastern Asia, Southern Asia and South-Eastern Asia are the regions that recorded the highest reduction in maternal mortality ratio (maternal deaths per 100,000 live births) over the past 20 years – 69 per cent, 64 per cent and 63 per cent, respectively. However, Southern Asia still has the second highest maternal mortality ratio among all regions, with 220 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2011.

### MIXED IMPROVEMENTS ON WATER AND SANITATION

The MDG drinking water target was met five years ahead of schedule in the three sub-regions. In Eastern Asia the proportion of the population using an improved water source increased from 68 per cent to 92 per cent between 1990 and 2011. In South-Eastern Asia and Southern Asia, access to an improved water source increased from 71 per cent to 89 per cent and from 72 per cent to 90 per cent, respectively, during this period.

The greatest progress in sanitation has been made in Eastern Asia, where the proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility, such as latrines or toilets, increased from 27 per cent in 1990 to 67 per cent in 2011, meeting the MDG target ahead of the deadline. In South-Eastern Asia the proportion of the population using improved sanitation increased from 47 per cent to 71 per cent between 1990 and 2011, putting the sub-region on its way to meeting the MDG target. In Southern Asia the proportion increased from 24 per cent to 41 per cent, showing a need to accelerate action on sanitation

*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).

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