

WHO/UNICEF joint monitoring report 2010

Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water - Fast facts

- An improved sanitation facility is one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact.
- An improved drinking-water source is one that by the nature of its construction adequately protects the source from outside contamination, in particular from faecal matter.
- All the information in this report is based on data available up to and including 2008.

Sanitation

- 2.6 billion people or 39 per cent of the world's population live without access to improved sanitation. The vast majority live in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- In the developed regions almost the entire population (99 per cent) used improved facilities as compared to 52 per cent in developing regions.
- At current rates of progress the world will miss the MDG sanitation target by almost 1 billion people, which claims to: "halve, by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation," by 13 per cent. And the MDGs are not the end of the sanitation challenge. Even if the target is met some 1.7 billion people will still not have access to improved sanitation facilities.
- Rural/urban disparities are particularly apparent in sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean, Southern Asia and Oceania where improved sanitation coverage is highest among the urban population despite the vast majority living in rural areas.
- 751 million people share their sanitation facilities with other households or only use public facilities.

Open defecation

- A global decline in open defecation has been recorded. The proportion of the world's population that practices open defecation has declined by more than one third from 25 per cent in 1990 to 17 per cent in 2008.
- However some 1.1 billion people still defecate in the open. Eleven countries, (India, Indonesia, China, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Sudan, Nepal, Brazil, Niger and Bangladesh) are home to 81 per cent of them.
- Open defecation is largely a rural phenomenon, most widely practiced in Southern Asian and Sub-Saharan Africa. Even in these two regions, declines in open defecation have been recorded, with a fall from 66 per cent of the population in 1990 to 44 per cent in 2008 in Southern Asia, and a corresponding decline in Sub-Saharan Africa from 36 per cent to 27 per cent.

Water

- 5.9 billion people, or 87 per cent of the world's population, and 84 per cent of the population living in the developing world now use drinking water from safer, improved sources. At current trends the world will meet or even exceed the water MDG target.
- 3.8 billion people, or 57 per cent of the world's population, get their drinking water from a piped connection that provides running water in their homes or compound.
- Sub-Saharan Africa and the Oceania are the areas that are lagging behind. Just 60 per cent of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa and 50 per cent of the population in Oceania use improved sources of drinking-water.

- In China, 89 per cent of the population of 1.3 billion has access to drinking-water from improved sources, up from 67 per cent in 1990. In India, 88 per cent of the population of 1.2 billion has access, as compared to 72 per cent in 1990.