Water and Sanitation

Millennium Development Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.

Target 10: By 2015, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Are we on track to meet the target?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Saharan Africa</th>
<th>ASIA</th>
<th>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</th>
<th>Commonwealth of Independent States</th>
<th>All Developing Regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East</td>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress on halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water</td>
<td>low coverage</td>
<td>moderate coverage</td>
<td>moderate coverage</td>
<td>high coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress on halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to basic sanitation</td>
<td>very low coverage</td>
<td>very low coverage</td>
<td>low coverage</td>
<td>very low coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of population using improved sources of drinking water(%)</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South-East</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Line 1 & 2 (progress) - Key: Dark Green = target met. Light Green = almost met, or on target. Orange = some/negligible progress, but insufficient to meet target. Red = no change or negative progress.

Line 3 (level) - Population using improved water sources (percentage) - Key: Please refer to map key below.


Water - On Track: The world is on track to meet the target of halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. The share of people using drinking water from improved sources has continued to rise in the world, reaching 83% in 2004 up from 78% in 1990. However, on current trends, sub-Saharan Africa will not meet the target. This is due to factors such as high population growth rates, low government expenditure particularly on operation and maintenance and conflict and political instability. Wide disparities between rural and urban areas persist in sub-Saharan Africa where city dwellers are twice as likely to have safe water as their rural counterparts.

Sanitation - Progress lagging: 1.2 billion people gained access to sanitation between 1990 and 2004. However, to meet the 2015 sanitation target, over 1.6 million people need to gain access to improved sanitation. The most serious problems are in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
Key messages

- Access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation are essential for achievement of the other MDGs. For example, it is a fundamental requirement for effective primary health care and a pre-condition for success in the fight against poverty, hunger, child mortality and in achieving gender equality. 2p.11

- Sub-Saharan Africa remains the area of greatest concern. Over the period 1990-2004, the number of people without access to safe drinking water increased by 23% and the number of people without sanitation increased by over 30%. 7p.2

Facts and figures

- In 2004, a total of 5.3 billion people, 83% of the world’s population used water from improved sources. 7p.8

- Accounting for population growth, in order to meet the water target by 2015, an additional 1.1 billion people need access to an improved water source and 84% of these live in rural areas. 7p.6

- Southern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean have made the greatest progress with more than 85% having access to an improved water source. 7p.9

- There are huge disparities between regions: while access to drinking water through a household connection is as low as 16% in sub-Saharan Africa, it is much higher in Eastern Asia (70%), North Africa (76%) and Western Asia (81%). 7p.8&9

- Inequality in coverage between rural and urban areas and accelerating urban population growth pose serious challenges to achieving the MDG drinking water target. 7p.14

- 4 out of 10 people around the world have no access to improved sanitation. Average access to improved sanitation in developing regions is 50%. 7p.16

- The regions presenting the lowest sanitation coverage are sub-Saharan Africa (37%), Southern Asia (38%) and Eastern Asia (38%). 7p.16

- Since 1990 the number of people without sanitation has decreased by only 98 million. To meet the MDG sanitation target, over 1.6 billion more people need to gain access with 140 million people needing access annually in developing countries. This equates to providing services to an additional 450,000 people a day from 2005 to 2015. 7p.6&18

- The 2004 global coverage rate of 59% means that 611 million people in urban areas and 2 billion in rural areas do not have access to improved sanitation. 7p.20

- Every year, unsafe water and a lack of basic sanitation kills at least 1.6 million children under the age of five years. 7p.3

- At any one time half the people in the developing world are suffering from one or more of the main diseases associated with inadequate provision of water supply and sanitation services and more than half the hospital beds in the world are filled with people suffering from water related diseases. 6p.17

- Arsenic in drinking water is a major public health threat. According to data from about 25,000 tests on wells in Bangladesh, 20% have high levels of arsenic (above 0.05 mg/l). 5
Challenges and solutions

Improving access to water can be difficult because responsibility for water resource management is usually spread across many different parts of the government in developing countries. No single government department can take the lead as they often have conflicting views. For example, Agricultural departments are usually more interested in promoting irrigation and food production, while other ministries will be more interested in improving the supply of drinking water and sanitation.

To improve access to water and sanitation there will need to be:
• Commitment from developing country governments to make it much more of a priority
• Appropriate long-term financing
• Arrangements in place to resolve the competing demands for water and other related environmental challenges
• Increased advocacy on behalf of poor people to ensure that their demands are heard
• Improved capacity of governments to facilitate delivery or deliver services to all citizens
• Improved responsiveness and accountability of government to meet poor people’s needs

What the UK government is doing to help

Country Action: In those countries which are not on-track to reach the MDG targets, we are encouraging governments to put more emphasis on solving the problems relating to water supply and sanitation.
• In 2003/04, DFID spent £131 million on water and sanitation. This included 22.2% in Africa.
• The Secretary of State for International Development announced in the DFID White Paper that the UK would double its funding for improvements in water and sanitation in Africa to £95 million a year by 2007/8 and more than double funding again to £200 million a year by 2010/11.
• The White Paper also made clear that the UK considers water and sanitation to be a basic service, considering it to be as important to development and poverty reduction as health, education and social protection.

Regional Action: DFID is stepping up its support to activities that seek to draw out lessons from experience across regions. For example, DFID is supporting the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW). DFID has pledged to support the Africa Development Bank’s Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative to help achieve 80% coverage by 2015. We are also supporting regional discussions in Asia and Africa on water and sanitation and are supporting the Nile Basin Initiative, which aims to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable use of the common Nile Basin water resources. We will work with civil society organisations in all regions to help them demand better access to water and sanitation.

We are also working to reform the EU Water Initiative and to empower it to meet its objectives on improving the effectiveness of EU development assistance on the ground.

International Action: DFID seeks to support the international system through policy dialogue and advocacy on water supply, sanitation, environmental health and water resources management. We support a number of different international initiatives, such as:
• DFID contributes £76 million a year to multilateral spending on water and sanitation via organisations like the World Bank, the European Commission and the United Nations.

• DFID supports the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) through £1.4 million of core funding over three years.

• DFID supports the Global Water Partnership to improve coordination of international action on water management through contributions of approximately £1.8 million a year - around 18% of their total core funding.

• DFID also contributes to selected strategic international, regional and national water events including the Commission on Sustainable Development and the World Water Forum.

• DFID is developing and implementing a range of international multi-donor programmes to encourage private sector investment in basic infrastructure services. We will continue to work with other donors to develop new ways to counter commercial, political and governance risks and ensure that investments made bring maximum benefit to the poor.

Case studies

India - DFID has contributed £20 million to the UNICEF Child’s Environment Programme. This is a project that aims to improve child health, learning and well-being through better access to safe water and sanitation, and improved hygiene. Approximately 1.8 million people in 12,000 villages have already benefited from this project.

South Africa - DFID is providing around £12m of support to the Department for Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) for programmes including work on water allocation reform and the development of processes for implementation of water resource management that promote equity and sustainable growth. A toolkit for allocation reform has been developed with stakeholders, based on agreed principles, including capacity building for the poor and promotion of cooperation between key institutions on governance issues.

Bangladesh – In addition to the government’s own £15 million contribution, DFID has provided £27 million over the past five years to work on a Rural Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply project which is designed to: improve standards of water supply in rural areas in 35 districts of Bangladesh; provide water and sanitation facilities and hygiene education in 4,600 primary schools; provide hygiene awareness and a product information campaign to promote the use of safe water and latrines, and the adoption of safe hygienic practices; and provide water supplies, school sanitation, hygiene awareness and research and development in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

3. Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development - Water Forum, Royal Geographical Society, Feb 2006
4. Meeting the MDG Drinking Water and Sanitation Target, Mid Term Assessment (WHO & UNICEF)
6. UN Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation, Final Report, Abridged Edition
7. ‘Meeting the MDG drinking water and sanitation target, The Urban and Rural Challenge of the decade’, WHO and UNICEF 2006

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