



Progress on Millennium Development Goals continues across Asia, says UN report



NEW YORK, 16 July 2014 – Southern Asia has made great progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but requires greater efforts to achieve most targets by the end of 2015, according to a new UN report. Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia have met or are within reach of meeting most MDG targets.

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014, launched today by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in New York, finds millions of people's lives have improved across Asia, and in its sub-regions of Eastern Asia, South-Eastern Asia and Southern Asia. The eight MDGs, 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.

Gender parity in primary education is being achieved in Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia, but not in Southern Asia.

Asia continues to expand access to primary education. In Southern Asia, the adjusted net enrolment rate of children of primary school age increased from 80 per cent in 2000 to 94 per cent in 2012. About 19 per cent of out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict areas in Southern Asia. In 2012, Eastern Asia's adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education was 97 per cent, and South-Eastern Asia's was 94 per cent, but these two sub-regions have made little progress since 2000.

The three sub-regions achieved parity in primary education between girls and boys. However, in Southern Asia, gender parity is yet to be achieved in Afghanistan and Pakistan—where there are at most nine girls for every ten boys enrolled—and Bangladesh and Nepal—where the gender disparity favours girls. Gender disparities persist in secondary and tertiary education in Southern Asia.

Women in Southern Asia and South-Eastern Asia are gaining more influence in politics. Between 2000 and 2014, the proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of national parliament increased from 7 to 16 per cent in Southern Asia and from 12 to 18 per cent in South-Eastern Asia. In Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, parity in the number of women and men holding wage-earning jobs has been nearly achieved. But Southern Asia has one of the lowest shares of women in non-agricultural wage employment, with women holding only 20 out of every 100 wage-earning jobs in the non-agricultural sector.

Maternal mortality is declining in all three sub-regions, but progress is slow in Southern Asia.

Asia has made impressive progress in reducing maternal mortality. However, Southern Asia accounted for 24 per cent of all maternal deaths worldwide in 2013. Compared to the universal attendance of skilled health personnel at births in Eastern Asia, only 51 per cent of deliveries were attended by skilled health personnel in Southern Asia. In 2012, only 36 per cent of pregnant women in Southern Asia received the recommended minimum of four antenatal care visits during their last pregnancy.

Eastern Asia met the target of reducing the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds ahead of 2015. The mortality rate for children under five in South-Eastern Asia dropped more than half from 71 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 30 in 2012. In 2012, Southern Asia accounted for 2.1 million of the 6.6 million deaths in children under five worldwide. In 2012, with 1.4 million children dying before reaching their fifth birthday, India had the highest child mortality rate worldwide.
