

Mi

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nutrition. The proportion of underweight children under age five declined from 14 per cent in 1990 to 6 per cent in 2012, which means Western Asia met its MDG target ahead of 2015.

Western Asia has made some progress in improving access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The proportion of the population using an improved water source increased from 85 per cent to 91 per cent between 1990 and 2012, which puts the region within reach of meeting its target by 2015. However, the report notes that excessive withdrawal from renewable water sources raises concerns about severe water scarcity in the region. The proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility increased from 80 to 89 per cent over the same period.

## Conflict reduces MDG success

By the end of 2013, a record high of 51 million people were displaced forcibly worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations. Five million were Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The Syrian Arab Republic became a main source of refugee outflows during 2013. Nearly 2.5 million Syrian refugees came under the responsibility of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Refugee Agency.

Conflict can have a major detrimental impact on achieving the MDGs. An estimated 29 million out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict-affected areas, even though these areas are home to only 22 per cent of the world's primary school-age population. Western Asia together with Northern Africa, account for 14 per cent of these children. For example, in the conflict-affected province of Najaf in Iraq, 27 per cent of children of primary school age from the poorest households never went to school in 2011, compared to three per cent in Al-Sulaimaniyah province.

*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 28 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, see [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

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