

Facts and Actions

Supporting the Millennium Development Goals



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The Millennium Development Goals

- 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2) Achieve universal primary education
- 3) Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4) Reduce child mortality
- 5) Improve maternal health
- 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7) **Ensure environmental sustainability**
- 8) Develop a global partnership for development

Information and text from:

www.millenniumcampaign.org
www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu
www.wsscc.org
www.wateraid.org
www.globalsolutions.org
www.unmillenniumproject.org
"The Millennium Development Goals Report 2006", published by the United Nations

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MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Targets: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
Halve by 2015, the proportion of the people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Quick Facts

- Forests cover 1/3 of the earth's surface and constitutes one of the richest ecosystems (UN)
- Over 13% of the earth's land surface has been designated as protected areas
- Less than 1% of marine ecosystems are protected—making them highly under-represented (UN)
- Approximately 60% of the ecosystem services that support life on Earth—such as fresh water, capture fisheries, air and water regulation, and the regulation of regional climate, natural hazards and pests—are being degraded or used unsustainably (www.maweb.org)
- Between 1990-2004, sanitation coverage in the developing world increased from 35-50%. Another 300 million people should have been served, however, to keep the world on track towards the 2015 target (UN)
- A child dies every 15 seconds from easily preventable water-related diseases (wateraid.org)



MDG 7 Overview

Safe drinking water and sanitation are basic human rights that we often take for granted. In the West we have the political will, infrastructure and tax-base to make sure our water supply is clean and readily available at the turn of a handle. How many of us would be marching in the streets if this wasn't so?!

Improving water supply and sanitation is necessary to meet many of the other

MDG targets. The good news is that the share of people using drinking water from improved sources has continued to rise in the developing world, reaching 80% in 2004, up from 71% in 1990. This means the world is on track to reach the drinking water target.

World wide, land is becoming degraded and plants and animals are being lost in record numbers. Climate is changing and fisheries and other marine

resources are being overexploited. The rural poor are most immediately affected because their day-to-day subsistence and livelihood depend on these natural resources. The exodus to urban cities has created a new concern with people living in unsafe and crowded urban slums. In 2007, for the first time in history, the majority of people will live in urban areas.

Most countries have com-

mitted on some level to the goal of sustainable development and to incorporating these principles into national policies and strategies. However, more political will is needed to reverse the loss of environmental resources.

The Water and Sanitation Collaborative Council (www.wsscc.org) is one international organization that plays a key role in bringing partners together to work collaboratively on water and sanitation issues. In their work, community organizations working with local NGOs have been responsible for many of the most cost-effective initiatives to improve and extend provision for water and sanitation to low-income urban households.

Many of the initiatives that improved and extended provision for water and sanitation were not 'water and sanitation' projects but initiatives through which urban poor households developed better quality and more secure housing and housing finance services also helped them obtain water and sani-

tion.

Further initiatives that have upgraded slum conditions include those improving health and employment among people living in urban slums. In Brazil and India the upgrading in *favelas* and slums was accomplished by strengthening protection against forced and unlawful evictions. In Egypt, S. Africa and Thailand, secure tenure and access to credit has encouraged residents to invest in their homes.

The United States Response

On 16 November 2005, the US Senate overwhelmingly passed H.R. 1973, the *Senator Paul Simon—Water for the Poor Act of 2005*, legislation which makes safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation a key priority of US foreign policy.

The late Senator Paul Simon, after whom the Bill was named, was a Congressional pioneer from Illinois who strongly advocated for clean drinking water and sanitation worldwide. The legislation identifies safe,

affordable drinking water and adequate sanitation as specific objectives of American foreign policy and requires the State Department and USAID to develop a strategy for US water and sanitation efforts abroad. This directs USAID to implement water and sanitation projects and requires a strategy to meet specific benchmarks and timetables.

The legislation acknowledges that clean water and sanitation are key requirements for public health, education, economic development, poverty reduction, women's empowerment, conflict prevention, and environmental sustainability. It also acknowledges President Bush's support of the Millennium Development Goals and acknowledges that the United States needs to increase the amount of funds available for water and sanitation, support innovative funding mechanisms, increase international coordination, and have better integration of water and sanitation into other development efforts.

MDG 7 Take Action

- ▶ Explore ways in which you and your community may be better stewards of the earth's resources (i.e., recycle, reduce your water consumption)
- ▶ Read, [What Can One Person Do? Faith to Heal a Broken World](#) by Sabina Alkire and Edmund Newell
- ▶ Buy fair trade coffee and other fair trade products. Visit www.coopamerica.org/pubs/greenpages/index.cfm for a national screened and approved green directory.
- ▶ Review www.emagazine.com/view/?924. This is an expansive overview of faith-based activism and organizations committed to environmental sustainability.
- ▶ Review the "UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment" report. Released on 31 March 2005, it is the most comprehensive assessment on the links between ecosystem health and human well-being ever undertaken. See a summary at www.greenfacts.org/ecosystems/

"A child born in a wealthy country is likely to consume, waste and pollute more in his lifetime than 50 children born in developing nations."

Archbishop of Canterbury

MDGs Resources and Further Information

Extensive listing of MDGs websites

- <http://condor.depaul.edu/~pszczerb/MDGs.html>