CHAPTER VII. MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 7:
ENSURING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

الفصل السابع - الهدف 7 من الأهداف الإنمائية للألفية: كفالة الاستدامة البيئية

Statistical highlights

1. In 2012, 84 per cent of the total population of ESCWA member States and 98 per cent of GCC countries had access to improved drinking water.

2. A 2.04 per cent decrease in access to safe drinking water for the urban population was recorded in ESCWA member States between 2000 and 2011, while a 2.6 per cent increase was recorded for rural populations.

3. In 2012, 80 per cent of the total population of ESCWA member States and 99 per cent of GCC countries had access to improved sanitation.

4. Urban access to improved sanitation increased by 2.24 per cent between 2000 and 2011 for ESCWA member States and rural access to improved sanitation increased by 17.8 per cent.
Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals sought to ensure environmental sustainability: target 9 focused on integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reversing the loss of environmental resources. Indicators 26 to 28 on land area covered by forest, protected areas to maintain biological diversity, carbon dioxide emissions and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs were addressed in the previous chapters. In this chapter, target 9 related to water, sought to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

While water related targets are kept under goal 6 in the new framework of the sustainable development goals that will frame the post-2015 development agenda, additional dimensions on water quality, hygiene, integrated water management, efficiency and aquatic ecosystems have been included.

Access of populations in ESCWA member States to safe drinking water reached 84 per cent in 2012, with an increase of 0.58 per cent since 2000. At a national level, however, the percentage decreased in four ESCWA member States between 2000 and 2012, namely in Jordan by 1.03 per cent; Yemen by 8.33 per cent; Palestine by 10.87 per cent; and the Sudan by 11.29 per cent (table VII.1).

Urban coverage in ESCWA member States decreased from 93 per cent in 2000 to 91 per cent in 2011. This decrease reflects the drop in access to safe drinking water in six ESCWA member States, namely Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen (table VII.2). In GCC countries, a 3.16 per cent increase in access was recorded between 2000 and 2011, taking into account that three GCC countries had already attained a 100 per cent rate of access.

In rural areas, access to improved drinking water in ESCWA member States increased from 73 per cent in 2000 to 75 per cent in 2011. In GCC countries, it increased from 93 per cent in 2000 to 96 per cent in 2011 (table VII.3).

By 2012, the urban access to safe drinking water reached 84 per cent in the ESCWA countries, as opposed to 81 per cent in 2000. By 2015, a 0.58 per cent annual increase was expected. In rural areas, urban access to improved drinking water increased from 73 per cent in 2000 to 75 per cent in 2011. In GCC countries, it increased from 93 per cent in 2000 to 96 per cent in 2011.
Access to sanitation

Access to sanitation remains lower than access to safe drinking water, particularly in rural areas. The percentage of the total population with access to improved sanitation in ESCWA member States increased from 74 per cent in 2000 to 80 per cent in 2012. The lowest level of access to sanitation was reported in the Sudan, at 24 per cent (table VII.4).

Access to improved sanitation in urban areas in ESCWA member States increased by 2.24 per cent between 2000 and 2011. Three GCC countries reported 100 per cent coverage (Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia), and three did not (Bahrain at 99 per cent, the United Arab Emirates at 98 per cent and Oman at 97 per cent) (table VII.5).

Box 10. MDGs deadline and the SDGs data revolution

As the 2015 deadline for the MDGs approaches, the international community has started to work on a new, post-2015 development agenda. The report of the United Nations High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has called for a “revolution” to produce better, timelier, more accessible, and more disaggregated data to help eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable development. For this to happen, the Panel notes, national ownership and increased commitment of financial and human resources for the statistical system are needed along with support from the international community. New information technologies must be harnessed to improve data at the same time as investments are made in existing data infrastructure, such as the registration of births and deaths, health and education information systems, and survey systems. Open access to data and its effective use in analysis is essential.


All ESCWA member States have shown improvement in providing better access to sanitation in rural areas, except the Sudan that experienced a decrease from 16 per cent in 2000 to 13 per cent in 2012 (table VII.6).