

Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality

In more than a third of the economies, **child deaths** are 30 or less per 1,000 live births, but many of the others, including some of the most populous economies in the region, have much higher death rates. Ten economies are expected to achieve the **target for child mortality** by 2015 but 15, including two of the most populous, are unlikely to do so. **Measles vaccination rates** for children are rising in the region. In 1990 only six economies had measles vaccination percentages of 95% or better, but by 2006 the number had more than tripled.

Introduction

The target is to reduce *by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate*. The cut-off point is 30 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Two related indicators are considered here:

- (i) Deaths per thousand live births of children under 1 year old (referred to as the *infant mortality rate*).
- (ii) Percentage of 1-year-old children who have been immunized against measles.

Immunization against measles has a direct impact on child mortality, and the percentage of 1-year-olds who have been immunized is also a good indicator of the quality of the child health care system.

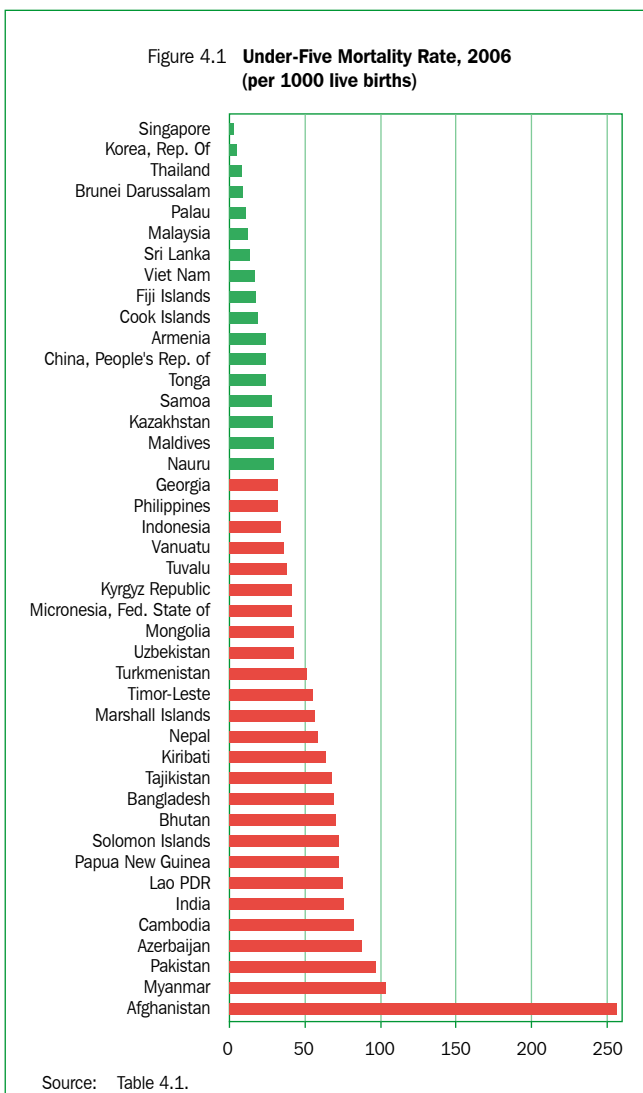
Key Trends

Figure 4.1 shows the number of deaths per 1,000 live births of children under 5 years old. More than a third of the economies (denoted by green bars) have achieved the cut-off target of 30 deaths per 1,000 live births.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has already reached the target but most of the other large developing economies are all in the lower part of the table. Rates of 75 or more are recorded for Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Pakistan. In these economies, around one in 13 children are dying before they reach their sixth year.

Box 4.1 divides economies into three groups:

- Early achievers have reached the target by reducing child mortality to 30 or below per 1,000 live births, or by cutting the 1990 value by two thirds.
- Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lao PDR, and Philippines are on track together with six smaller economies.
- Fifteen economies are making only slow progress and will not achieve the target without substantial improvement in child health care over the next decade. These include India and Pakistan. Four former Soviet Union countries are also making only slow progress, reflecting a deterioration in public health care since 1990.



Box 4.1 Progress on Under-Five Mortality Rate

Early achievers

Armenia	Nauru
Brunei Darussalam	Palau
China, People's Rep. of	Samoa
Cook Islands	Singapore
Fiji Islands	Sri Lanka
Kazakhstan	Thailand
Korea, Rep. of	Timor-Leste
Malaysia	Tonga
Maldives	Viet Nam

On track

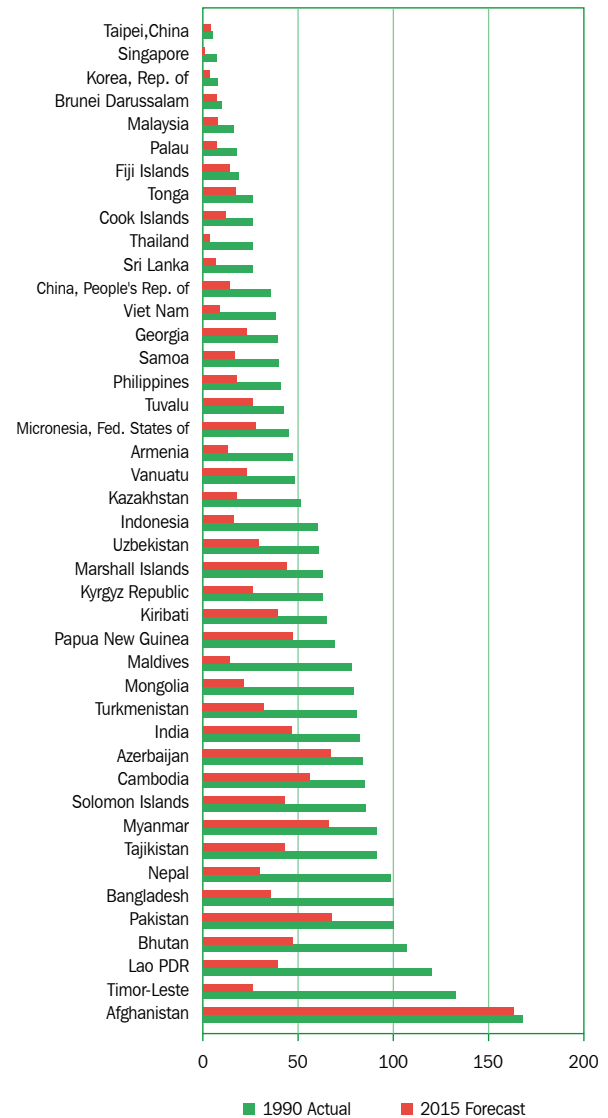
Bangladesh	Lao PDR
Bhutan	Mongolia
Georgia	Nepal
Indonesia	Philippines
Kyrgyz Republic	Vanuatu

Slow progress

Afghanistan	Pakistan
Azerbaijan	Papua New Guinea
Cambodia	Solomon Islands
India	Tajikistan
Kiribati	Turkmenistan
Marshall Islands	Tuvalu
Micronesia, Fed. States of	Uzbekistan
Myanmar	

Source: Derived from Table 4.1.

Figure 4.2 Infant Mortality Rate, 1990 Actual and 2015 Forecast (per 1,000 live births)



Source: Derived from Table 4.1.

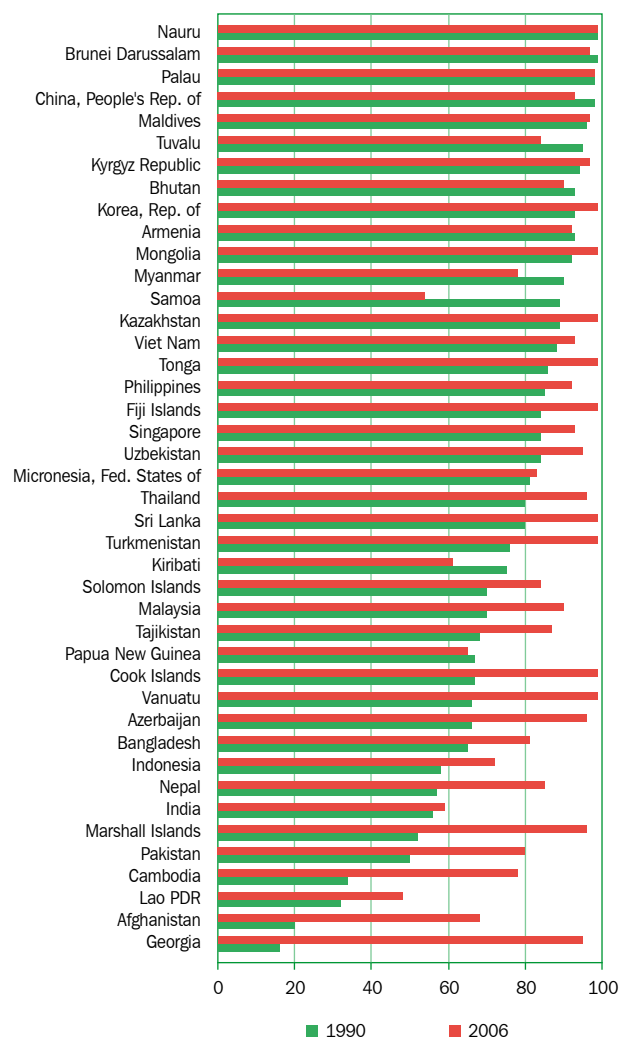
Figure 4.2 gives mortality rates per 1,000 live births for children under 1 year of age. It shows the actual infant mortality rates reported for 1990 together with the mortality rates expected for 2015 if infant mortality continues to change at the same speed from 2006 to 2015, as in the period from 1990 to 2006.

In all economies, infant mortality is expected to be lower by 2015 than in 1990. The forecast reductions are particularly large in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste.

Figure 4.3 shows the third indicator of the quality of child health care—the percentage of 1-year-old children immunized against measles. This figure covers 42 economies, and in 31 of them, the immunization percentages were higher in 2006 than in 1990. Gains have been particularly dramatic in economies that started from a low base in the early 1990s such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Georgia. Moreover, in 1990, only six economies had percentages above or equal to 95%, but by 2006, 19 economies recorded percentages in this range.

The nine economies where immunization rates were lower in 2006 than in 1990 include the four Pacific economies of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Tuvalu. The PRC and Myanmar were also in this group. In the case of the PRC, the reduction was small, from 98% in 1990 to 93% in 2006; in Myanmar the fall was substantial, from 90% in 1990 to 78% in 2006.

Figure 4.3 Percentage of 1-Year-Old Children Immunized against Measles, 1990 and 2006 or Nearest Years



Source: Table 4.1.

Data Issues and Comparability

In the more developed countries, data on mortality are usually taken from vital statistics registration records. In most developing countries, this source is not available and the data are usually taken from living standards, demographic surveys, and health surveys of households. As coverage of these surveys is often incomplete and the surveys may not be held each year, econometric estimation techniques may be used to produce a consistent time series. For these reasons, mortality data are of varying quality in the Asia and Pacific region.

Data on immunization may be provided directly by the health workers and clinics providing inoculations or, more commonly in the Asian region, the information is collected from samples of households in health and demographic surveys. As with mortality data, estimation techniques will often be used to convert partial data into comprehensive estimates.

Goal 4 Target

Table 4.1 **Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate**

	4.1 Under-Five Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)			4.2 Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)			4.3 Proportion of 1-Year-Old Children Immunized against Measles (percent)		
	1990	2000	2006	1990	2000	2006	1990	2000	2006
Developing Member Countries									
Central and West Asia									
Afghanistan	260	257	257	168	165	165	20	35	68
Armenia	56	36	24	47	32	21	93 (1992)	92	92
Azerbaijan	105	93	88	84	77	73	66 (1992)	99	96
Georgia	46	37	32	39	32	28	16 (1992)	73	95
Kazakhstan	60	43	29	51	37	26	89 (1992)	99	99
Kyrgyz Republic	75	51	41	63	44	36	94 (1992)	98	97
Pakistan	130	108	97	100	85	78	50	56	80
Tajikistan	115	93	68	91	75	56	68 (1992)	87	87
Turkmenistan	99	71	51	81	59	45	76 (1992)	97	99
Uzbekistan	74	62	43	61	52	38	84 (1992)	99	95
East Asia									
China, People's Rep. of	45	37	24	36	30	20	98	85	93
Hong Kong, China	...	...	...	4 (1996)	3	2* (2007)	...	...	...
Korea, Rep. of	9	5	5	8	5	5	93	95	99
Mongolia	109	62	43	79	48	34	92	94	99
Taipei, China	...	...	...	5	6	5	...	...	...
South Asia									
Bangladesh	149	92	69	100	66	52	65	76	81
Bhutan	166	100	70	107	77	63	93	76	90
India	115	89	76	82	66	57	56	52	59
Maldives	111	54	30	78	43	26	96	99	97
Nepal	142	86	59	99	64	46	57	71	85
Sri Lanka	32	19	13	26	16	11	80	99	99
Southeast Asia									
Brunei Darussalam ^a	11	9	9	10	8	8	99	99	97
Cambodia	116	104	82	85	78	65	34	65	78
Indonesia	91	48	34	60	36	26	58	72	72
Lao PDR	163	101	75	120	77	59	32	42	48
Malaysia	22	14	12	16	11	10	70	88	90
Myanmar	130	110	104	91	78	74	90	84	78
Philippines	62	40	32	41	30	24	85	81	92
Singapore	9	4	3	7	3	2	84	96	93
Thailand	31	13	8	26	11	7	80	94	96
Viet Nam	53	30	17	38	23	15	88	97	93
The Pacific									
Cook Islands	32	24	19	26	20	16	67	76	99
Fiji Islands	22	18	18	19	16	16	84	85	99
Kiribati	88	70	64	65	52	47	75	80	61
Marshall Islands	92	68	56	63	55	50	52	94	96
Micronesia, Fed. States of	58	47	41	45	37	33	81	85	83
Nauru	...	30	30	...	25	25	99 (1997)	...	99
Palau	21	14	11	18	13	10	98	83	98
Papua New Guinea	94	80	73	69	60	54	67	62	65
Samoa	50	34	28	40	28	23	89	93	54
Solomon Islands	121	88	73	86	65	55	70	87	84
Timor-Leste	177	107	55	133	85	47	...	39 (2002)	64
Tonga	32	26	24	26	22	20	86	95	99
Tuvalu	54	43	38	42	35	31	95	81	84
Vanuatu	62	48	36	48	38	30	66	94	99
Developed Member Countries									
Australia	10	6	6	8	5	5	86	91	94
Japan	6	5	4	5	3	3	73	96	99
New Zealand	11	8	6	9	6	5	90	85	82

a Brunei Darussalam is not a developing member country but an unclassified regional member country of ADB.

Sources: Millennium Indicators Database Online (UNSD 2008); for Hong Kong, China: Census and Statistics Department and Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health; for Taipei, China: Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics.