

# THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TARGET 10

## WATER for ALL WATER BRIEFS

### The Importance of Target 10 to the MDGs

In September 2000, the member states of the United Nations unanimously adopted The Millennium Declaration. The summit agreed on an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives across the globe through eight goals and 18 targets. These were called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Achieving Target 10—halving by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation—is instrumental to achieving many of the MDGs.

- A good water supply will increase productivity in agriculture, livestock, and industry and help eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (Goal 1). According to a recent joint agency report coordinated by the Asian Development Bank,<sup>1</sup> meeting Target 10 will deliver an additional \$323 million annually in Asia from increased economic productivity.
- If children, particularly girls, spend less time fetching water, they will have more time to devote to their schooling to help achieve universal primary education (Goal 2). The same goes for women in general, who will have more time to earn income, thus earning social capital, improved social positions, and empowerment (Goal 3).
- Water-borne diseases are the biggest killer of young children, in particular diarrhea. Clean water will reduce child mortality (Goal 4); and if Target 10 is achieved, 275 million cases of diarrhea in the region will be averted. Better water management will also reduce mosquito habitats and the incidence of malaria, while improved health resulting from Target 10 reduces susceptibility to and helps combat major diseases (Goal 6). If Target 10 is achieved, there will be a \$2.5 billion annual saving in health costs across Asia.<sup>2</sup>
- Integrated water resources management is a key factor in balancing and protecting ecosystems and reducing water-based pollution and wastewater discharge. The result is greater environmental sustainability in river basins (Goal 7).
- Water problems, including floods and droughts, create major constraints on economic development for landlocked and small island states. Improved water management and disaster mitigation are a crucial part of the global partnership for development (Goal 8).

### The Return on Investment from Target 10

The 'Asia Water Watch 2015' report estimates that for every \$1 invested in people gaining access to water and sanitation, there will be returns of \$6 in health, livelihood, and education benefits. The report estimates that an investment of just \$8 billion annually would assure that every country in Asia reaches Target 10. Once Target 10 is reached, the \$8 billion annually will return \$54 billion annually—seven times the annual investment made, according to the report.

### Is Asia on Track To Meet Target 10?

The record of Target 10 progress in Asia is uneven.

Progress for reaching Target 10 in water supply is generally good. In 2002, 82% of Asia's population had access to improved water supply, up from 74% in 1990. The most dramatic improvement was in urban water supply coverage, where 482 million people gained access to improved drinking water between 1990 and 2002—an increase of 51%.

India is in the enviable position of being on course to meet Target 10 for both water supply and sanitation indicators in both urban and rural areas, according to data reporting and trends analysis. A number of other countries, including Pakistan, several Pacific nations, Thailand, and Turkey are also expected to meet the water supply indicator ahead of schedule.

Yet, much still needs to be done elsewhere. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is less likely to meet the water supply indicator. Several other countries, including Bangladesh, most of Central Asia, and the Philippines, will struggle to meet the water supply target unless significant improvements are made to existing trends.

Sanitation is more problematic. There is considerable progress but the starting point is very low. One half of the region's population still lacks access to improved sanitation—2 billion of the 2.6 billion people lacking worldwide. Yet, average annual increases in improved sanitation coverage are an impressive 21%—a much higher growth rate than for improved water supply. The People's Republic of China (PRC), for example, is likely to meet the sanitation targets.

<sup>1</sup> "Asia Water Watch 2015: Are Countries in Asia on Track to Meet Target 10 of the Millennium Development Goals?" report published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), and World Health Organization (WHO)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

## ADB's Role in Achieving Target 10.

ADB is playing a key role in achieving Target 10 through:

- Increased lending to the water sector with ADB's lending for water supply, sanitation, and wastewater management totaling over \$1.5 billion from 2003 to 2005.
- The funding of 25 Pilot and Demonstration Activities (PDAs) across Asia designed to support new approaches to water sector policy development and sector reform.
- Promoting effective national water policies, reforms, and new institutional frameworks through its Cooperation Fund for the Water Sector. To date, five Asian countries have conducted comprehensive water sector assessments, and eight Asian countries are conducting national water sector reforms with ADB assistance.
- A continued focus on Integrated Water Resources Management in river basins – supported by NARBO (Network of Asian River Basin Organizations).
- A focus on innovative financial and risk mitigation instruments, as well as lend to subsovereign entities through its Innovation and Efficiency Initiative.
- Partnerships and alliances with National Water Sector Apex Bodies, NARBO, the South East Asia Water Utilities Network, the Water for Asian Cities Program, and Water for the Poor – Partnerships for Action initiative and WaterAid.

**There is still much to do. What is clear, however, is that achieving Target 10 will be a key driver in attaining the MDGs.**

## The Goals & Targets

- **Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**  
**Target 1:** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day  
**Target 2:** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
- **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**  
**Target 3:** Ensure that, by 2015, children will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
- **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**  
**Target 4:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
- **Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**  
**Target 5:** Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
- **Goal 5: Improve maternal health**  
**Target 6:** Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
- **Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**  
**Target 7:** Have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS  
**Target 8:** Have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse the incidences of malaria and other major diseases
- **Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**  
**Target 9:** Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs, and reverse the loss of environmental resources  
**Target 10:** Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation  
**Target 11:** Have achieved, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
- **Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development**  
**Target 12:** Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system  
**Target 13:** Address the special needs of the least developed countries  
**Target 14:** Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states  
**Target 15:** Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries  
**Target 16:** Develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth  
**Target 17:** Provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries  
**Target 18:** Make available the benefits of new technologies in cooperation with the private sector

**Note:** In this publication, "\$" refers to US dollars.