



embargoed until 1 july, 9 am cest (gmt+2)

## Maternal and child health improved in Western Asia, says UN

Challenges remain to achieve several Millennium Development Goals

Beirut, 1 July

Access to paid employment remains a distant target for women in Western Asia, and women are far less likely to be employed than their male counterparts. The report finds that the region has the lowest share of women in non-agricultural wage employment among all developing regions, with women holding only 19 out of every 100 wage-earning jobs in the non-agricultural sector.

## Improvements on water and sanitation

Western Asia has made 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 90 per cent between 1990 and 2011. The proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility, such as latrines or toilets, increased from 80 per cent to 88 per cent over the same period. The report notes that accelerated progress is needed in order to meet the MDG target in the region.

A decline in the proportion of slum dwellers was observed across most regions. However, Western Asia is the only region with an increased proportion of slum dwellers, from 21 per cent in 2000 to 25 per cent in 2012.

## Conflict impacts MDGs

The MDGs call for the support and protection of refugees and displaced persons. The UN report acknowledges that the “number of people uprooted by conflict or persecution is at its highest level in 18 years.”

By the end of 2012, some 45.1 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to conflict or persecution. Excluding Palestinian refugees, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic are among the largest source countries of refugees.

*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 27 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, press materials and an inter-agency media contact list, see [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals).

## media contacts

*Beirut:* UN Information Centre  
Cynthia Khoury, [khouryc@un.org](mailto:khouryc@un.org), +961 1 978 829

*New York:* UN Department of Public Information  
Wynne Boelt, [boelt@un.org](mailto:boelt@un.org), +1 212 963 8264  
Mohsin Mohi-Ud-Din, [mohi-ud-din@un.org](mailto:mohi-ud-din@un.org), +1 212 963 1044

Issued by the UN Department of Public Information – DPI/2583B