

The Arab Millennium Development Goals Report

Summary



Facing challenges and looking beyond 2015



United Nations



League of Arab States



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This report is a response to a request by the United Nations General Assembly for a periodic assessment of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was jointly prepared by the League of Arab States, the United Nations organizations members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) and the Regional United Nations Development Group for the Arab States, and coordinated by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The members of the thematic working group on MDGs within RCM are listed below. A number of outside expert advisors and focal points in the ministries of social affairs of the 22 Arab countries also contributed to the report. This publication is based on a set of data compiled by ESCWA in consultation with the member countries of the League of Arab States. Data are drawn from both national and international sources, mainly the United Nations Statistics Division Millennium Development Goals Indicators database.

For a relevant analysis of MDGs, the League of Arab States and the United Nations have agreed on the following regional classification of Arab countries: *the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)*: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; *the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)*: the Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen; *Maghreb*: Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia; *Mashreq*: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES (Social Sector)

&

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (Convener of the Thematic Working Group on MDGs)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The Thematic Working Group gratefully acknowledges the reviews and feedback of Ali Abdel Gader (Research Professor, Doha Institute), Heba El Laithy (Professor, Cairo University) and Ghaith Fariz (Director of the Arab Knowledge Report, United Nations Development Programme) on an earlier draft of this report. The report and related documents including country-level data and national MDG reports are available from <http://web.escwa.un.org/sites/arabmdg13/>.

Foreword

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – a strong global commitment to human development made by Heads of State and Government in the year 2000 – envisaged a fifteen-year timeframe to achieve ambitious development targets to improve the lives of all. Arab countries reaffirmed their commitment to these goals in resolutions adopted at the Arab developmental summits (Kuwait 2009, Sharm Al-Sheikh 2011 and Riyadh 2013), and through efforts made by the Arab Social Affairs Council and other Arab specialized ministerial councils and organizations.

Today, we are rapidly approaching the MDG endpoint of 2015. Countries in all regions have made great strides towards achieving the goals. In the Arab region, much has been achieved, especially in access to education and health services, but much remains to be done.

The Fourth Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2013 highlights the progress made by Arab countries in achieving MDGs since 1990 and underlines ongoing development challenges which should be addressed in any post-2015 development framework. The report also suggests a new development paradigm beyond 2015.

Development in the Arab region cannot be addressed separately from regional realities. With the continued Israeli occupation of Palestine, the region is suffering from the only remaining occupation in modern history. Conflict and instability in the Arab region also continue to take their toll on economic, social and political life.

This report was prepared during a period marked with significant political and social change. A post-2015 development agenda will only be meaningful if it echoes the rallying calls of millions of Arabs for freedom, dignity and social justice. Notwithstanding the daunting challenges, there are ample reasons for hope. The region has resources and potential, not least of which is the tremendous wealth of youth and will that was recently manifested in the streets. If harnessed properly, this force can be an engine for change to build sound economies and resilient societies and nations.

An inclusive and sustainable post-2015 development agenda should address specific subregional and subnational inequalities. Arab countries have a strong incentive to work towards integration. Less vulnerability to external factors can only be realized through intraregional joint action to face collective challenges. This should be grounded in a strong political will to share both strengths and weaknesses, to minimize burdens and maximize opportunities, to turn contradictions into areas of complementarity and effective integration potentials.

To achieve equitable human development, there must be an inclusive and balanced approach addressing economic, social, environmental and political dimensions. Furthermore, as highlighted by the global United Nations report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, policies and actions have to serve not only the quantitative acceleration of development progress, but also the enhancement of its quality. Any regional post-2015 development agenda must also pay attention to the special needs and circumstances of Arab LDCs.

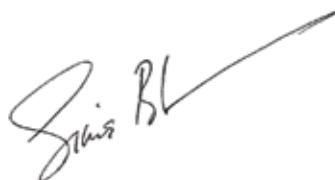
This report contains detailed information on where the Arab region stands today in terms of achieving MDGs. It is our sincere hope that it will be a useful reference as we look for a better future for all in the Arab region.



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Overview

Despite strong progress towards the achievement of many targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), inequalities remain between countries and within countries

Significant gains towards universal access to primary education, especially for girls

Primary school enrolment and literacy rates in the region have increased due to relatively high investments in education over the last decades, reaching 5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As a result, achievements related to universal access to primary education are on track. That also enables an improved access to education for girls, in line with the education-related target of MDG 3 on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Achievements in the reduction of child and infant mortality, and in improving maternal health, were slow

The Arab region is slowly improving in terms of reducing child mortality (MDG 4) and improving maternal health (MDG 5). In particular, Arab Least Developed Countries (LDCs) lag behind, with a decrease of only 15 per cent in child mortality, and of 17 per cent in maternal mortality.

Progress towards universal access to reproductive health in most Arab countries is hampered by persistent geographical and economic barriers

While on average the Arab region has improved access to health care, LDCs stagnate at a low level. Antenatal care coverage increased only from 39 per cent in 1990 to 40 per cent in 2010. Analysis at the household level reveals glaring disparities: the richest quintile is close to reaching universal access to health care, while the poorest quintile and rural areas suffer from a widespread lack of access to services.

Millions more people have access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation in the region, but the rural-urban divide is still deep

Access to water and sanitation markedly differs between rural and urban areas across the Arab region. LDCs and rural areas in other subregions lag behind. In some conflict-stricken countries, the destroyed infrastructure impedes sufficient progress towards the targets of MDG 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability. The lack of improvement in access to water and sanitation is also accentuated by a high concentration of urban slums, particularly in Arab LDCs.

Recent events may provide an opportunity to meet people's aspirations, yet they are a current threat to MDG progress

Poverty swells after 2010

The 1.25 United States dollars (US\$) per day as a threshold for extreme poverty yield a reduction of rates in the Arab region from 5.5 per cent in 1990 to 4.1 per cent in 2010. The dynamics of recent sociopolitical events translates not only into regional instability, but also into medium to long-term economic and social consequences. Extreme poverty is expected to have reached 7.4 per cent in 2012.

Conflict affects an already vicious cycle of poverty, unemployment and hunger

Unemployment is expected to have reached 14.8 per cent in 2013, above the 1990 level. This renders the policy challenge “decent work for all” urgent and manifold, especially with regard to improving the

low participation of women and youth. Expected increases in poverty and unemployment are likely to contribute to a continuing increase of people suffering from hunger (20 per cent in the near future, up from 15 per cent in 2011).

Political transitions offer an opportunity for the empowerment of women that should not be missed

The representation of women in parliament has significantly increased from 2000 to 2012, but it is still far below the global level. The hopes of an increased role for women in the region raised by political transitions have not yet materialized. In many Arab countries, men and women stood together during the initial phases of political change; however, women are now far less visible in transition processes. There are even signs of backtracking on gender equality achievements in some countries.

Despite burning short-term challenges, the new Arab development agenda must address the limitations of the MDG framework by focusing on long-term inclusive development

Good governance as a basis for development

Although Arab countries have achieved many MDG targets, they have failed in promoting inclusive and participatory development. People in countries with some of the strongest MDG achievements took to the streets to protest their lack of voice, the absence of government accountability and the unfair advantages afforded to elites. Overall governance reforms are a key measure of development achievements. They foster trust in the institutions responsible for implementing regional and international plans. Respect for human rights, democratic governance and rule of law are among the foundations of development and should thus underpin any post-2015 framework.

A region of wealth and hunger

In 2011, more than 50 million people in the region were undernourished, 20 million more than in 1991. Arab LDCs, Iraq, Palestine and Morocco are particularly affected. The proportion of children under the age of five who are underweight is decreasing in the Mashreq, Maghreb and GCC countries, however the increase in LDCs prevents the region from meeting the MDG target on combating hunger.

Untapped potential for regional and global partnerships for development

Official development assistance (ODA) has not increased at the same rate as the regional population growth, thus rendering per capita ODA levels significantly lower in 2011 than in 1990. The decline of bilateral aid to LDCs is particularly alarming: the rate is only US\$18 per capita in Yemen, for example. Fiscal space for development expenditure is increasingly constrained in both middle income countries and LDCs, and the role of regional donors should be reviewed and enhanced. Despite a decline of ODA from Arab donor countries, they remain more generous than the Development Assistance Committee of member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (DAC-OECD).

From quantitative to qualitative development

Quantitative achievements towards MDG targets do not necessarily go hand in hand with an improvement of the quality of public services. For example, enrolment in all levels of education has increased, but that progress was not necessarily accompanied by an improvement in the quality of education, nor an increase in job opportunities. The same holds for health services: the quantity of health-care providers has increased, however the costs and quality of services are still impediments to sustainably improved health-care conditions. Moreover, although the access to improved water sources has increased, this was not coupled with a guarantee of water availability at all times. In some areas, this water might also still be contaminated.

Increased effort is required to empower women beyond education

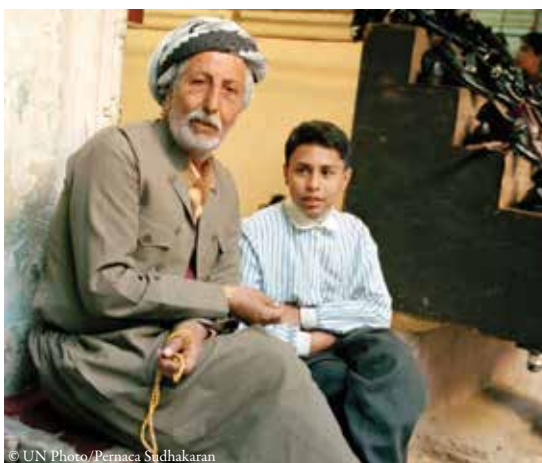
Despite strong progress of gender parity in education in the Arab region, in comparison to other developing regions, the empowerment of women is still lagging behind. Efforts in the area of access to education have yet to translate into positive results as the participation of women in the labour market remains low. Gender gaps persist also in other areas, such as political participation: women's representation in parliament has significantly increased, but it is still far behind its levels in the rest of the world.

Rethink indicators and improve data quality and accessibility

The application of globally vetted measures of poverty and inequality, such as the Gini index and the US\$1.25 poverty line, leads to an unrealistic assessment of inequality and extreme poverty in Arab countries, which appear to be low. Monitoring the progress of development should therefore be based on more reliable measures and account for actual disparities. Data should also be disaggregated, for example by income levels, place of origin, place of residence, gender and age. In addition, the accessibility of data is very restricted in Arab countries. Only with improved availability and accessibility will experts be able to measure real progress made in basic development targets such as the reduction of poverty and inequality.

Goal 1

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger



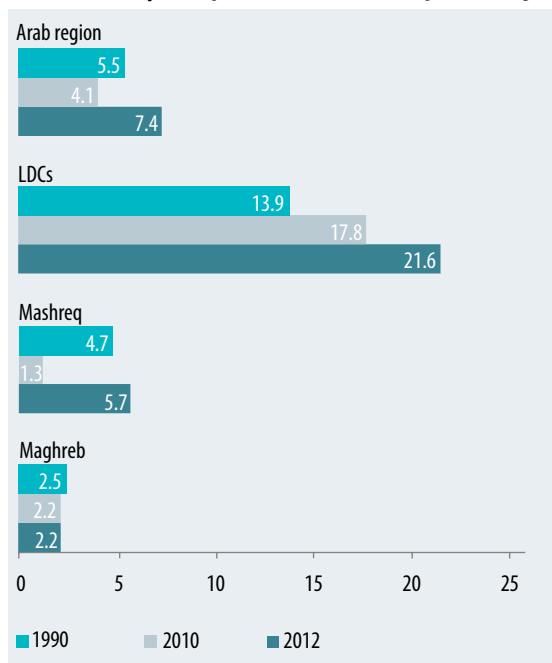
TARGET

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1.25 a day

Extreme poverty is low, but has increased dramatically since 2010 in Mashreq countries and LDCs

Extreme poverty, measured by the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1.25 a day, is comparatively low in the region, and has declined from 5.5 per cent in 1990 to 4.1 in 2010. However, due to the political turmoil witnessed in some countries of the region, extreme poverty is estimated to have increased in the last couple of years, reaching 7.4 per cent in 2012.

Incidence of extreme poverty, based on the international poverty line of US\$1.25 a day (Percentage)

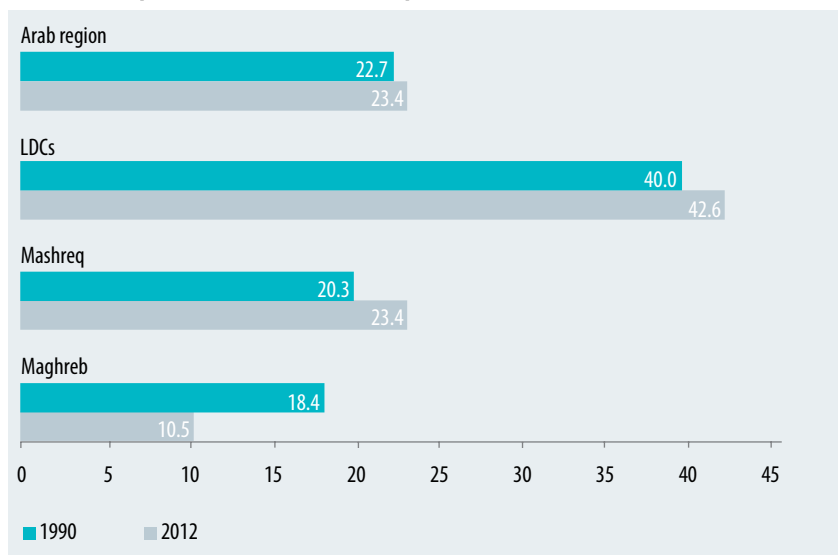


Setting national poverty lines raises the proportion of extreme poor people to more than 20 per cent

Fixed international poverty baselines, such as US\$1.25 of daily income, are of limited use in capturing extreme poverty in Arab countries. While the region has a comparatively low poverty rate when the US\$1.25 line is applied, individual countries report much higher poverty rates under their national poverty lines. Based on these, poverty in the region rose from 22.7 per cent in 1990 to 23.4 per cent in 2011, due to increases in LDCs (especially Yemen) and Mashreq countries (particularly Egypt and Syria). Regardless of which poverty line is applied, the region will not achieve the poverty reduction goal. Furthermore, it is the only region in the world where poverty has increased since 2010.

Extreme poverty is low in the Arab region, but the 2015 target is unlikely to be met

Incidence of poverty based on national poverty lines (Percentage)





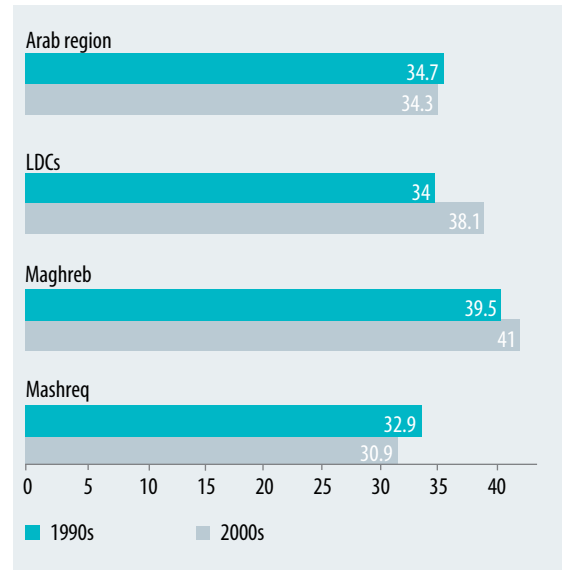
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Over the last two decades, despite reasonable economic growth, the decline in the proportion of poor was relatively marginal

Poverty in the Arab region is highly sensitive to economic shocks

The Arab region's poverty rate measured by the US\$1.25 poverty line is very low, on par with the rate registered in Europe and Central Asia, and lower than the rate in Latin America and the Caribbean. Rates jump sharply at higher poverty lines, however. At a poverty line of approximately US\$3 a day, the average rate of the Arab region is far closer to the average of all developing regions. Unlike any other region, a minor economic shock can have major poverty implications for the Arab region, due to the high percentage of people whose daily income falls between US\$1.25 and US\$3, which also explains the rapid rise in poverty rates since 2010.

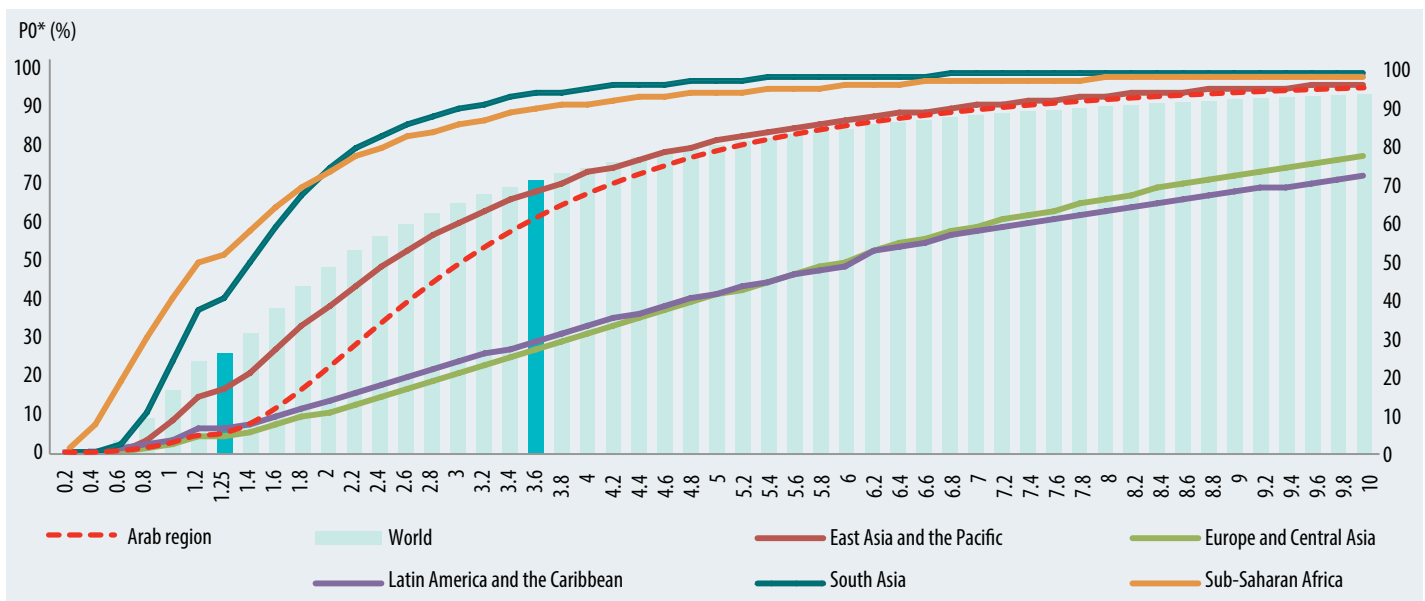
Gini index of inequality



Inequalities in income and expenditure seem low and relatively stable, but the reality may be more complex

A Gini index of 34 for the Arab region gives the impression of low to moderate inequality. The Gini index measures inequality based on differences in income and expenditure (high inequality is typically associated with a Gini value of 45 or above). Results show that the situation has changed little over the last two decades, as the latest data for the region show an index value of 34.3 in the 2000s versus 34.7 in the 1990s.

Poverty rates for the Arab region and developing regions across a range of poverty lines, 2000-2011 (Based on recent surveys)



Given that most Arab countries embarked on liberal economic reform programmes during the 1990s, which had far reaching social and economic consequences, a rise in inequality was expected. This is difficult to square with the relatively stable values of the Gini coefficient for the region.

There are many reasons for this paradox but the most convincing one is that household expenditure surveys, from which the Gini index is derived, are unable to capture actual expenditures of the richest group, which leads to an underestimation of inequality. Although this is also the case for most developing countries, the large and growing difference in the Arab region between household expenditures reported by surveys and national accounts lends support to this conclusion, as it suggests that the region's growth has not translated into higher incomes or household expenditures for most people, or in other words, that income inequality has widened.

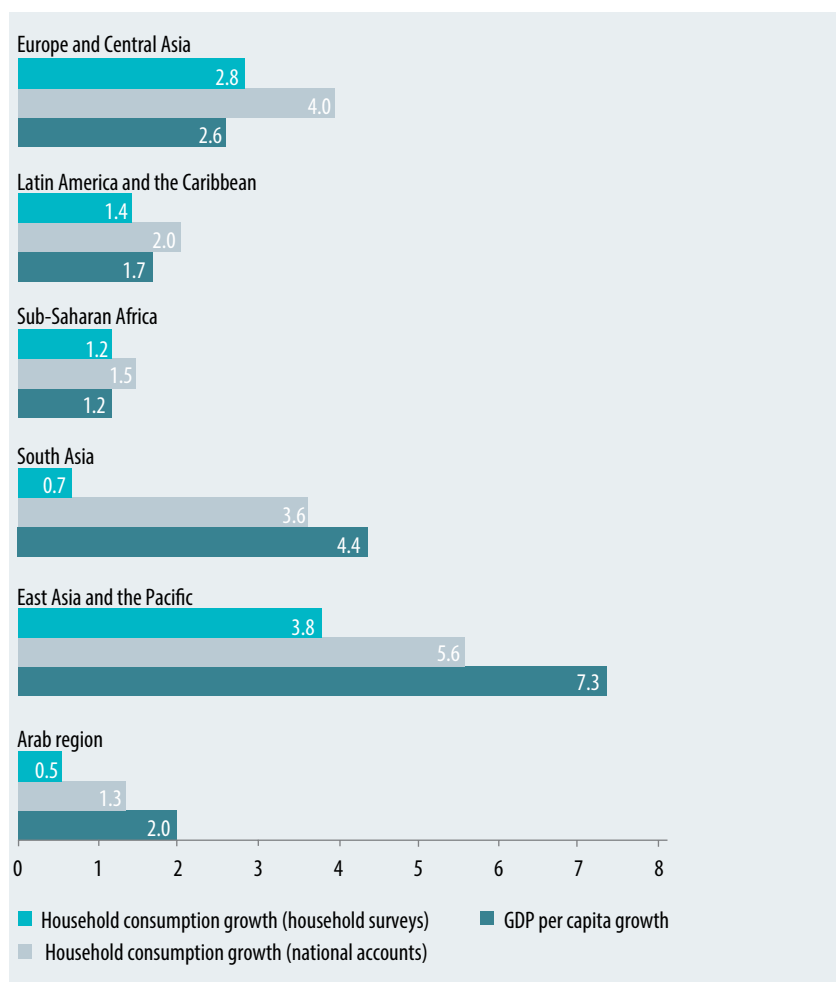
Indeed, a look at the per capita growth of household final consumption expenditure underlines how much harder Arab economies have to work to allow average-income families to benefit from growth. While GDP per capita growth in the Arab region has been comparable to its growth in other regions, the per capita growth of household consumption expenditure according to survey data in the Arab region was only 0.5 per cent below average in all other regions.

Systemic exclusions resulting in income and non-income inequalities continue to undermine development in the region. Over the last two decades, despite reasonable economic growth, the decline in the proportion of poor was relatively marginal until 2010. It started increasing since 2010, as unemployment and particularly youth and women's unemployment continued to be major concerns. Rising inequality raises significant ethical questions and also threatens the potential for growth to reduce poverty, and undercuts the sustainability of growth. It can also induce political and social instability. Some Arab countries have already faced such severe consequences of inequality.

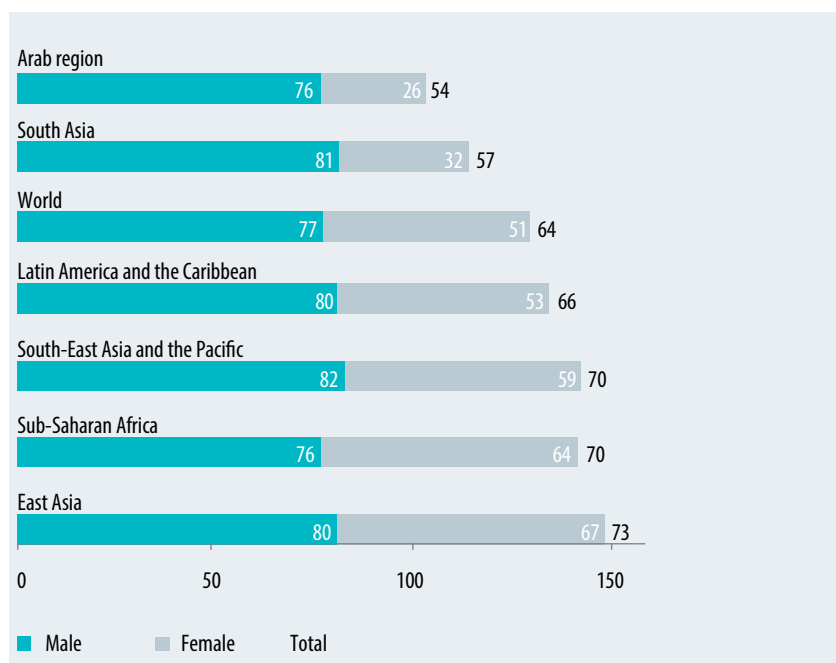
This was also the conclusion of the 2010 Arab MDG Report which argued that inequality, in terms of both the Gini index and the ratio of the richest to the poorest quintile, has not shifted in most countries of the region, with the exception of Jordan and, to some extent, Mauritania.

Income inequality has increased in Mashreq countries and LDCs. As for Maghreb countries, the Gini index registered a decline from 32.9 in the 1990s to 30.9 in the 2000s.

Average annual growth of per capita real GDP, and household consumption expenditure according to national accounts and household surveys, 1990-2011 (Percentage)



Labour force participation rate, 2010 (Age 15 and above)





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The region has made progress on educational attainments for both boys and girls, but gains in women's education did not significantly raise their participation in the labour force

TARGET

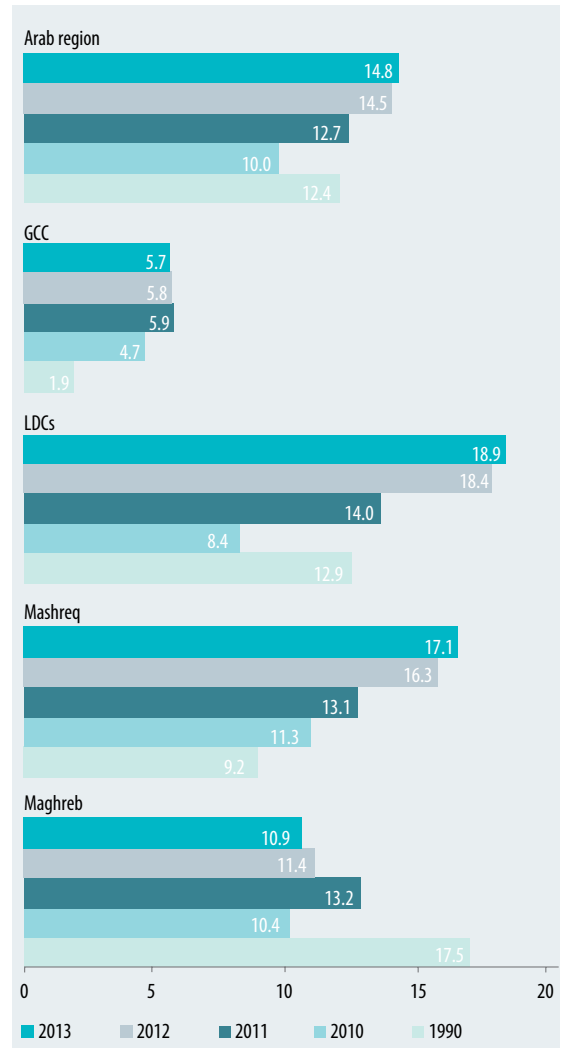
Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people

Despite gains in job creation, women's participation in the labour force remains a key challenge

The Arab region has the lowest labour force participation rate among all regions, mainly due to the low participation of women. Men's labour force participation rate is almost identical to the global average of 77 per cent. Although many Arab countries witnessed an increase in the rate of women's participation to the labour force in the past two decades, it stands only at 26 per cent in the region, which is the lowest rate among those of all regions and half the global average of 51 per cent in 2010.

Between 1990 and 2010, unemployment declined from 12.4 per cent to 10 per cent in the region, mainly in Maghreb countries. In 2013, the regional unemployment rate is expected to have increased to 14.8 per cent, due to the rise of

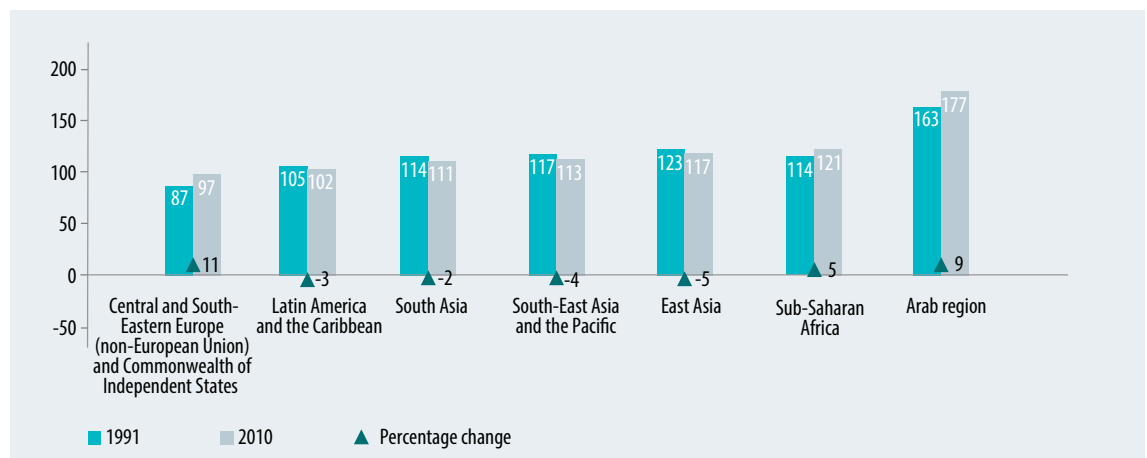
Total unemployment rates (Percentage)



unemployment in all subregions. According to poverty trends, Mashreq countries and LDCs are expected to be more strongly affected.

The number of informal jobs grew, which is an indication that many more people are desperate

Vulnerable employment (Females to males ratio)



for employment. The ratio of women to men in vulnerable employment has increased in recent decades and is the highest in the world.

TARGET

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

The region is far behind on meeting the target of halving undernourishment

Food insecurity, due to factors including conflicts and political turmoil, geographical and environmental specificities and volatile food prices, is severe in some countries, such as the Comoros, Iraq, Somalia, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen. Children, particularly in LDCs, suffer from high and increasing malnutrition.

The proportion of people consuming less than the daily level of minimum required calories increased from 13.9 per cent in 1991 to 15.3

per cent in 2011. Above 50 million people in the region are undernourished, up from 30 million in 1990.

Undernourishment is particularly problematic in nine Arab countries (see table), which account for 40.4 million of the region's undernourished people. It is most widespread in the Comoros and Somalia, where more than 60 per cent of people suffer from undernourishment, but there are high rates of undernourishment in Iraq, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen (around 30 per cent). Furthermore, given the estimated increase in poverty and unemployment alongside economic turbulence in many of these countries, hunger is expected to have further increased since 2011.

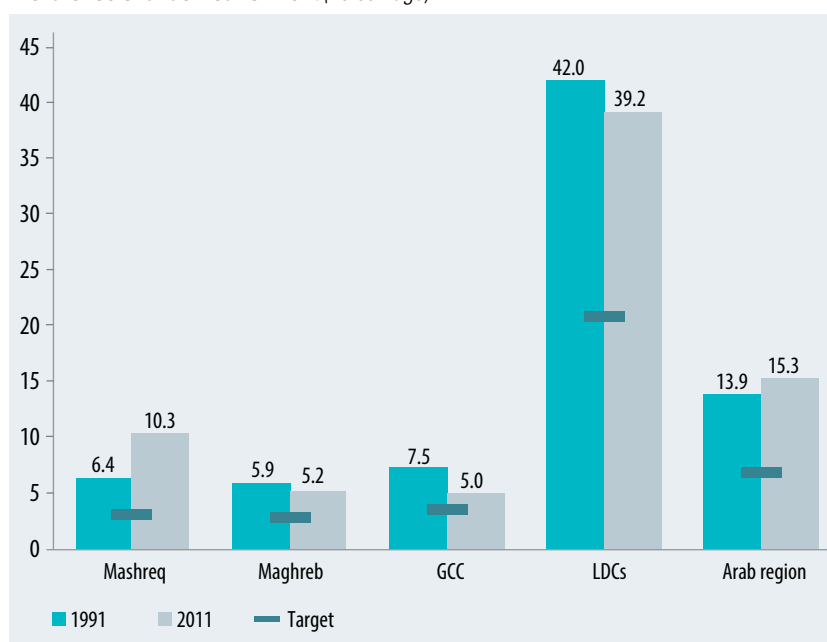
Undernourished people in the nine most affected Arab countries (Millions)

	1990	2000	2011	Difference (between 1990 and 2011)
Comoros	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.3
Djibouti	0.4	0.4	0.2	-0.2
Iraq	2.0	4.7	8.6	6.6
Mauritania	0.3	0.3	0.3	0
Morocco	1.8	1.8	1.8	0
Palestine	0.4	0.7	1.2	0.8
Somalia	4.8	5.2	6.3	1.5
Sudan	8.9	8.9	13.5	4.6
Yemen	3.6	5.6	8.0	4.4
Total	22.4	28.0	40.4	18
Prevalence rate	25.0	24.2	28.3	3.3

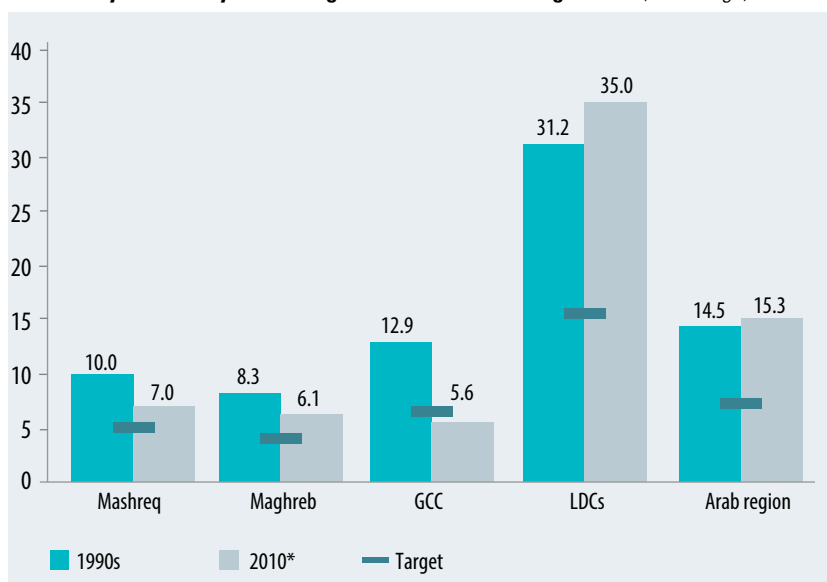
Children under the age of five suffer from high and increasing malnutrition in LDCs

Across the region, the proportion of children under the age of five who are underweight increased from around 14.5 per cent in the 1990s to around 15.3 per cent in 2010. Despite progress in a number of countries, the share of underweight children increased in Arab LDCs, with more than one in three children affected. Rates are particularly high in Djibouti, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen, with slow progress towards the target.

Prevalence of undernourishment (Percentage)



Moderately or severely underweight children under the age of five (Percentage)



Goal 2

Achieve universal primary education



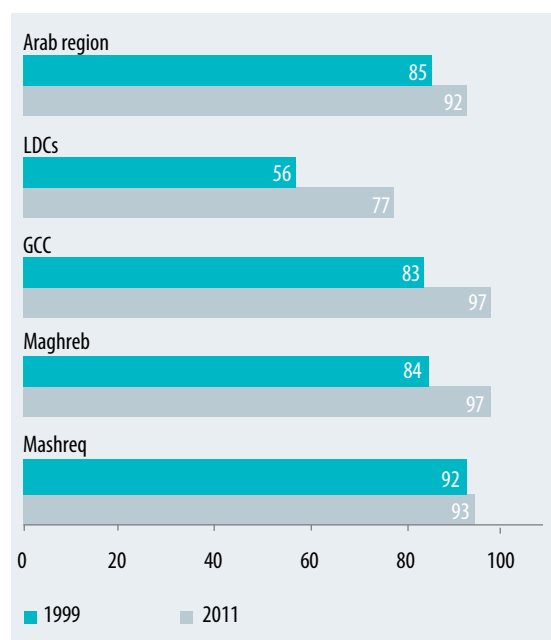
TARGET

Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

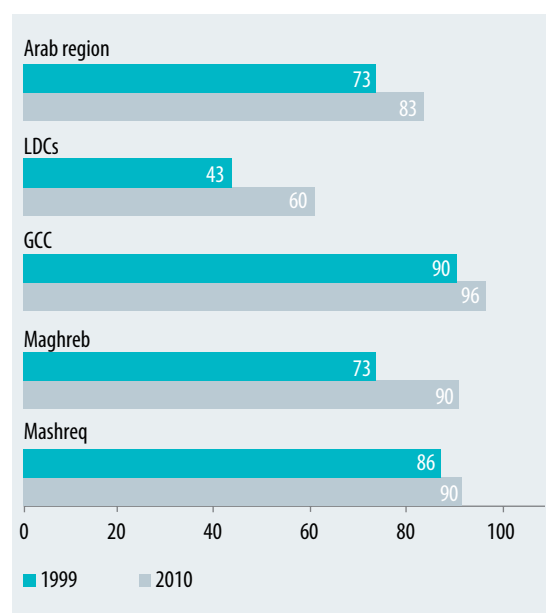
Significant gains in primary school enrolment, but LDCs should catch up

Arab Governments invested heavily in primary education systems. From 1965 to 1974, they poured 4.4 per cent of GDP into education, compared to 2.6 per cent in Asia and 3 per cent in Latin America. Partly due to demographic factors, education expenditure has risen steadily since then. Today, Arab countries spend over 5

Primary net enrolment rates (Percentage)



Gross intake rate to the last grade of primary school (Percentage)



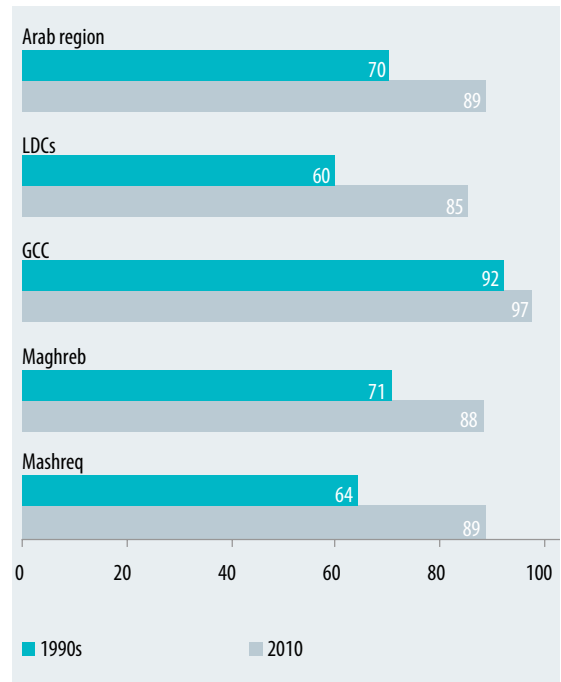
By 2011, 92 per cent of children were going to primary school, up from 85 per cent in 1999

per cent of GDP on education, which amounts to around 20 per cent of total government budgets.

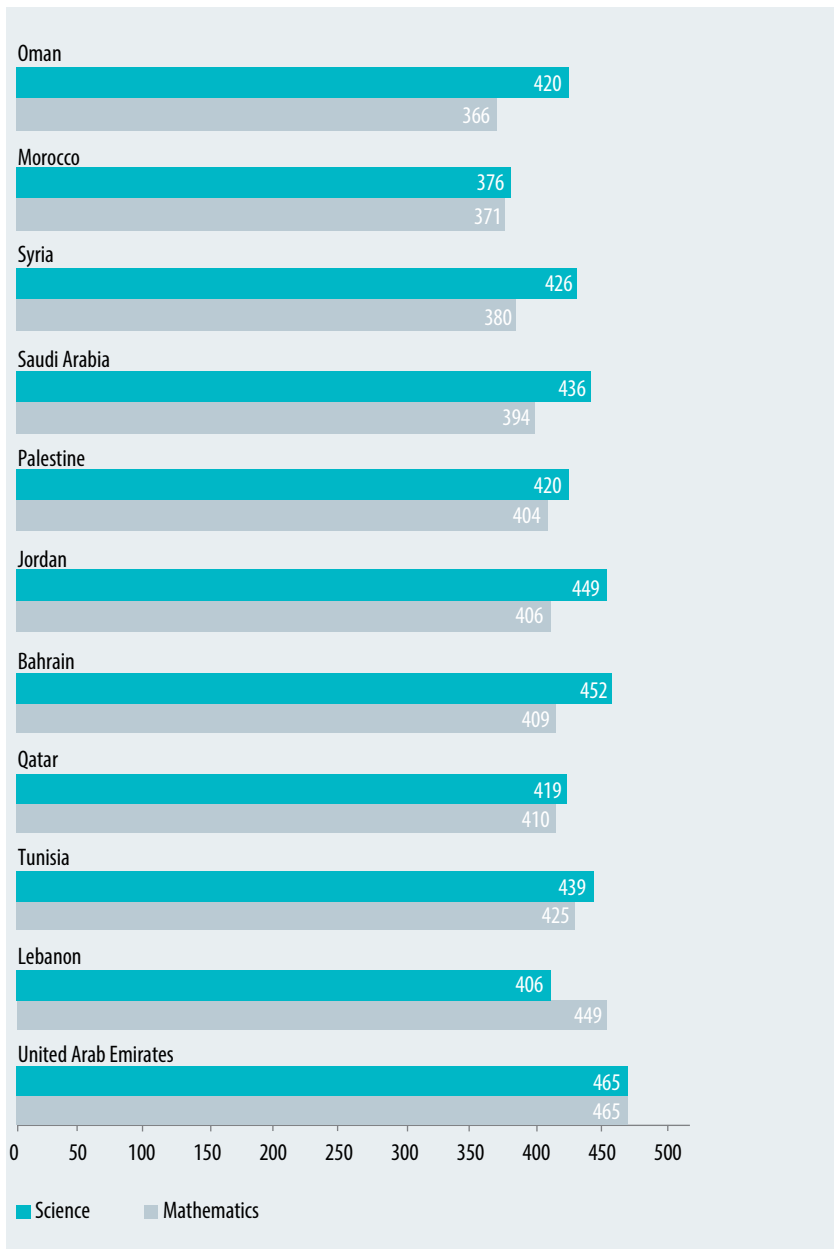
This high government expenditure on education has strongly boosted achievements in the sector. By 2011, 92 per cent of children were going to primary school, up from 85 per cent in 1999. Primary school completion rates have increased. Still, there are worrisome trends: enrolment rates in LDCs are well below the regional average, and 9 million children have yet to go to school in these countries. In addition, in conflict-stricken countries, enrolment rates are stagnant or deteriorating. The Syrian Arab Republic had achieved universal primary education by 2010, but the ongoing crisis



Literacy rates of youth aged 15-24 years old
(Percentage)



TIMSS results for participating Arab countries, 2011



has interrupted education for many children, including through the destruction of schools.

Completion rates, measured by the gross intake rate to the last grade of primary school, have increased in the region from 73 per cent in 1999 to 83 per cent according to the most recent data, with rises in all subregions.

Literacy rates have improved significantly across the region, but more than 7 million youth are still illiterate; close to 5 million of those are young women.

The quality of education is a key concern

The increase in school enrolment rates has not been accompanied by an equal level of improvement in the quality of education. International assessments show that most Arab countries fall far below international averages and benchmarks. Disparities in education opportunities persist between rich and poor students.

According to the results of the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) 2011, none of the 14 participating Arab countries reached the international achievement level of 500. The results of the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) revealed similar trends.

Goal 3

Promote gender equality and empower women



TARGET

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

More girls go to school, but the economic and political empowerment of women remains a challenge

The region is increasingly close to gender parity in education, particularly for primary school enrolment. Most countries have also gone far in closing gender gaps in secondary education, but the region as a whole remains below parity at a level of 0.91 in the Gender Parity Index, due to limited advancements in LDCs.

In tertiary education, the Arab region has reached an acceptable level of gender parity. In some GCC countries, the tertiary enrolment rate for women can be up to double that of men. This could be the result of a number of factors, including men going abroad for tertiary education or choosing a military career.

Low political and economic participation of women

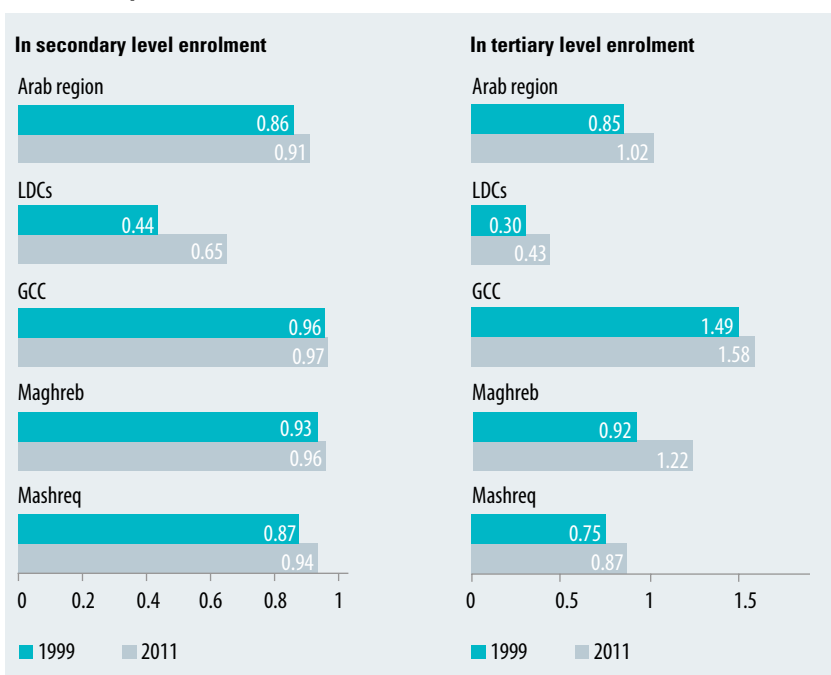
Women are also at a disadvantage in the quality of jobs, as they hold less than one fifth of paid jobs outside the agricultural sector. At the global level, that proportion has risen slowly from 35 per cent to 40 per cent. In the last two decades, GCC and Maghreb countries did see a small increase in this important indicator of the economic empowerment of women, while LDCs and Mashreq countries saw a decline.

The situation is different for political empowerment. There are still few women in senior decision-making positions but their political participation is increasing. Women's share of seats in parliaments rose from 2.6 per cent in 2000 to 12.7 per cent in 2013. Nevertheless, this rate is still far below that of the rest of the world.

In Arab countries, the social movements calling for change saw men and women standing together to bring down old regimes. Women took to the public spaces everywhere, even in countries which always rank very low on gender equality indexes.

There has been strong regional progress towards gender parity in education, a crucial step to create equal opportunities for women and men

Gender Parity Index

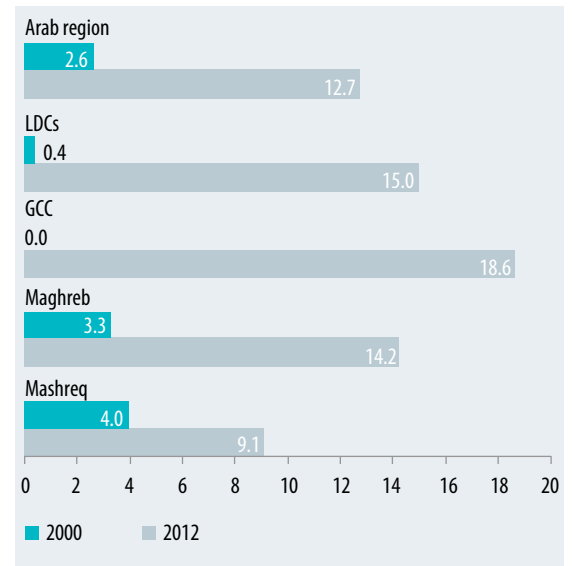




In subsequent transitional processes, however, women have been far less visible, and there have been concerns about backtracking on achievements in women's rights.

GCC countries have achieved a major improvement in the political participation of women, as their share in parliament seats rose to

Seats held by women in national parliaments (Percentage)



about 19 per cent, mainly due to Saudi Arabia which increased women's share of parliament seats to 20 per cent in January 2013 by decree.

Goal 4

Reduce child mortality



TARGET

Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Significant progress in reducing child and infant mortality, but LDCs will not achieve the target

Child mortality in the region has fallen by only one third. Progress towards the set target remained too slow, due to the fact that, in LDCs, the under-five mortality rate has declined by only 15 per cent since 1990.

National averages mask important subnational disparities. In Yemen, the under-five mortality rate among the poor is triple the rate among the rich, and in Egypt, the rate among the poor is

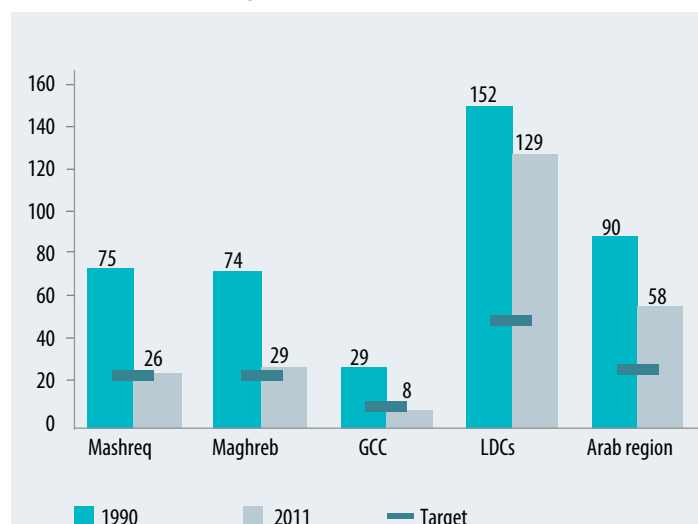
two and half times the rate among the rich. Such important disparities are also registered between urban and rural areas.

These differences are also strongly linked to the mother's education level, as educated mothers contribute to the survival of their children. Also, the impact of the mother's education level is higher in North Africa and Western Asia than in all other developing regions.

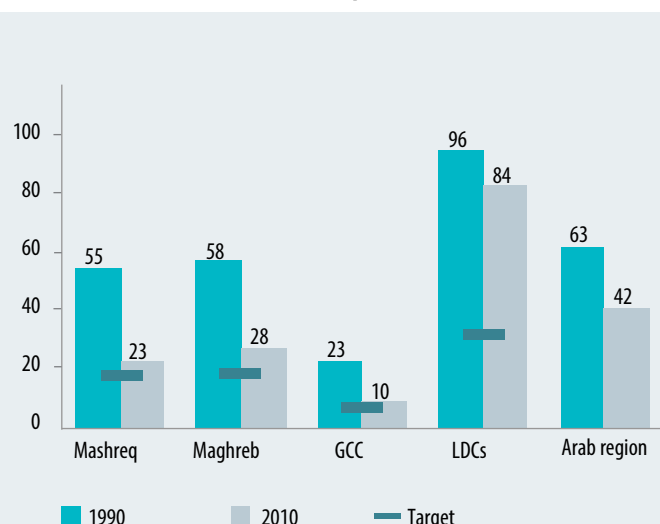
The progress story is similar for infant mortality, but somewhat slower, with a 34 per cent decline in the region. Mashreq, Maghreb and GCC countries have all reduced rates by more than 50 per cent; the 2015 target is within reach in those subregions. LDCs lag behind with only a 13 per cent reduction over the last two decades.

Three out of the four subregions have achieved or are close to achieving the target of reducing the under-five mortality rate by two thirds

Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births

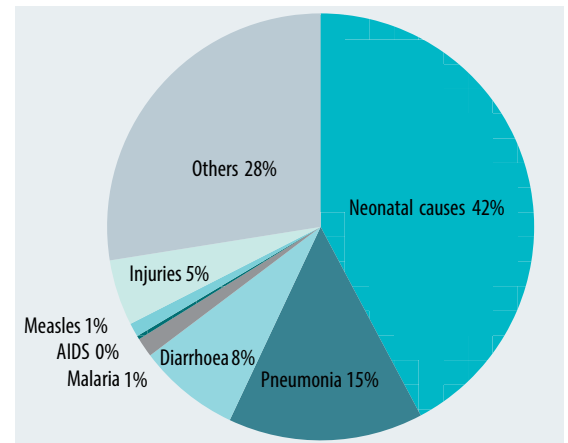


Infant mortality rate, 0-1 years old, per 1,000 live births





Causes of death among children under five, 2010 (Percentage)



A larger share of children die in the first month after birth

In the Arab region, the share of neonatal deaths in overall child mortality increased from 35 per cent in 1990 to 42 per cent in 2011. The causes of neonatal mortality are generally different from the

causes of the deaths of children. More than 50 per cent of neonatal mortality is related to preterm birth complications and complications during birth. Therefore, neonatal mortality requires specific health interventions, different from those designed to address other under-five deaths.

Goal 5 Improve maternal health



TARGET

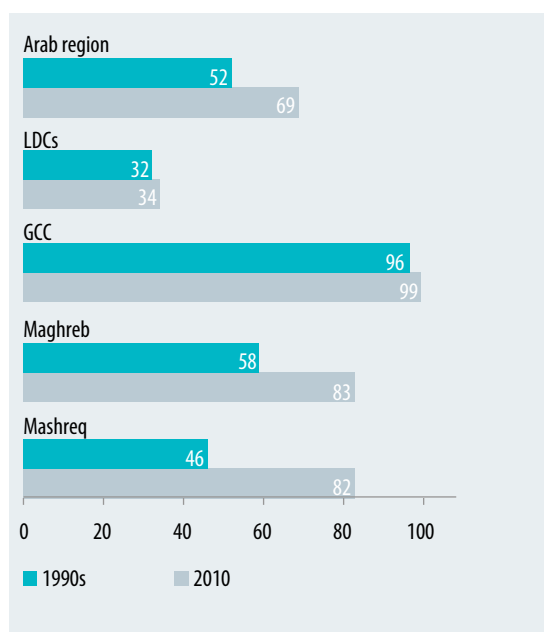
Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Maternal mortality is still very high in LDCs

Maternal mortality fell by some 27 per cent in the region between 1990 and 2010, but it was still well below the target of a three-quarters decline by 2015. Mashreq and Maghreb countries have cut rates by over 60 per cent; GCC countries have halved their ratio, thus achieving more progress than developed regions. LDCs have only achieved a 17 per cent reduction.

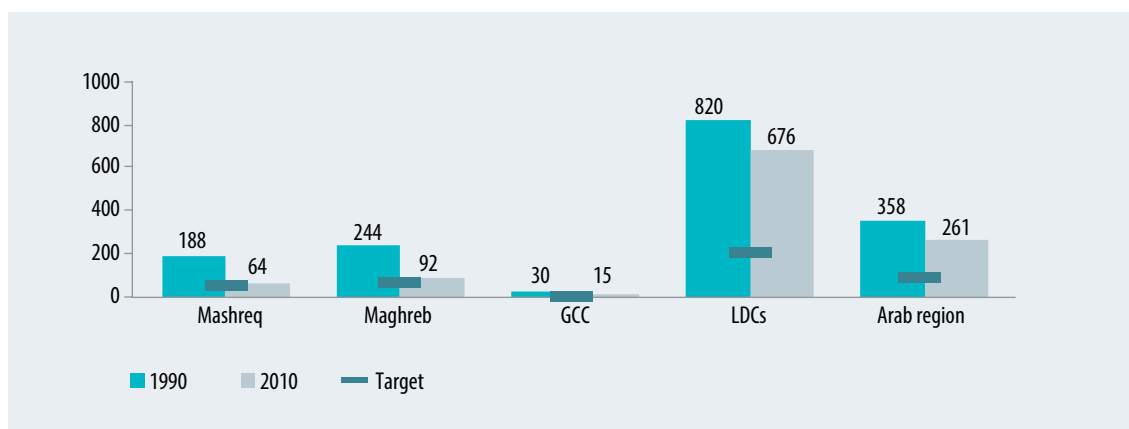
The high prevalence of maternal mortality is closely linked to the provision of health services at child delivery. Skilled health personnel attend more than two thirds of births in the region, but only one third in LDCs.

Births attended by skilled health personnel (Percentage)



Maternal mortality fell by some 27 per cent in the region between 1990 and 2010, but it was still well below the target of a three-quarters decline by 2015

Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births





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TARGET

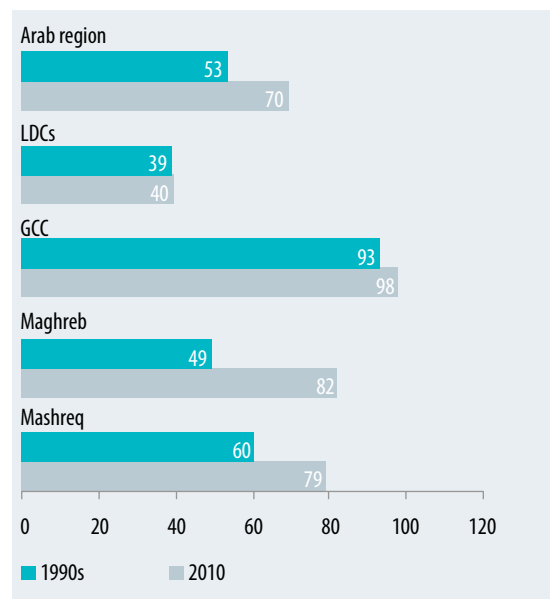
Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

Access to reproductive health care has been improved, but not in LDCs

GCC countries are close to universal access to antenatal care, but progress in LDCs is marginal.

Despite improved antenatal care coverage and overall increases in the share of births attended by

Antenatal care by at least one visit to skilled health personnel (Percentage)



skilled health personnel, large disparities persist between the richest and poorest households. With the exception of Yemen, Arab countries have almost reached universal coverage in both indicators for the richest quintile, but the poorest quintile and rural areas still suffer from a lack of access to services.

Antenatal care coverage is improving across the region, but progress is marginal in LDCs

Goal 6

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases



TARGET

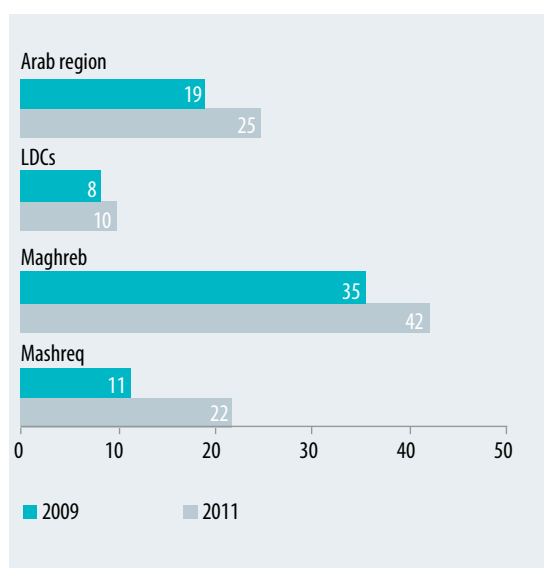
Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

The number of people living with HIV is increasing, but more people can now access treatment

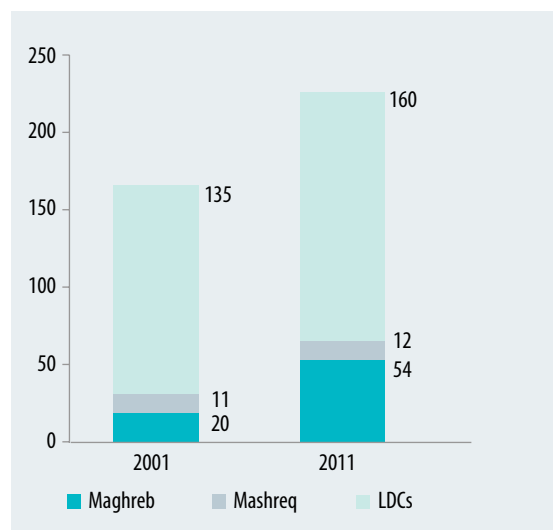
Recent UNAIDS estimates indicate an increase in new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths in the region. Between 2001 and 2011, the estimated number of people living with HIV has also increased. An increasing number of people can now access treatment, coverage is still insufficient. Stigma and discrimination remain barriers for access to prevention and treatment services.

Antiretroviral (ART) coverage (Percentage)



Efforts are being made to increase the coverage of HIV treatment, nevertheless it is still insufficient

Number of people registered as living with HIV (Thousands)



TARGET

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Regional tuberculosis prevalence rates are falling slowly; death rates have declined more substantially

Reductions in the prevalence of tuberculosis (TB) have been considerable in the Arab region since 1990, and appear to have accelerated since 2000. Nonetheless, current forecasts suggest that more should be done to achieve the 2015 target of halving the prevalence rates of 1990. The region is closing in on a 50 per cent reduction in TB death rates across all subregions.



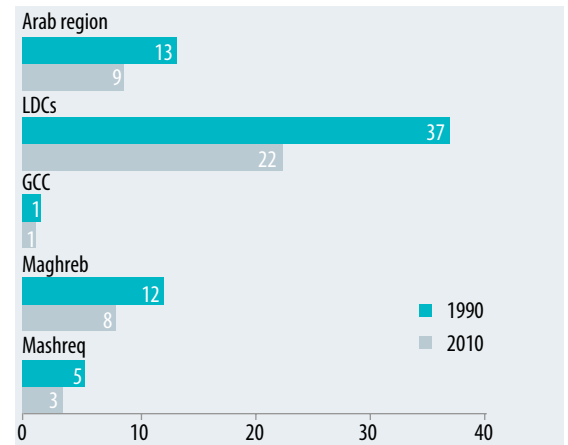
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More TB patients are successfully treated, and the region is close to the global target of 85 per cent treatment success among detected cases

Halting the spread of malaria and other major diseases primarily challenges LDCs, where there are no discernible downward trends

The region faces a growing threat from hepatitis B and C. Chronic liver disease related to viral hepatitis has become a leading public health problem. Worldwide, Egypt has one of the highest rates of chronic infection with hepatitis C, at 15 per cent.

TB death rate per 100,000 population (Mid-point)



Goal 7

Ensure environmental sustainability



TARGET

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

Carbon dioxide emissions are increasing, while other indicators of environmental sustainability are improving

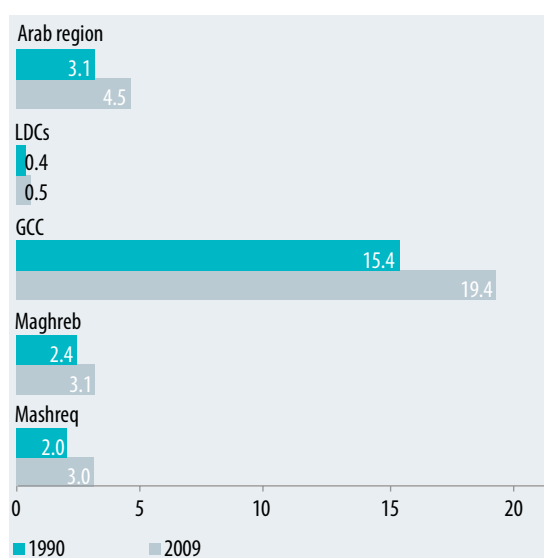
Regional carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, which contribute to climate change, have more than doubled since 1991, mainly due to increases in emissions from GCC countries, which, in per capita terms, are higher than in developed regions.

The region is increasingly protecting marine and terrestrial areas. However, most of the Arab countries have not yet adopted national sustainable development policies to link environmental, social and economic priorities. By 2012, protected areas covered 7.6 per cent of total territory, which represented a doubling in size since 1990. The increase is mainly due to an expansion of such areas in GCC countries.

In 2012, the region had reason to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The consumption of ozone-depleting substances had dropped by 98 per cent between 1995 and 2010.

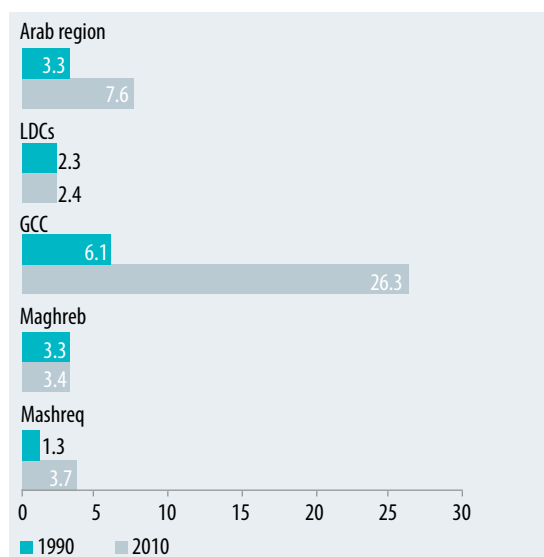
The region will greatly suffer from climate change, including through increased water scarcity, reduced agricultural productivity and the inundation of fertile lands and coastal infrastructure.

Per capita CO₂ emissions in metric tons



In the Arab region, per capita rates are highest in GCC countries, at 19.4 metric tons

Terrestrial and marine protected areas as a percentage of total territorial area





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Access to safe water markedly differs between urban and rural areas across the region

TARGET

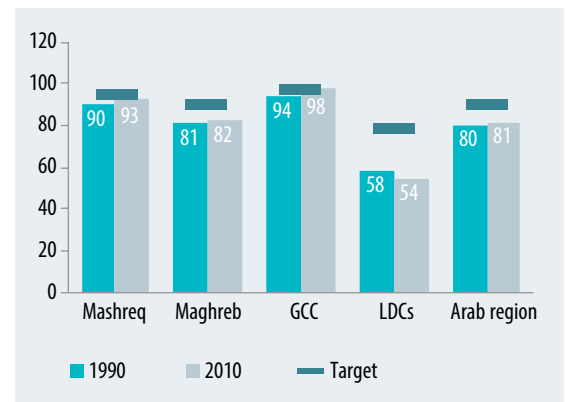
Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Millions more have benefitted from improved access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, but large subnational disparities remain

The rate of coverage with improved access to safe drinking water has reached 81 per cent. While some countries are on track to meet the target, others still suffer from acute water shortages.

Access to safe water markedly differs between urban and rural areas across the region. While 89 per cent of people in urban areas have access to improved drinking water, only 73 per cent of rural dwellers do. This has negative impacts, especially on women and children who often bear the burden of fetching water over long distances.

Proportion of the population with access to improved drinking-water sources

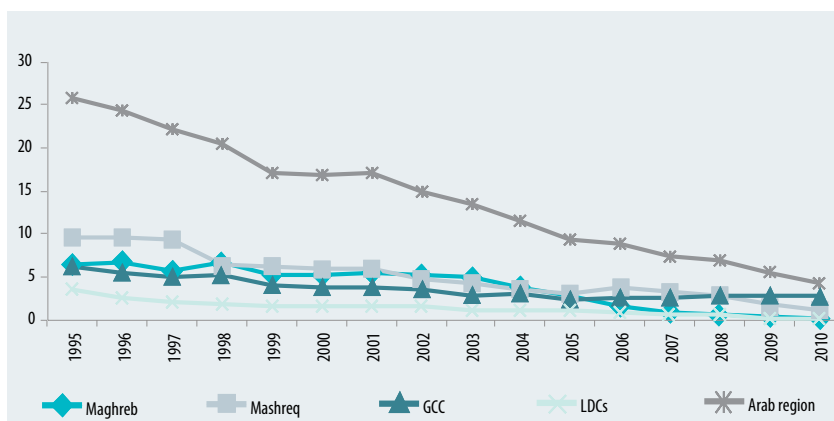


The indicator “use of an improved drinking-water source” is used as a proxy to measure the access to safe drinking water or its availability. However, even in countries with 100 per cent coverage with improved drinking-water sources, water availability remains a critical issue. In addition, the indicator does not reflect the quality of water nor its level of water pollution.

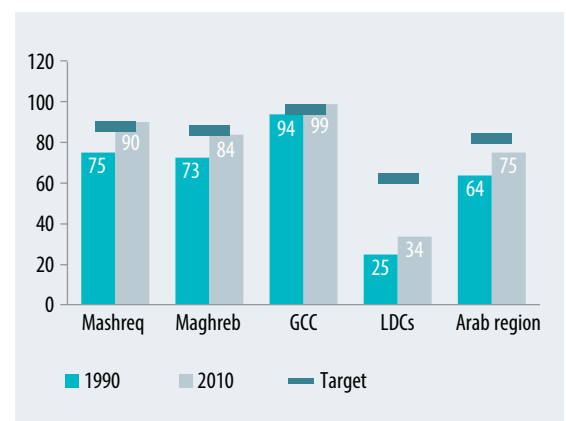
The region has performed better on access to sanitation than on access to water. However, rural areas are still behind, especially in LDCs.

In discussing water supply and sanitation coverage, this report draws on 2010 data. But substantial changes may have occurred since then, due to conflicts in countries such as Libya, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Access to water and sanitation services may have been affected in those countries by the destruction of the related infrastructure and the reduction of public investment in services.

Consumption of all ozone-depleting substances in ozone depletion potential (Thousand metric tons)



Proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities



TARGET

By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

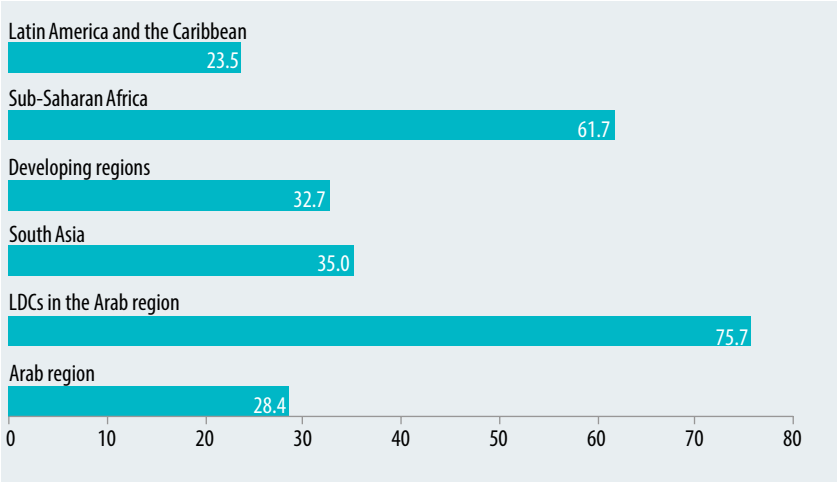
Slums have been virtually eliminated in some Arab countries, while in others, conflict has fanned their growth

Urban growth in the region often happens illegally and under precarious environmental conditions. Some of the most significant challenges to the sustainable development of Arab cities include declining fresh water resources, and the lack of effective systems for solid waste and wastewater collection, treatment and safe disposal. Cities should also be equipped to manage the effects of climate change.

In parts of the Arab region, slum dwellings are in isolated pockets, but in most LDCs, more than two thirds of urban residents live in slums.

In countries affected by conflict and political instability, such as the Comoros, Iraq, Lebanon,

Urban slum population as a percentage of total urban residents (Latest available data)



Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen, 50 per cent to 95 per cent of urban residents live in slums. Conflict forced many people to slums, refugee camps and informal settlements, within or beyond national borders.

Goal 8

Develop a global partnership for development



TARGET

Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

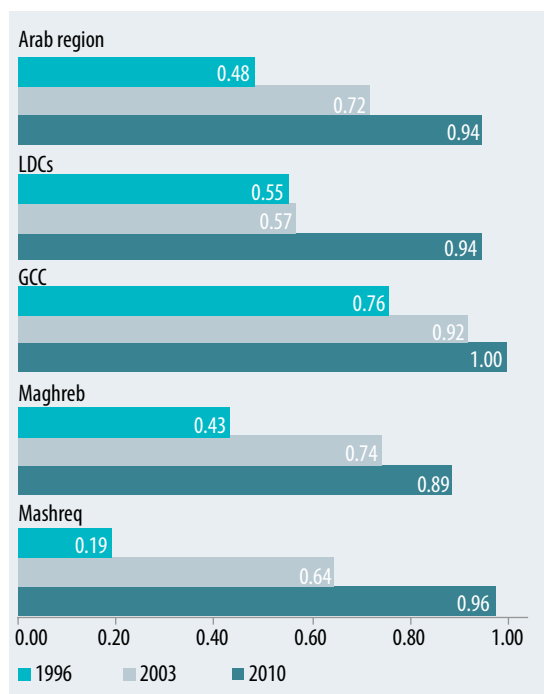
The Arab region is still unable to fully utilize the potential of trade liberalization

Trade liberalization and regional and global economic integration have been a central objective of economic policy for most Arab countries during the past two decades. As a result, trade barriers are lower today than in 1990. In 2010, 94 per cent of non-oil exports to developed markets were free of duty, a significant improvement over 48 per cent in 1996. The average preferential tariffs applied on agricultural goods, textiles and clothing exports from Arab countries decreased, from 8 per cent in 1996 to 6 per cent in 2010.

Arab countries did not yet fully seize the benefits of trade liberalization. Non-oil exports still represent only a small fraction of the total sent to developed economies, and the share of manufactured goods remains minimal. In 2011 and 2012, exports from Mashreq countries and LDCs dropped significantly due to instability and weak economic growth in Europe, a major trading partner for Arab countries.

The reasons for this weak export performance may vary from one country to another, but what is common among most Arab countries is a macroeconomic policy bias to low value-added service sectors, as reflected in the diversion of investment from productive sectors, particularly manufacturing. As argued in the *Arab Development Challenges Report* (United Nations Development Programme, 2012), other factors such as overvalued

Proportion of total imports of developed economies from the Arab region, by value, admitted free of duty, for all product categories excluding arms and oil



The average preferential tariffs applied on agricultural goods, textiles and clothing exports from Arab countries decreased from 8 per cent in 1996 to 6 per cent in 2010

exchange rates and supply constraints also play an important role in the general weakness of the strategy to support non-oil exports.

TARGET

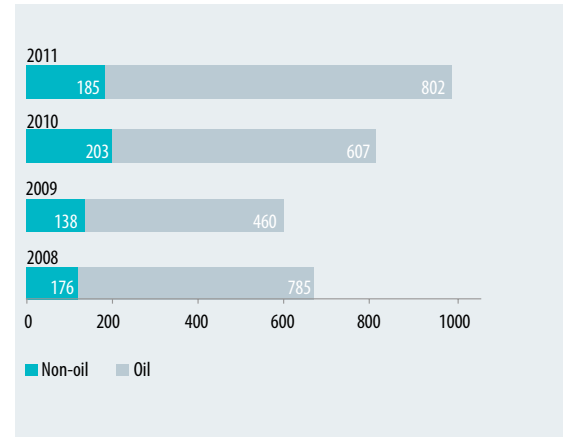
Address the special needs of the least developed countries

Official development assistance to the Arab region is still low and volatile

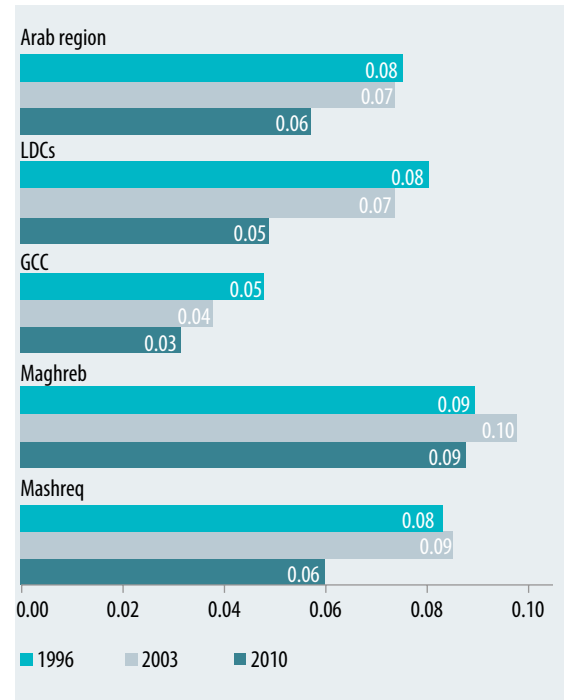
ODA is far below what is needed for LDCs, given their limited MDG achievements. Total



Volume of exports from the Arab region (Billions of US\$)



Preferential tariffs imposed by developed economies on agricultural, clothing and textiles exports from Arab countries



ODA has not matched population growth, rendering per capita levels significantly less in 2011 than in 1990

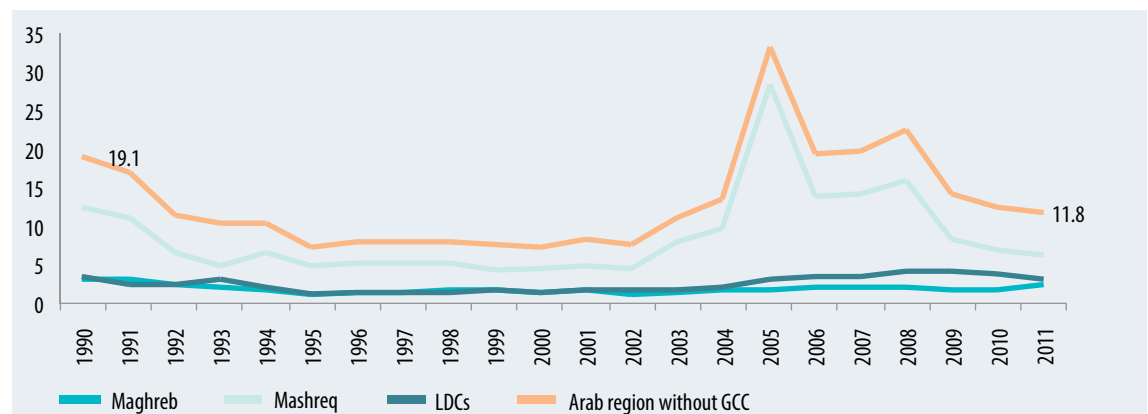
bilateral aid fell from US\$19.1 billion in 1990 to US\$11.8 billion in 2011. ODA has not matched population growth, rendering per capita levels significantly less in 2011 than in 1990. This is particularly alarming for LDCs. The strikingly low per capita ODA for Yemen of US\$18 stands out within the LDC group.

Arab donors are more generous than member countries of DAC-OECD; nevertheless ODA as a share of the Gross National Income (GNI) has declined since 1990

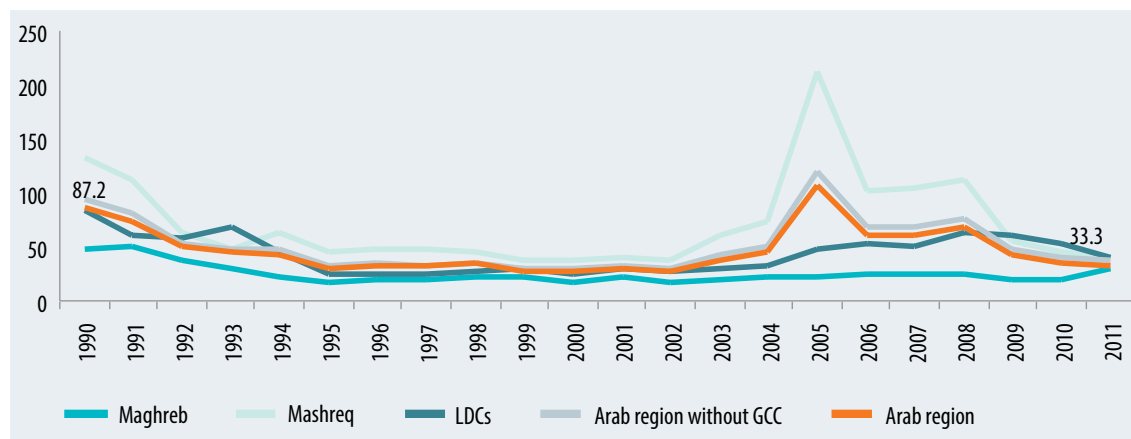
Arab donors contributed around 5 per cent of total DAC-ODA and 65 per cent of total non-DAC-ODA in 2011.

During the period 1990-1994, on average, ODA from Arab donors was about 1.5 per cent of GNI, a share that has since declined, with the exception of the mid-2000s. By 2011, it had fallen to 0.46 per cent, still higher than the DAC average of 0.34 per cent. Moreover, as most GCC countries underreport ODA and the numbers reported here are based on data from OECD, actual ODA from Arab countries is likely to be higher.

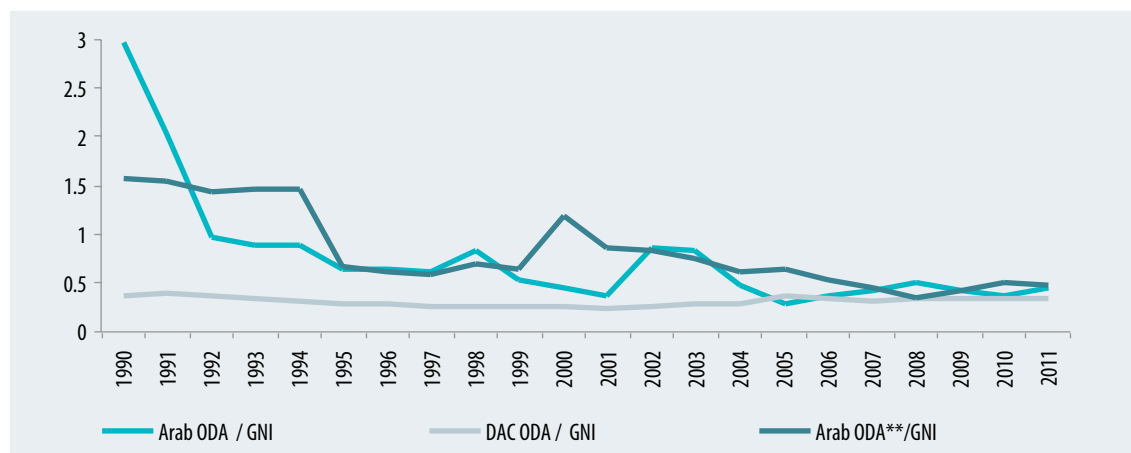
Net ODA received by the Arab region, constant 2010 US\$ (Billions)



Net ODA per capita received by the Arab region, constant 2010 US\$



ODA by Arab donors and DAC ODA as a percentage of GNI



Four out of five Arab LDCs with available rankings are classified as being at high risk of or in debt distress

TARGET

Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Fiscal space for development expenditure in middle-income countries and LDCs is more constrained since 2010

Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon are now all above the 60 per cent debt-to-GDP threshold for middle-income countries, while rising ratios in Morocco and Tunisia have not yet reached this point. The ratio in Lebanon has fallen in recent years, but is still crippling large, at 135 per cent.

The increase in debt levels in the Mashreq countries and LDCs can be partly attributed to rising government fiscal deficits since 2010, as a result of growing demands for public expenditure

in social services, the rising cost of fuel subsidies and the reduction in tax and non-tax revenue. Between 2011 and 2012, deficits grew from 2.3 per cent to 4.5 per cent in LDCs, and from 5 per cent to 8.4 per cent in Mashreq countries.

All Arab LDCs are above the 40 per cent debt-to-GDP threshold set. The Comoros and the Sudan are considered to be in debt distress, while Djibouti and Yemen are at high risk. Mauritania is classified as at moderate risk, while no rating is available for Somalia. The Comoros, Mauritania, Somalia and the Sudan have been considered eligible for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, launched in 1996 by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to address the special challenges of poor countries. Somalia and the Sudan are still at the pre-decision point with an uncertain outcome, given their protracted arrears. The Comoros and Mauritania have reached the HIPC “completion point” and benefited from irrevocable debt relief.



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Access to
social media is
spreading rapidly

TARGET

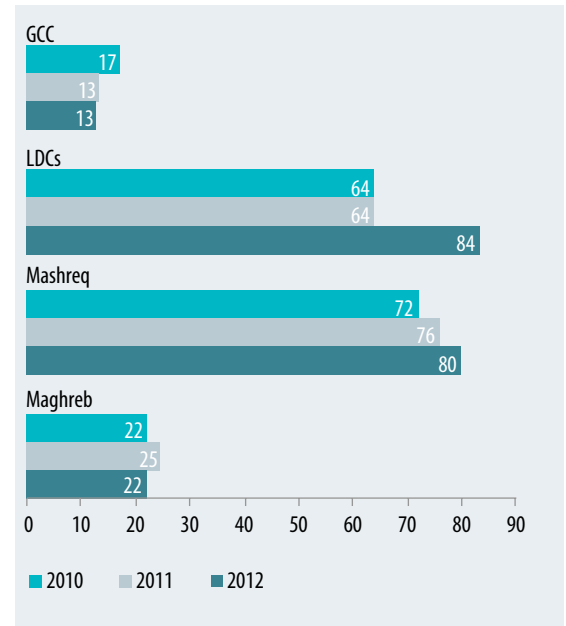
In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) revolution is spreading in the region

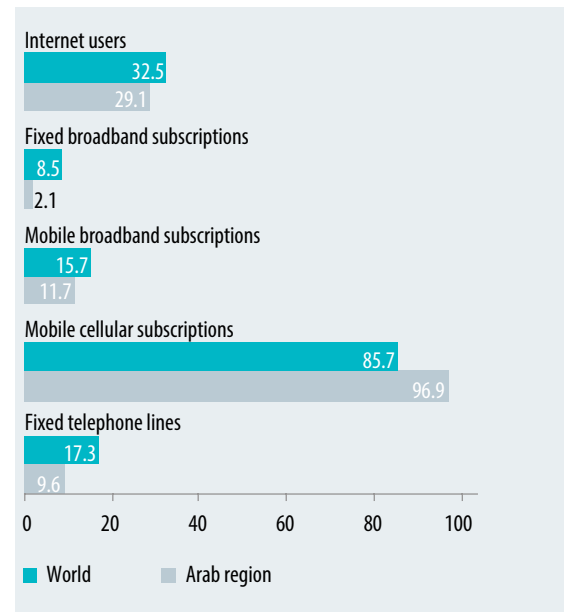
The ICT revolution brings the promise of major technological advancements to the developing world and has a considerable role in economic growth. While global demand for ICT has continued to increase, the Arab countries have a mixed record on different services. The region is performing above the global average in terms of mobile cellular subscriptions, but still lags behind in fixed telephone lines, fixed and mobile broadband, and the number of Internet users.

Access to social media is spreading rapidly. YouTube registers more than 167 million video views per day in the region, Facebook has more than 45 million users and Twitter 2 million. There is strong growth in content posted in Arabic on both Facebook and Twitter. Gulf countries have the highest usage rate. ICT and access to social media can be effective tools to improve governance and empower women.

General government gross debt as a percentage of GDP



ICT uptake in the Arab region and the world, 2011 (Percentage)



MDG

Assessment: A mixed record



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Gains in goals 2 and 3 are offset by challenges in goals 1 and 7

One useful way to present a summary of MDG performance is through the MDG achievement Index (MDGI). Using percentage terms for 12 quantifiable MDG targets, it compares actual performance with the minimum required for the country to be on track for the goals. The MDGI table in the annex to this report maps performances, revealing that most countries are either slightly above or below where they should be for most targets. Some targets have already been achieved by most countries, notably gender parity in education. Conversely, in some countries and mainly in LDCs, some indicators have regressed below their 1990 baselines.

On average, the Arab region is behind on MDGs by 9.6 per cent, which is better than

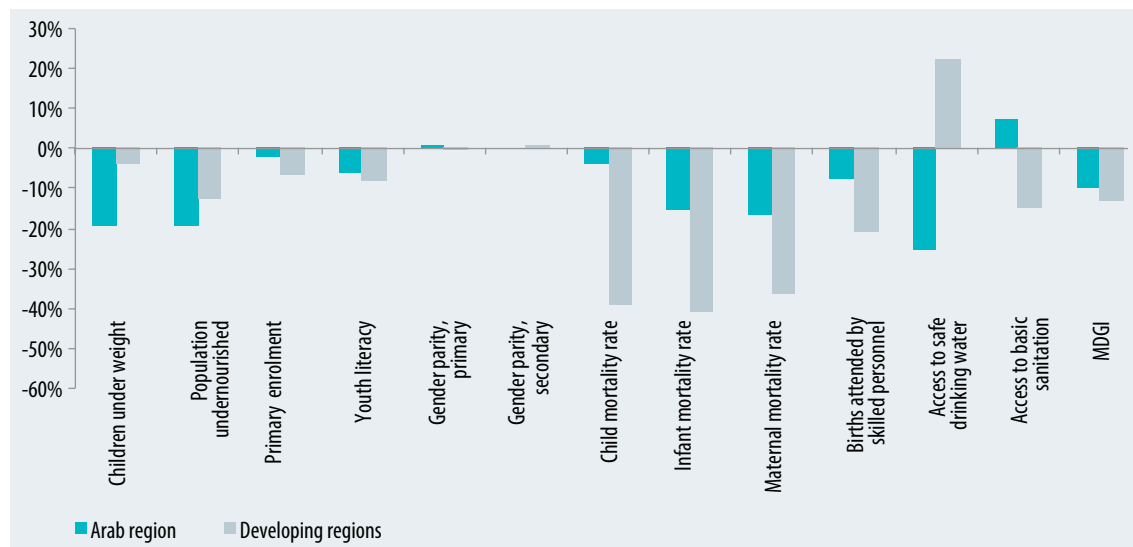
the average of 13.3 per cent for all developing regions. The region has made remarkable progress towards the targets related to education and to extending access to improved sanitation. These gains, however, are shadowed by the glaring deficits in combating hunger – the region is nearly 20 per cent below the target on reducing undernourishment. The discrepancy between Arab countries and the developing world average is highest in access to safe drinking water.

Five countries, notably Egypt, led progress while LDCs, Iraq and Palestine are seriously challenged

The Arab region has made considerable progress towards achieving many MDGs, but there are notable differences between and within subregions. Some countries have made strong

One of the most remarkable achievements of the region has been its progress towards education targets, most notably gender parity in education

Average MDGI for the Arab region and developing regions, 1990-2011





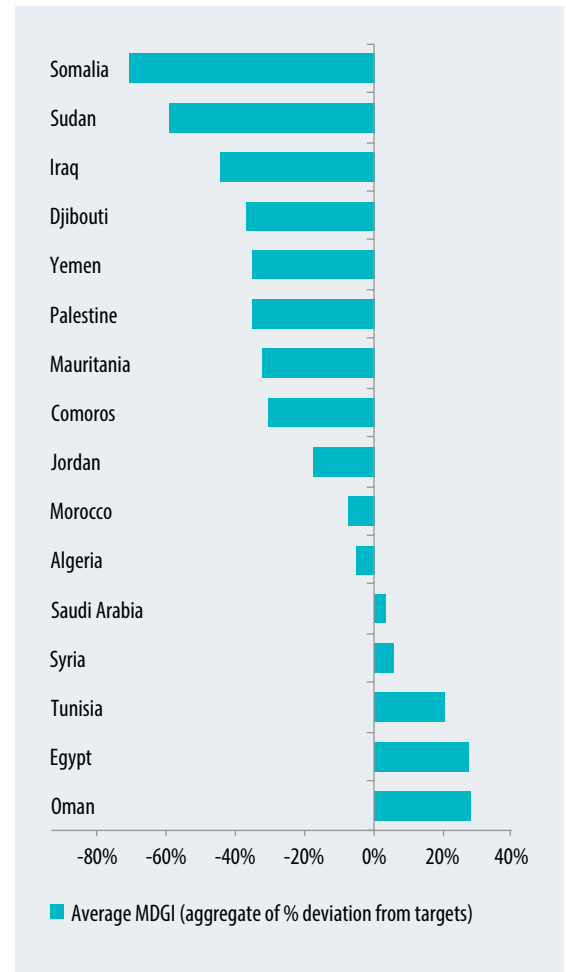
progress on most indicators, while others have witnessed limited or no progress. LDCs, all of which are poor MDG performers, are unlikely to achieve the set goals. Iraq and Palestine are also poor MDG performers, due to conflict and occupation. GCC countries are the most advanced in the region, having already achieved many of the goals by 1990.

The Maghreb and Mashreq subregions have registered different levels of achievement, generally performing better than LDCs but still lagging behind GCC countries. Their main challenge is to reduce subnational inequalities, since aggregate trends hide large disparities, be they between rich and poor, rural and urban residents, or men and women.

Five countries, namely Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia, scored a positive average MDGI. These countries have thus exceeded what is required to meet the MDG targets, on average.

Among these five countries, Oman and Egypt have spearheaded the region's progress towards MDGs and, given its demographic weight, it would be safe to conclude that Egypt has played the leading role. A second group of countries, namely Algeria, Jordan and Morocco, are slightly below target. Morocco, for example, faces specific

Average MDGI for some Arab countries



deficits in the target related to underweight children. Finally, Iraq and Palestine lag behind with an average MDGI deficit of 30 per cent or above; and Somalia is, on average, more than 70 per cent behind on the 12 MDG targets.

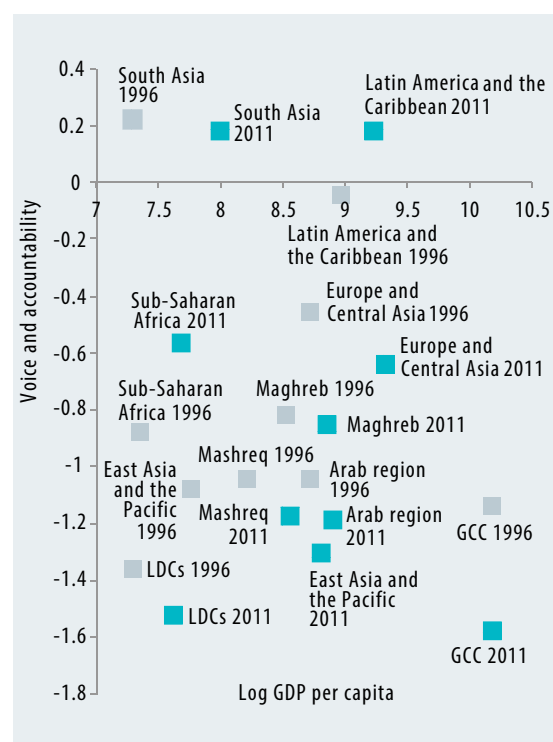
MDGI was not calculated for some GCC countries, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, for reasons including that they had already attained most MDGs by 1990, and data were insufficient for calculating the index.

Policy directions for a post-2015 regional development agenda

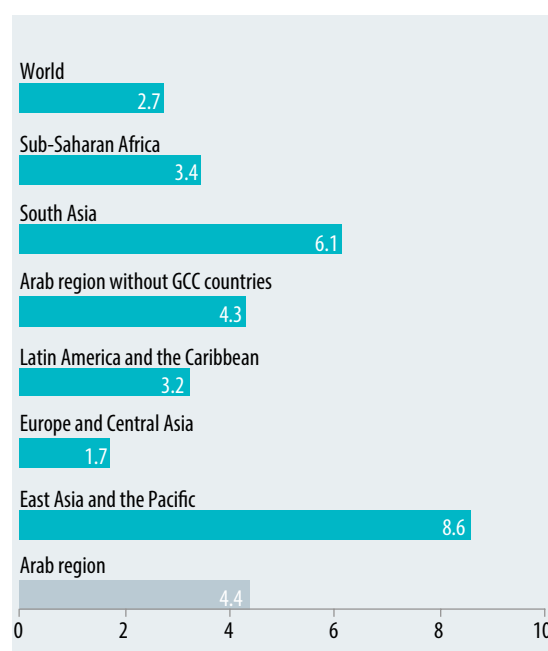


Transitions in many parts of the region provide lessons to inform both the reviews of the existing MDG agenda and the preparatory process of any meaningful framework to move forward. Among regional short-term priorities are achieving food security and ending hunger. Countries in the Arab region should also consider governance reforms and move towards inclusive and quality development that links the economic, social and environmental dimensions. This part of the report suggests a way forward towards a regional development agenda, taking into consideration

GDP per capita and voice and accountability: Dynamic picture



Average annual GDP growth rates, 1990-2011 (Percentage)



The causes of the recent political turmoil in some countries have mainly been socioeconomic and governance failures

the key development priorities in the Arab region, as well as the recommendations of the third Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, held in January 2013, on a post-2015 development agenda and its implementation. It also considers ongoing debates on global goals after the MDG 2015 endpoint.

Drive and embody inclusive development through governance reforms

Arab countries have performed well in many MDG indicators but have fallen short of promoting inclusive development. Since 1990, economic growth has been above the global

Three of the countries with recent political developments have also led the region on MDG progress, which raises questions about deficits in governance that have been overlooked in the MDG framework

average and the region even outperformed Latin America, Europe and Central Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. However, the benefits of growth have not been widely shared, as illustrated by gaps in food security and other disparities. Arab countries are now faced with tackling socioeconomic development challenges in order to pursue growth combined with social justice and equity, and to address the aspirations of citizens, especially young men and women, and people with disabilities.

A significant gap in the MDG agenda was the quality of governance, comprising democratic processes such as elections and effective public institutions. The recent political situation in some Arab countries was a sudden “wake-up call” which reminded the world that meaningful development depends on good governance. People in Arab countries with some of the strongest MDG achievements took to the streets to protest their lack of voice, the absence of government accountability and the unfair advantages accruing to elites.

As a whole, the Arab region has lagged behind other regions in most governance indicators, with all Arab countries below the level of ‘good governance’ that is expected given their level of income. Ideally, all countries, whatever their current level of development, should move towards better governance as they grow richer.

In fact, data show that Arab countries have been moving in the opposite direction since 1996, with shortfalls in good governance, namely voice and accountability, coupled with prosperity. East Asia and the Pacific, which had the highest growth record among developing regions, is the only region which has surpassed Arab countries in this decline.

The first and foremost recommendation of this report is therefore to make governance reforms a key measure of development achievement. It is widely recognized that governance and human rights issues were missing in the MDG framework, though they were included in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The post-2015 agenda should consider goals that encompass those issues, particularly given growing evidence that both conflicts and bad governance pose major threats to development.

Aiming to respect human rights, build public political participation should underpin any post-2015 framework, as those are linked to

all other development goals. There needs to be agreement on minimum standards for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, encompassing aspect such as civil and political freedom, independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression and the media, accountability and transparency. In the Arab region, in particular in the countries that are going through political transition, the rebuilding of institutions is critical. The protection of property rights, the rule of law and an independent judiciary are of primary importance to restart business activity.

Adopting economic and social policies to achieve quality development

Arab uprisings have shown that development and economic growth should not be solely concerned with the creation of wealth, but also with its fair distribution and participation through democratic governance.

The problems of many Arab economies lie in their structures: stagnating shares of agriculture and manufacturing; a rapidly expanding service sector based mainly on low value-added activities; and a still leading, though rapidly declining, oil sector. This pattern is not sustainable, and has not been conducive to the equitable distribution of benefits.

In looking at the post-2015 agenda, a more diversified economic structure should be considered, as it is essential to achieve more growth, with a special focus on the equitable distribution and redistribution of benefits. Arab countries should rethink macroeconomic policies accordingly. In particular, policies should seek to expand manufacturing and exports of non-oil commodities. Industrial policies are also needed to ensure that industries grow in directions that contribute to transforming economies, including through job creation. Complementary policy reforms in other areas such as trade; investment; science and technology; enterprises (micro- small- and medium-sized); human-resource training and upgrading; and regional development will be needed. This paradigm shift in economic policy requires that Arab countries empower and strengthen public institutions, most importantly those responsible for the planning and implementation of development policy.

Building institutions to promote social justice, particularly to address hunger and food security, and adopting progressive social policies

to rectify some of the imbalances in the Arab region, is a priority. Two policy interventions are recommended. First, an Arab Food Security Fund should be established to expedite relief during food emergencies. The fund should start with a balance of US\$3 billion, which represent the gap between what has been promised and what has been delivered by Arab donors of ODA. Given the acute food security issues in the region, the time has come for the implementation of such a fund.

Second, Arab countries should adopt the United Nations social protection floor concept. It promises income security and access to all essential services to all citizens, and is a way of ensuring progress across MDGs. While often viewed as a drain on budgets, social protection systems are highly effective in fuelling economic and social development, especially pro-poor, inclusive growth that can be sustained over the long term. They also embed social justice and human rights – a key demand in Arab uprisings. They could also be affordable, costing less in some countries than current food and fuel subsidies that benefited well-to-do people more than disadvantaged ones.

Emphasize gender equality and women's empowerment

The Arab region faces major challenges when it comes to gender equality. Despite impressive progress towards gender parity in primary, secondary and tertiary education, women's participation in the labour force is the lowest in the world. Participation in parliaments is also far behind its levels in the rest of the world. With very little data disaggregated by gender, most development policies that use existing statistics can be considered “gender blind”, overlooking women's needs, which prevents them from being fully effective.

While MDGs shed light on some serious gender equality concerns, they had limited impact in the region. A post-2015 agenda should move beyond numeric indicators to prioritize the quality of life of men and women, and their personal freedoms. Such a qualitative approach could, for instance, reinforce gender equality across the life cycle, particularly in the early stages of education, which can have a direct impact in helping boys and girls equally value the contributions of men and women to society. Later on, this could support women's ability to access employment.

The post-2015 agenda should reflect the fact that gender equality is not just about bettering the quality of life of women, who represent half of the world's population. Gender equality accelerates development and improves the lives of everyone. Indeed, raising the education level of mothers in LDCs would help in reducing child mortality in those countries and across the region.

Women can be powerful drivers of economic growth. In general, a post-2015 agenda should put forward concrete goals and targets to establish real equality. For instance, statistics captures women in paid work, but they do not offer a complete picture of their economic contribution, especially concerning unpaid household work. Ensuring that women participate at all levels of decision-making related to economics, poverty alleviation and all other development policies should be an explicit aim.

Integrate environmental concerns into development agendas

The vulnerability of food, water and energy resources threatens long-term sustainable development in the region, and further exacerbates poverty. This is especially so when considering the cumulative impacts of a changing climate, shrinking energy and water reserves, and challenges to food security.

The concept of sustainability has gained momentum in the run-up to the post-2015 discussions. In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20, agreed that economic, social and environmental issues are interrelated and, along with social justice, fairness and equity, are central to sustainable development.

Sustainability is frequently considered when discussing the environment; however it should be applied more broadly to cover all aspects of development. Economic growth, agricultural production, industrial development and manufacturing, and access to food and social services: all need to be approached from that perspective. Growth, accompanied by high and rising inequality, is not sustainable, nor is increased agricultural production that leads to a rapidly reducing forest cover or the depletion of aquifers. Similarly, intensive fishing and marine pollution exert a mounting pressure on countries in the Arab region, which should maintain their fish stocks and keep them within a safe biological limit.

A post-2015 agenda should move beyond numeric indicators to prioritize the quality of life of men and women, and their personal freedoms

Since Arab ODA is extremely important and powerful, it could be coordinated in a more efficient way, with stronger monitoring and oversight, and greater transparency

In the Arab region, economic growth driven primarily by the extraction of natural resources such as oil and natural gas, has been intensive in terms of carbon emissions that lead to climate change. This phenomenon will only exacerbate the underlying challenges of resource scarcity and expanding consumption. The risks and opportunities associated with climate change are now emerging within the development discourse in the region, with a focus on adaptation as an inevitable strategic option and new clean energy policies to set the stage for future low-carbon economies.

Sustainable production and consumption patterns are main topics of discussion in the region, in the context of green economy initiatives. Arab countries should consider a new model for development in response to sustainability challenges, supported by new and more equitable values and institutions. Responses to these challenges should be drawn from sustainability links between social, economic and environmental policies.

Incorporating sustainability into the broader development framework is not easy. In addition to the practical challenges of measurement, there are also political issues of consensus between developing and developed countries. The dependency on fossil fuels for economic growth continues to increase total regional emissions, as it has done historically for today's developed countries. Equity, growth and environmental sustainability are not necessarily mutually reinforcing; there are trade-offs and policy choices to be made.

In forging the post-2015 agenda, however, there is an opportunity to build in sustainability, which was not evident in the MDG framework. Not all areas require hard trade-offs. Some immediate entry points would be those offering multiple benefits, such as better health as a result of reduced pollution. A starting point could be to assess national economic, social and environmental policies in terms of whether they contribute to, or detract from, equality and sustainability.

Forge new regional partnerships for financing development

Changing the Arab region's course of development will require political will and finance for reforms. Popular movements have galvanized political commitment to change. International and regional support can help in mitigating the negative effects of the economic recession in some

Arab countries. As for reaping the benefits of financing, the story is mixed in the region.

Middle-income countries such as Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, as well as LDCs, and particularly the Sudan and Yemen, confront a lack of fiscal space. The latter also struggle with difficulties in effectively spending funds for development. Given these factors, on top of the complexity of political transition and conflict, policy reforms at the country level alone may not suffice to ignite inclusive development. Regional and global donors should stand by commitments to countries undertaking major reforms.

The eighth MDG called for a "global partnership for development", with six targets and indicators, including on ODA. The goal is often criticized for being poorly defined, and although one aim was to link it to the other seven goals, in reality, it does not specifically relate to these.

The global and regional environment for partnership has changed drastically since MDGs were agreed in 2000. There is a growing demand for human rights, democracy and participation. With the rise of the global South, richer Western countries no longer monopolize international development.

Looking beyond 2015, a new partnership should bring together diverse actors in the service of inclusive development, including Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, youth and women's groups, religious organizations, international and regional organizations and foundations. These partnerships should be forged with mutual respect, and based on transparency and good governance with adequate monitoring.

Since Arab ODA is extremely important and powerful, it could be better coordinated in a more efficient way, with stronger monitoring and oversight, and greater transparency. One way to avoid mismanagement is to have regular evaluations and impact assessments.

As a way forward, a review of Arab donors should be undertaken, possibly towards coordinating efforts to finance national development plans in the region, and to develop systems to increase transparency and accountability.

Monitor the quality of services, not just the level of development

While MDGs have helped moving beyond measuring GDP alone, the goals are based mainly

on quantitative targets, so there has been less progress in assessing the quality of achievements. Non-income related deprivations, such as the poor quality of education and inadequate healthcare, have remained persistent over the past decades in many parts of the region. MDGs were mainly focused on increasing or decreasing numbers, such as students in primary school. But this does not necessarily relate to quality learning or daily attendance. The gap in quality is apparent when considering that, outside enrolment, Arab education achievements remain low against international standards, and that most youth are poorly prepared for the labour market.

In the health sector, MDGs focused on a few issues, without capturing systemic health-care shortfalls. Not only large sections of Arab populations are not covered by any health-care system, but out-of-pocket payments have risen to over 50 per cent of total health expenditure, further reducing access for the poor. The quality and relevance of health care have suffered. Health systems are fragmented and need better management, guided by clear government priorities to mobilize and allocate resources for more accessible and higher quality health care.

Providing access to water, an aim of MDGs, is another example of how quantitative targets are insufficient if not completed with qualitative ones, such as monitoring the quality of water and the cycle of water management. In many Arab cities, the unregulated disposal of wastewater degrades water resources and coastal ecosystems, and can contaminate urban water supplies, leading to significant health effects.

The quality of services that affect development should be firmly incorporated in the post-2015 agenda. One way to move ahead is to focus on the outcomes of learning or health interventions. Public services, such as water supply, could have inbuilt quality indicators to measure progress. If governance goals are included in the post-2015 agenda, the quality of institutions should also be measured.

Developing means to monitor poverty and inequality suited for the Arab region, as well as mechanisms to improve access to data and statistics

Rethinking the measurement of development progress should be a top priority of the post-2015 agenda. In many cases, it requires strengthening national statistical systems. Within the numerical targets, a key concern is the reliance on the international fixed poverty line of US\$1.25, which may not be appropriate for many developing countries, including those of the Arab region. A more sensible approach, proposed by the Arab Development Challenges Report (UNDP, 2012), argues that relying on national poverty lines to construct a globally comparable poverty measure is valid. The comparison should be based on well-established relationships between national poverty lines and average per capita expenditure across all developing countries.

A similar argument can be made on how to measure inequality. Inequalities in various forms, related to income or in other respects, continue to undermine development achievements and growth, and threaten stability. This issue has attracted wide attention in the post-2015 discussions. Many gaps cannot be quickly addressed, since they are deeply rooted in countries' histories, politics and governance systems. They are visible through the lack of access to services, resources, power, voice and agency, and they include inequalities in wealth and income, assets, opportunities and access to natural resources, among others.

Measures of inequality should be more reliable and account for actual disparities, which requires improving sampling methods in surveys to better capture disaggregated data at the country level. Different categories should be used, such as income, ethnicity, geography, gender and age. Finally, the accessibility of data, particularly household living conditions and expenditure surveys, is very restricted in Arab countries. Improving data availability and accessibility is the only way to measure the real scale of progress in basic development targets such as poverty and inequality in the region.

The quality of services that affect development should be firmly incorporated in the post-2015 agenda

Annex

MDGI for selected indicators 1990-2011 (Percentage)

	Children underweight	Population undernourished	Net enrolment in primary education	Literacy rates (15-24)	GPI in primary education	GPI in secondary education	Under five mortality	Infant mortality	Maternal mortality	Births attended by skilled health personnel	People not using improved drinking water	People not using improved sanitation
Egypt												
Iraq												
Jordan												
Palestine												
Syrian Arab Republic												
Algeria												
Morocco												
Tunisia												
Oman												
Saudi Arabia												
Comoros												
Djibouti												
Mauritania												
Somalia												
Sudan												
Yemen												
	45 to 100% above target	20 to 45% above target	1 to 20% above target									
	-1 to -20% below target	-20 to -45% below target	-45 to -100% below target	over -100% below target	target not applicable	no data						

The Arab region has made impressive progress towards many Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in education. Achievements, however, were uneven. There are still major deficits in targets related to hunger, infant and maternal mortality, and access to water. There are also major inequalities between and within Arab countries.

Lessons from the Arab region could be one of the reference points as the world prepares for a post-2015 development agenda. The fact that some of the countries caught in the recent wave of political instability were also among the region's leading MDG achievers raises important questions about critical issues that have been overlooked by the MDG framework. To better capture the aspirations of the people of the region, the report argues that the post-2015 development framework should have, at its core, pillars that promote good governance. It should also emphasize the *quality*, not just the *quantity* of development, empower women and reduce inequalities to foster development for all.



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