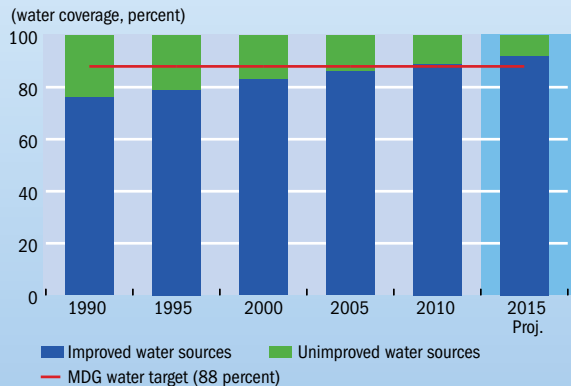


# Water for People

**The global target for safe drinking water has been met but more than 780 million people still lack access to clean water**

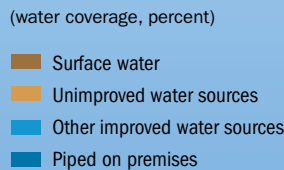
SINCE 1990, more than 2 billion people have gained access to improved water sources, such as piped connections and protected wells, according to a joint report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Almost 6.1 billion people—or 89 percent of the world's population—used safe drinking water in 2010. That beats the 88 percent target for access to safe drinking water in 2015 set by the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

**The MDG drinking water target has been met.**



Note: The drinking water target excludes direct measurement of drinking water quality. The measure used for MDG monitoring is "the use of an improved water source." This proxy indicator may not conform to the recommended methods in the WHO report *Guidelines for Drinking-Water Quality* (2011).

**Most of the improvement in drinking water coverage came from the use of piped connections and other improved sources.**



**89%**  
OF THE WORLD'S  
POPULATION USED SAFE  
DRINKING WATER IN 2010

**Mixed progress**

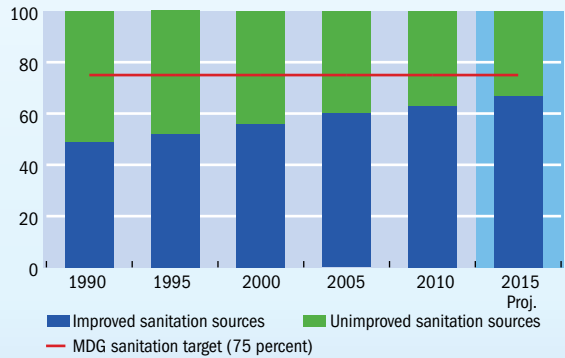
These global figures mask huge differences among regions and countries. Only 61 percent of the people in sub-Saharan Africa have access to improved drinking water sources, compared with 90 percent or more in Latin America and the Caribbean, northern Africa, and large parts of Asia. More than 40 percent of all people who lack access to safe drinking water live in sub-Saharan Africa. Only 19 out of 50 countries in that region are on track to meet the target by 2015.

1990 2010

**63%**  
OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION  
HAD ACCESS TO SANITATION  
FACILITIES IN 2010

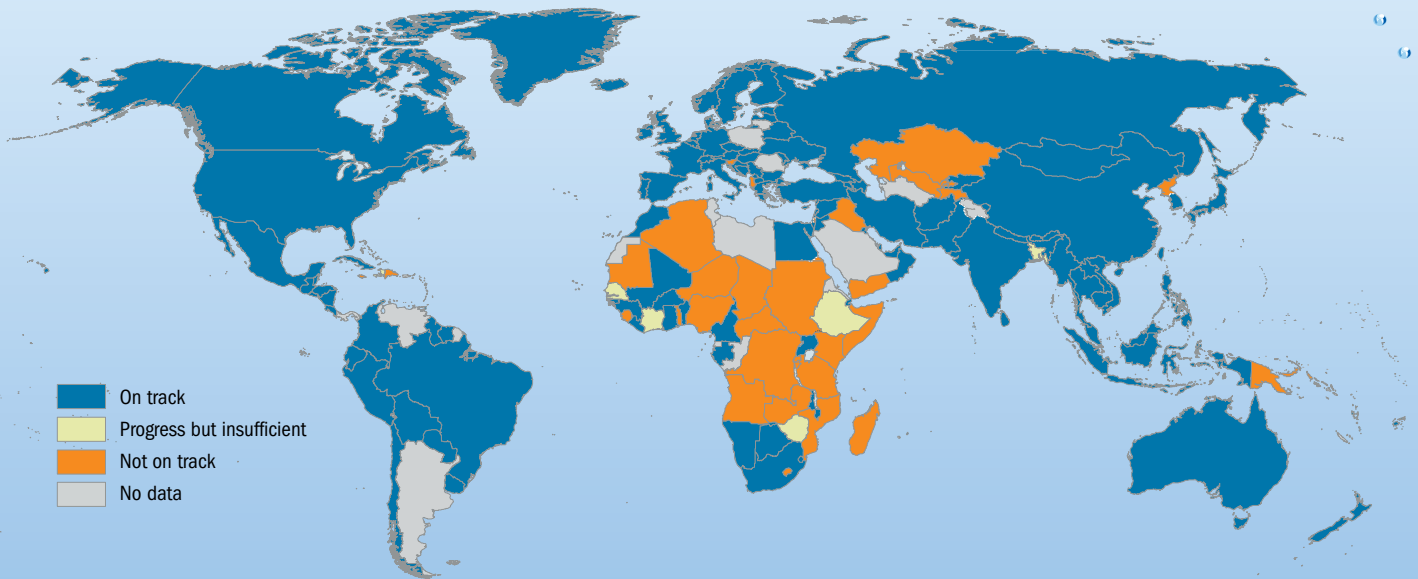
**But the MDG sanitation target may fall short.**

(sanitation coverage, percent)



**Sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific are not on track to meet the MDG drinking water target.**

(progress toward the MDG drinking water target, 2010)



**Toward universal access**

The UNICEF-WHO report shows why the job is far from finished. More than 780 million people still have no access to safe drinking water, and the world is unlikely to meet the MDG target for access to sanitation facilities. Continued efforts are needed to reduce urban-rural disparities and inequities associated with poverty, dramatically increase coverage in sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific, promote global monitoring of drinking water quality, bring sanitation on track, and expand the MDG target toward universal coverage. ■



Women carrying water in Niger.

*Prepared by Natalie Ramírez-Djumena. Text and charts based on Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, published by UNICEF and the WHO in 2012. The report is available at [www.who.int/publications/en/](http://www.who.int/publications/en/)*