

Media Update

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UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

Pakistan among 95 Countries to have Met Sanitation MDG

Islamabad, 2 July 2015: Pakistan is one of the 95 countries that have met the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target for sanitation aimed at halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to basic sanitation, says a recently launched global report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP).

According to the report, 64 per cent of the population in Pakistan now has access to sanitation compared to 24 per cent in 1990. A feat achieved by only 95 countries so far. Pakistan is also placed among just 77 countries which have met both the drinking water and the sanitation MDG target. The number of people defecating in the open has been reduced from 46 to 25 million during the last decade. However, closing the gap that exists due to inequities between urban and rural residents in terms of improved access to water and sanitation services, remains a challenge.

“This is an incredible achievement,” says Angela Kearney, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan. “Toilet use is becoming the new norm in rural Pakistan. A country on the road to modernity with unprecedented uptake of toilets, has met the sanitation MDG. I would like to congratulate the Government of Pakistan and its development partners on achieving this all important goal. The Government's leadership and commitment to improve access to sanitation through increased investment and supporting national and provincial level dialogue on the subject, has provided the required



impetus for achieving this target which will go a long way in protecting women and children as well as overall national development.”

While providing a comprehensive assessment of progress made since 1990, the report also highlights what more needs to be done to help the 2.4 billion people globally who still lack access to improved sanitation and at the same time urgently address the large disparities that exist in this context. Despite significant progress, South Asia is still the region where the largest number of people, nearly 953 million, do not have access to improved sanitation.

It is noteworthy that earlier this year, the second Pakistan Conference on Sanitation (PACOSAN) was hosted in Islamabad where a large gathering of eminent specialists deliberated on accelerating Pakistan’s move towards achieving the sanitation MDG. Addressing the inaugural session of the conference, the President of Pakistan, Mr. Mamnoon Hussain highlighted that despite strong emphasis on cleanliness in Islam, lack of sanitation facilities is one of the major causes of high child mortality rate in Pakistan. He urged all stakeholders to join hands for universal coverage of sanitation and hygiene in the country.

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