

Table 5. Access to Water Supply and Sanitation by Region, 1990 and 2002 (2006 Update)

Description

Table 5 shows the total population and the population without access to improved water supply or sanitation services (“unserved”) in urban and rural areas for 1990 and 2002. The regions shown correspond with those of the MDGs and are not comparable to those in previous editions of *The World’s Water*. Overall, global water supply coverage for the year 2002 is estimated to be 83 percent, and global sanitation coverage is estimated to be 58 percent. Since 1990, the fraction of the population with access to an improved water supply increased from 77 percent to 83 percent in 2002, and the unserved population declined by over 150 million. During this same period, the fraction of the population with access to improved sanitation systems increased from 49 percent to 58 percent, and the unserved population declined by 70 million. These estimates are based on data from 93 and 97 percent of the global population in 1990 and 2002, respectively.

These data form the basis for all major international policy statements on lack of access to water. Because 1990 was used as the base year for establishing the 2015 MDGs, the 2002 data represents the halfway point and shows progress toward achieving these goals. The data indicate that significant work remains, particularly in the sanitation sector. And although some regions are on target, greater effort must be placed on improving water supply and sanitation coverage in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia. The World Health Organization and UNICEF intend to report coverage data more frequently to allow better tracking of progress toward the MDGs. Go to the original source (later section) for a list of which countries belong to which regions shown here.

Limitations

These data give a good picture of the current lack of access to improved water and sanitation services, but comparison from different assessments should be done with extreme care, or not at all, because of changing definitions.

Country-reported data may reflect national definitions of “improved,” unlike survey data, which were standardized as much as possible. For example, in many African countries the population “without access” to improved sanitation means people with no access to any sanitary facility. In Latin America and the Caribbean, however, it is more likely that those “without access” have a sanitary facility, but the facility is deemed unsatisfactory by local or national authorities. Low coverage figures for Latin America and the Caribbean, in part, may be a reflection of the comparatively narrow definitions used within that region.

Changes in the source of data also complicate comparisons over time. Before 2000, for example, data collected by WHO were provider-based and collected from service providers, such as utilities, ministries, and water agencies. The data shown here, however, is user-based and was collected from household surveys and censuses. User-based data is more likely to include improvements installed by households or local communities and gives a more complete picture of water supply and sanitation coverage.

1990 Population (millions)

2002 Population (millions)

Region	1990 Population (millions)				2002 Population (millions)			
	Total Population	Population Served	Population Unserved	Percent Served	Total Population	Population Served	Population Unserved	Percent Served
GLOBAL								
Urban water supply	2,263	2,150	113	95%	2,988	2,839	149	95%
Rural water supply	3,000	1,890	1,110	63%	3,237	2,331	906	72%
Total water supply	5,263	4,053	1,211	77%	6,225	5,167	1,058	83%
Urban sanitation	2,263	1,788	475	79%	2,988	2,420	568	81%
Rural sanitation	3,000	750	2,250	25%	3,237	1,198	2,039	37%
Total sanitation	5,263	2,579	2,684	49%	6,225	3,610	2,614	58%
DEVELOPED REGIONS								
Urban water supply	672	672	0	100%	745	745	0	100%
Rural water supply	262	259	3	99%	248	233	15	94%
Total water supply	934	934	0	100%	993	973	20	98%
Urban sanitation	672	672	0	100%	745	745	0	100%
Rural sanitation	262	259	3	99%	248	228	20	92%
Total sanitation	934	934	0	100%	993	973	20	98%
EURASIA								
Urban water supply	183	178	5	97%	180	178	2	99%
Rural water supply	99	82	17	83%	101	83	18	82%
Total water supply	282	259	23	92%	281	261	20	93%
Urban sanitation	183	170	13	93%	180	165	14	92%
Rural sanitation	99	67	32	68%	101	66	35	65%
Total sanitation	282	237	45	84%	281	233	48	83%
NORTHERN AFRICA								
Urban water supply	58	55	3	95%	77	74	3	96%
Rural water supply	60	49	11	82%	71	59	11	84%
Total water supply	118	104	14	88%	147	133	15	90%
Urban sanitation	58	49	9	84%	77	68	8	89%

Rural sanitation	60	28	32	47%	71	40	30	57%
Total sanitation	118	77	41	65%	147	108	40	73%
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA								
Urban water supply	141	116	25	82%	240	197	43	82%
Rural water supply	363	131	232	36%	445	200	245	45%
Total water supply	504	247	257	49%	685	397	288	58%
Urban sanitation	141	76	65	54%	240	132	108	55%
Rural sanitation	363	87	276	24%	445	116	329	26%
Total sanitation	504	161	343	32%	685	247	438	36%
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN								
Urban water supply	313	292	22	93%	407	387	20	95%
Rural water supply	128	74	54	58%	129	89	40	69%
Total water supply	442	366	75	83%	536	477	59	89%
Urban sanitation	313	257	56	82%	407	342	65	84%
Rural sanitation	128	45	83	35%	129	57	72	44%
Total sanitation	442	305	137	69%	536	402	134	75%
EASTERN ASIA								
Urban water supply	368	364	4	99%	550	511	38	93%
Rural water supply	858	515	343	60%	825	561	264	68%
Total water supply	1,226	883	343	72%	1,375	1,072	302	78%
Urban sanitation	368	235	132	64%	550	379	170	69%
Rural sanitation	858	60	798	7%	825	247	577	30%
Total sanitation	1,226	294	932	24%	1,375	619	756	45%
SOUTH ASIA								
Urban water supply	317	285	32	90%	444	417	27	94%
Rural water supply	857	549	309	64%	1,036	829	207	80%
Total water supply	1,175	834	341	71%	1,480	1,243	237	84%
Urban sanitation	317	171	146	54%	444	293	151	66%
Rural sanitation	857	60	797	7%	1,036	249	788	24%
Total sanitation	1,175	235	940	20%	1,480	548	933	37%

SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA								
Urban water supply	141	128	13	91%	220	200	20	91%
Rural water supply	299	194	105	65%	316	221	95	70%
Total water supply	440	321	119	73%	536	423	112	79%
Urban sanitation	141	94	46	67%	220	173	46	79%
Rural sanitation	299	117	182	39%	316	155	161	49%
Total sanitation	440	211	229	48%	536	327	209	61%
WESTERN ASIA								
Urban water supply	85	80	5	94%	121	115	6	95%
Rural water supply	52	34	18	65%	63	46	16	74%
Total water supply	136	113	23	83%	184	162	22	88%
Urban sanitation	85	81	3	96%	121	115	6	95%
Rural sanitation	52	27	25	52%	63	31	32	49%
Total sanitation	136	108	29	79%	184	145	39	79%
OCEANIA								
Urban water supply	1	1	0	92%	2	2	0	91%
Rural water supply	5	2	3	39%	6	3	4	40%
Total water supply	6	3	3	51%	8	4	4	52%
Urban sanitation	1	1	0	83%	2	2	0	84%
Rural sanitation	5	2	2	50%	6	3	3	46%
Total sanitation	6	4	3	58%	8	5	4	55%

Due to rounding, coverage figures might not total 100%, even if the population unserved is shown as 0. Definitions have changed over time. See the description of this table.

Source

World Health Organization/UNICEF. 2004. Meeting the MDG drinking water and sanitation target: A mid-term assessment of progress. http://wssinfo.org/pdf/JMP_04_tables.pdf.