



The Millennium Development Goals are the world's targets for addressing extreme poverty. They mirror our rich Catholic social teaching by placing the highest priority on the dignity of life, stewardship of the environment and solidarity with all individuals, worldwide. They demand human rights and focus on immediate, persistent action. While each goal is important in its own right, the goals should be viewed collectively as they are mutually reinforcing.

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

2015 Target: Reduce by half those without access to safe drinking water & basic sanitation.

Safe water & sanitation are critical to survival. *A child dies every 15 seconds from disease attributable to unsafe drinking water, deplorable sanitation and poor hygiene.*

As of 2002, 1.1 billion human beings (400 million children) lacked access to clean water. In sub-Saharan Africa in countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda, four out of five children either use surface water or have to walk more than 15 minutes to find a protected water source. Over 50% of Africans suffer from water-related diseases.

This urgent unmet need and reliance on unclean water is the basis for other problems, such as cholera and diarrhea, which kill five million people and infect 400 million school-aged children annually.

40% of people worldwide lack access to a simple latrine, which can severely affect health and dignity. Family members may have to wait until night to relieve themselves for safety and modesty, and their living arrangements (i.e., many living 5 to a room) may mean they can more easily transmit disease to the family if they lack water for good hygiene.

Response. It's not that there isn't enough water to go around. Lacking are the commitments of governments, the technology to help ensure good water and sanitation, and the money to put water programs into place.

Programs promoting sustainable development and the cost-effective treatment and disposal of wastewater are critical to conserving water resources. Also, promoting hygiene education at the community level, gives the poor the tools and the opportunity to design and choose technology that can evolve and be upgraded over time, like quality surveillance systems, rain water harvesting systems, shallow wells and pond filtering systems.

Progress. The world is on target to meet the drinking water goal. Access to safe water increased from 77% to 83% (1990-2002). However, over 1 billion people remain unhelped (nearly 70% in Asia). Obstacles to progress include conflict and political instability, high rates of population growth, and low priority given to water and sanitation.

Many regions (nearly 2.6 billion people) are not on track to meet the MDG sanitation target. Half of those affected live in remote, rural areas of India and China, displaced by war and famine or mired in a cycle of poverty and disease.

Advocate. Don't waste the promise of a new generation. Support Goal 7-related campaigns. Encourage debate on environmental sustainability. Learn more:

www.millenniumcampaign.org