

Developing Countries Need To Harness Urbanization To Achieve The MDGs: IMF-World Bank Report

worldbank.org. WASHINGTON, April 17, 2013 - Urbanization helps pull people out of poverty and advances progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but, if not managed well, can also lead to burgeoning growth of slums, pollution, and crime, says the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2013, released today by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Urbanization has been a major force behind poverty reduction and progress towards other MDGs. With over 80 percent of global goods and services produced in cities, countries with relatively higher levels of urbanization, such as China, and many others in East Asia and Latin America, have played a major role in lowering extreme poverty[1] worldwide. In contrast, the two least urbanized regions, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, have significantly higher rates of poverty and continue to lag behind on most MDGs.

GMR 2013: Rural-Urban Dynamics and the Millennium Development Goals starkly compares the well-being in the countryside versus the city. Urban infant mortality rates range from 8-9 percentage points lower than the rural rates in Latin America and Central Asia; to 10-16 percentage points in the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa and highest in East Asia (21 percentage points).

In South Asia, 60 percent of urban dwellers have access to sanitation facilities, compared with 28 percent in rural areas. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 42 percent of the urban population has access, compared with 23 percent of rural residents. Access to safe water in urban areas in developing countries was almost complete in 2010, with 96 percent coverage, compared with 81 percent of the rural population having access.

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