

PROGRESS FOR CHILDREN

**A REPORT CARD ON GENDER PARITY
AND PRIMARY EDUCATION**

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**EDUCATION FOR ALL G
IS KEY TO DEVELOPME**

The day in March 2002 when I was in Kabul, witnessing the return to school of what turned out to be 3 million Afghan children after years of war, was the source of some of my most indelible memories as Executive Director of UNICEF. If I had not known it by then, that dramatic day would have proved to me the central importance of education for the children of the world.

Education is about more than just learning. It saves lives: from the teenagers it protects against HIV/AIDS to the babies saved by their mothers' knowledge of health and nutrition. It transforms lives: from the adolescents given the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty to the girls it gives a new sense of self-esteem and status in society. It enriches lives: from the refugee child given stability even in an emergency camp to 12-year-old Sadiqa in Kabul, who spent three months of her winter vacation studying in catch-up classes so she could make up for the years of missed opportunities, and who dreamed of one day being President of Afghanistan.

This report card – part of a series in which UNICEF will monitor progress for children in the lead-up to 2015 – measures the world's advances towards Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3, which pursue universal primary education and gender equality and women's empowerment. The report emerges at a vital time: 2005 is the year by which the first Millennium target – to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education – is to be met.

There is no time to lose. The report card shows that in many regions and countries, the target will not be met, notwithstanding the efforts of many governments, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, including UNICEF's own '25 by 2005' Initiative

GIRLS AND BOYS WORLDWIDE

and its work with partners in the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. The need to make further progress towards gender parity this year remains urgent, not least to demonstrate the international community's commitment to achieving gender equality in education. Without gender parity, after all, universal primary education will be impossible.

The manifold benefits of girls' education are now beyond dispute. It reduces child and maternal mortality, enhances economic productivity, improves health and nutrition and protects girls from abuse, exploitation and HIV/AIDS. It also contributes in the most meaningful way possible to gender equality.

Education is the right of all children: girls and boys, rich and poor. Investing in education – and girls' education in particular – remains our best hope of accelerating progress towards the wider goals in human development that the international community has pledged to meet.

I am hopeful that this community, which has shown itself so responsive in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami disaster, will find the way to mobilize as quickly and effectively in the cause of gender parity in education.



Carol Bellamy
Executive Director, UNICEF

Primary education and gender parity

Some 125 countries – 91 developing countries and 34 industrialized countries – are on course to reach the gender parity MDG in primary education, with as many girls in school as boys. Countries' positions in relation to the goal are based on primary net enrolment/attendance ratios in 2001. For complete data, see the tables on pages 28-30.



GENDER PARITY: A MO

Girls' education has been expanding all over the world, but not fast enough.

Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 is the achievement of universal primary education: to ensure that by 2015 all children complete a full course of primary schooling. Goal 3, to promote gender equality and empower women, also has a vital educational dimension, as progress towards it is measured by the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

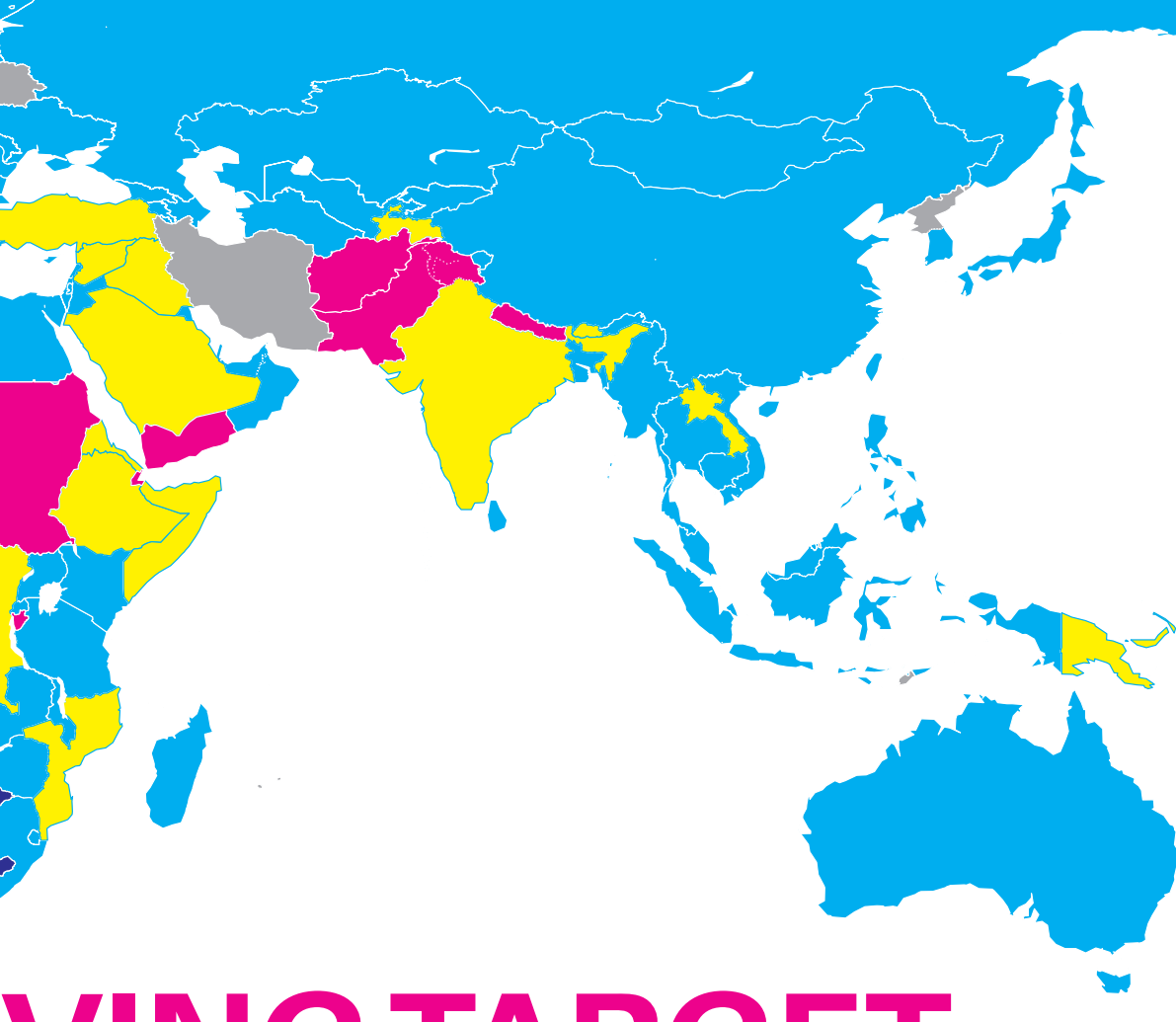
MDGs 2 and 3 are inextricably linked. Universal primary education by definition cannot be achieved without gender parity. Equally, gender parity in primary education is of limited worth if the participation of both girls and boys remains at very low levels.

UNICEF estimates and projections indicate that three regions – Middle East/North Africa, South Asia and West/Central Africa – will not meet the gender parity goal in primary education by 2005. And while there is some reason for optimism in that 125 countries – 91 developing countries and 34 industrialized countries – are on course, with as many girls in school as boys, some of these countries have

such low total enrolment that gender parity cannot be considered to be much more than a statistical quirk. Moreover, even in those countries that have achieved gender parity as part of a healthy total school enrolment, there is the further issue of how far this has contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women – the real point of the third MDG.

Nevertheless, it is clear that substantial progress has been made. Girls' education has been expanding all over the world, but not fast enough, and not consistently enough to ensure a basic education for millions of girls still out of school or to ensure the progress of countries that lag behind.

In assessing progress towards these two MDGs, it is essential to go beyond the numbers of children enrolled in or completing school. Universal primary education, for example, will necessitate all children starting school at the right age and progressing through the levels with minimal or no repetition. This will entail improving the quality of education; it will also require an expansion and improvement of early



Total primary net enrolment/attendance ratios are below 85 per cent in the following countries:

Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, India, Iraq, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

This map is stylized and is not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

NING TARGET

childhood care and education to prepare children for a smooth transition from home to school. These aspects of education are less easy to measure – although gathering and analysing more sophisticated data that will help efforts in the future is a priority. For now, though, progress towards gender parity and universal primary completion is measured primarily using ‘headline’ numbers such as enrolment/attendance.

THE BIG ‘IF’

The world is making steady progress on enrolment/attendance. Joint work by UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics shows that in 2001 the global primary net enrolment/attendance ratio (NE/AR)¹ was 82 per cent, meaning that a total of 115 million school-age children were out of primary school. Furthermore, UNICEF’s projections based on primary net attendance in a sample of 81 developing countries show that in 2005 the percentage of primary-school-age children in school will rise to 86 per cent.

The achievement is significant – it means that **if** the world’s primary-school-age population remains constant or decreases

between 2000 and 2005, as the UN has projected², it would be safe to say that *the number of children out of primary school may now be below 100 million for the first time since these data have been recorded.*

This level of progress, however, will not be sufficient to ensure that every child benefits from a full course of primary education by 2015. The pace must be stepped up. Energy and resources urgently need to be devoted not only to expanding the provision of schooling, drawing in all out-of-school children, but also to addressing the range of factors in schools as well as in homes and communities that impede children’s completion of a primary education.

Analysis of household survey data from 1980 to 2001 shows a wide regional variation in the average annual rate of increase (AARI) in the NE/AR.³ Regional AARI varies from a high of 1.4 per cent per year for Middle East/North Africa to a low of 0.35 per cent for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS). In general the regions that had already attained high levels of participation demonstrated the lowest AARI, reflecting the fact that

they were starting from a high base, as well as the extra difficulty involved in achieving the last few percentage points for universal participation. At the same time, the regions with the lowest levels of school participation (South Asia, Eastern/Southern Africa and West/Central Africa) achieved very high AARI, indicating that the efforts and resources invested in expanding education have borne fruit, despite considerable barriers and obstacles. The progress made in these regions remains precarious, however, in the face of continued low levels of enrolment/attendance and multiple barriers to education.

A more significant sense of progress can be gauged from the projected AARI required to achieve the goal of universal primary completion by 2015.⁴ The world would have to maintain an AARI of 1.3 per cent over the next 10 years – approaching the rates achieved in Middle East/North Africa over the past two decades. The regions that are currently furthest from the goal will clearly have to achieve AARIs that are considerably higher: 3.2 per cent in West/Central Africa, 2.8 per cent in Eastern/Southern Africa and 1.9 per cent in South Asia.

The good news is that most of the countries in the Middle East/North Africa, East Asia/Pacific and Latin America/Caribbean regions appear to be on course for 2015 if they maintain their current AARI. Past gains need to be safeguarded against the eroding effects of problems such as child labour, child trafficking, HIV/AIDS and emergencies such as civil conflict and natural disasters. In CEE/CIS the AARI needs to improve, but the target can certainly be met. In all these regions, gains in enrolment/attendance need to be translated into improvements in children's completion of primary education.

At the other extreme, most of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and to a lesser extent in South Asia, will need to increase their AARI substantially to reach the 2015 goals. In West/Central Africa, for example, the AARI will need to be four times its current rate. There are, furthermore, 37 countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa, where the AARI will need to be above 2.0 per cent in order to reach the goal.

Clearly, the regions that have made some of the highest gains in AARI over the past 20 years will have to make even greater improvements over the next 10 years if they are to achieve universal primary completion by 2015. This is a formidable challenge.

In the most disadvantaged regions and countries 'business as usual' will not deliver. Global policies and strategies for the future will need to help such countries achieve exponential growth in AARI, through a series of 'quantum leaps' in their enrolment rates.

GENDER BIAS STILL AN OBSTACLE

Gender parity in education is so central to achievement of the MDGs that it was the only area in which an earlier target date of 2005 was set. Eliminating gender disparity is clearly

a stepping stone towards the broader goal of education for all, which is impossible without gender parity. Even more significantly, it is also a platform for gender equality and the empowerment of women, which in turn are necessary for other MDGs such as reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and reducing poverty.

UNICEF projections based on attendance data for 81 developing countries show a global gender parity index (GPI)⁵ in 2005 of 0.96 – meaning that there are 96 girls for every 100 boys in primary school. This technically puts the world on track to meet the goal of gender parity in primary education. But in practice there is a long road still to travel, with three of the world's regions lagging way behind in terms of girls' primary participation. Globally, some 54 per cent of the children out of primary school are girls, meaning that for every 100 boys out of school, there are 117 girls in the same situation. (*See page 8 for a discussion of gender differences in secondary education.*)

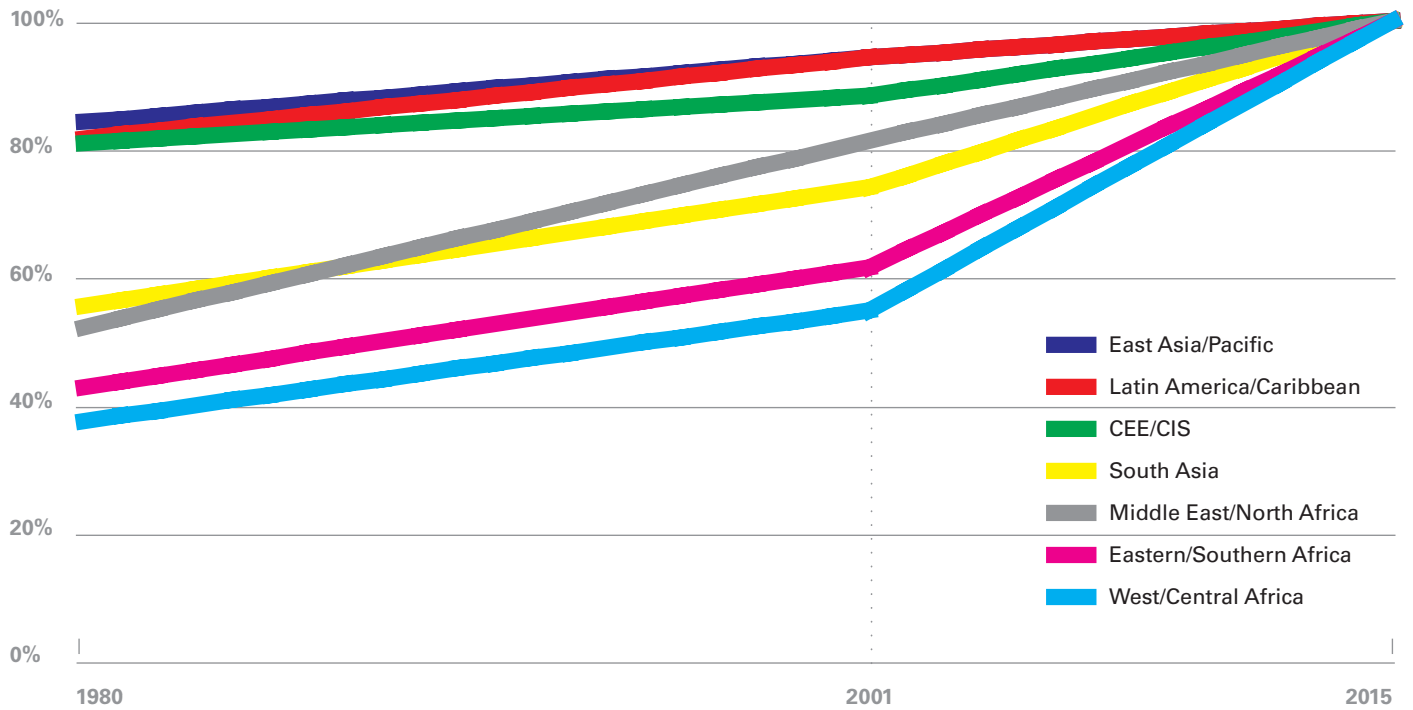
From this broad-brush picture, however, the detail needs to be distinguished at regional, national and even subnational levels in order to assess the achievements so far – and to measure the tasks ahead if gender parity is to be attained as soon as possible after the 2005 target date. The gender gap has been closing steadily ever since 1980: Girls have experienced greater gains in school participation than boys across all regions and in most developing countries.⁶ Without exception, all regions showed a higher AARI for girls than for boys over this period, reflecting the enormous ground girls' education had to cover since 1980 in order to close the gap. Despite this level of progress, the indications are that AARI for girls will have to grow much faster than for boys in most regions over the next decade if the world is to achieve gender parity as part of universal primary completion by 2015.

Two regions illustrate the complexity of the situation. In South Asia and West/Central Africa the gender gap is still a paramount concern, but the dimensions of the problem are different. The availability of education in the two regions is very different: In South Asia three quarters of girls attend school whereas in West/Central Africa only a fraction over half of the girls participate in education. But the sheer numbers of girls out of school in South Asia – around 23.5 million, which means there are almost 5 million more girls out of school than boys – ensures that the gender gap for the developing world as a whole remains wide. In West/Central Africa, meanwhile, girls have far less chance of realizing the manifold benefits of education than the girls of any other region. Closing the gender gap in these two regions – as well as pushing on towards universal primary education – should be an absolute priority for policy makers and development agencies over the next decade.

In general the gender gap yawns widest in the Middle East/North Africa, South Asia and West/Central Africa regions, in each of which the GPI in primary attendance is under 0.95 (where 1.00 would indicate parity between girls and boys). In Middle East/North Africa there have been remarkable

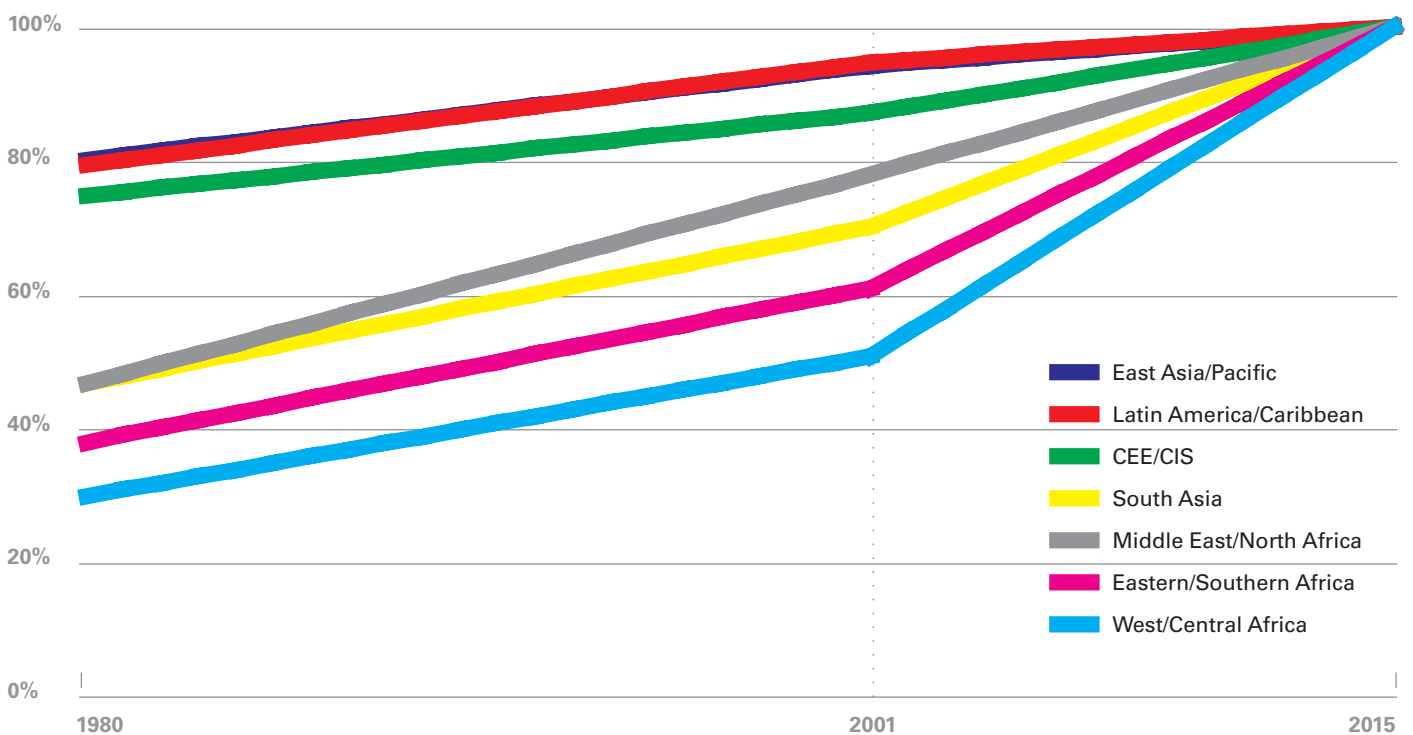
Total primary net enrolment/attendance ratios (1980-2015)

The chart shows the average annual rate of increase in total net enrolment/attendance ratios observed between 1980 and 2001 and required from 2001 in order to meet the universal primary completion goal in 2015.



Girls' primary net enrolment/attendance ratios (1980-2015)

The chart shows the average annual rate of increase in girls' net enrolment/attendance ratios observed between 1980 and 2001 and required from 2001 in order to meet the universal primary completion goal in 2015.



improvements in girls' educational participation in recent years: Over the period 1980 to 2001 the region has seen by far the largest expansion in educational opportunities for both girls and boys. But there are still only 94 girls in school for every 100 boys, indicating that there are still significant pockets of bias to overcome.

Conditions in individual countries often vary markedly from the regional average. In 26 of the 81 developing countries included in the UNICEF projections for 2005, the GPI dips below 0.96, i.e., there are fewer than 96 girls per 100 boys in primary school. The countries showing the lowest ratio of girls in school per 100 boys are Yemen (61), Niger (67), Chad (69), Burkina Faso (71), Mali (74), Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau (76), Benin (78) and Guinea (79).

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the gender gap concerns those countries and regions where gender disparity favours girls rather than boys. UNICEF projections of primary net attendance ratios (NAR) for 2005 show that in two developing regions – Latin America/Caribbean and East Asia/Pacific – there are marginally higher percentages of girls in primary school than boys. Moreover, in 12 of 81 countries, the GPI is 1.05 or more, indicating there are substantially more girls than boys in primary school.

It is important that girls' education remains a priority concern even in regions and countries with a reverse gender gap. There are two reasons for this. First, individual country statistics can reveal concerns even within regions where girls' school attendance is good. In Latin America/Caribbean, for instance, there are marginally more girls in school than boys, yet in Guatemala, UNICEF projections for 2005 show that only 97 girls per 100 boys attend school. Similarly, even when national averages show slightly higher numbers of girls in school than boys (as in Bolivia) there may be pockets of intense discrimination against girls, such as within indigenous populations or other minority groups.

The second reason for countries with a reverse gender gap to retain girls' education as a priority is that, as the MDGs make clear, gender parity is not just a basis for achieving universal primary completion but is also a platform for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Attention will need to be given to factors that ensure girls gain equality in and through education, leading to women's empowerment in the wider society.

It is imperative at this stage that the world's commitment to girls' education does not falter. Postponing meaningful gender parity by a few more years will be costly, not only for the individual girls whose lives are affected, but also for the whole Millennium Development enterprise. Investing in girls' education is a strategy that protects the rights of all children to a quality education and can jump-start all other development goals – beginning with gender equality and the empowerment of women.

BARRIERS, THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Progress in achieving the education and gender MDGs depends not just on providing education but on addressing the barriers that prevent some children from starting or completing school. These disparities represent significant challenges for policy makers and development agencies; recognition of their importance presents clear opportunities for progress over the next 10 years.

Among the significant barriers are poverty, child labour, child trafficking, HIV/AIDS, remote geographic location, poor infrastructure, ethnicity, women's low social status and mothers' lack of education, civil conflict, natural disasters and violence. Since these disparities often overlap, it is not always easy to discern how they interact to impact on education. There is therefore a paramount need for gathering disaggregated statistics in these areas that can inform future policy and practice. Disaggregated statistics can illuminate, for example, the ways in which girls are affected by a combination of their gender, vulnerability to sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS, and their origin from poor households or within rural areas.⁷

Poverty

Household survey data from all developing regions show that children from the poorest 20 per cent of households are 3.2 times more likely to be out of primary school than those from the wealthiest 20 per cent. This ratio masks wide variations among regions and between individual countries. For example, whereas in the CEE/CIS region the poorest children are 1.6 times more likely to be out of primary school, the ratio stretches to 4.5 in both Middle East/North Africa and Latin America/Caribbean. Yet even in the CEE/CIS region, individual countries show wide disparities: In both Kazakhstan and the Republic of Moldova children from the poorest households are at least 5.0 times more likely to be out of school.

In every region there are countries with similarly huge disparities, such as: Indonesia in East Asia/Pacific (5.6); Eritrea, Madagascar and Zambia in Eastern/Southern Africa (4.9 or more); Algeria and Bahrain in Middle East/North Africa (4.9 or more); India in South Asia (3.4); Nicaragua, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela in Latin America/Caribbean (6.0 or more) and Cameroon in West/Central Africa (5.0). Furthermore, 77 per cent of children out of primary school come from the poorest 60 per cent of households in developing countries, with much higher levels in Latin America/Caribbean (84 per cent) and Eastern/Southern Africa (80 per cent).

Ensuring that all children of primary school age are in school by 2015 will require programmes and interventions that are carefully tailored to the conditions of each country. For example, while in both Eritrea and Venezuela at least 90 per cent of children out of school come from the poorest 60 per cent of households, in Venezuela only 7 per cent of all children are out of primary school, while in Eritrea an alarming 37 per cent of children are deprived of an education.

In the same way, different strategies may be required to reach out to girls from poor backgrounds. The more a girl is subjected to multiple disadvantages, the more essential it is that the education system should reach out to her through special measures rather than just assume she will be drawn in as part of a general drive for education for all.

Mothers' education

Another key indicator as to the likelihood of a child attending school is whether or not the mother has herself benefited from some education. Children whose mothers have had no education are more than twice as likely to be out of school as children whose mothers have had some education – and the likelihood stretches to more than two-and-a-half times in Latin America/Caribbean and South Asia. In eight countries, children with unschooled mothers are at least three times more likely to be out of primary school: Venezuela (4.8), Suriname (4.4), Cameroon (3.9), Côte d'Ivoire (3.7), Guyana (3.4), Eritrea (3.4), India (3.3) and Guinea-Bissau (3.0).

In developing countries, 75 per cent of children out of primary school have mothers with no education. The regional variation hidden by this average is quite extreme: While 80 per cent of children out of primary school in West/Central Africa, South Asia and Middle East/North Africa have mothers with no education at all, the proportion in East Asia/Pacific shrinks to 28 per cent and in CEE/CIS to just 1 per cent, essentially because the historic levels of girls' education in those regions have been much higher. In Latin America/Caribbean only 20 per cent of mothers of primary-school-age children are unschooled, yet their children represent more than half the number of children out of school – an indication of the wide economic disparities within the region.

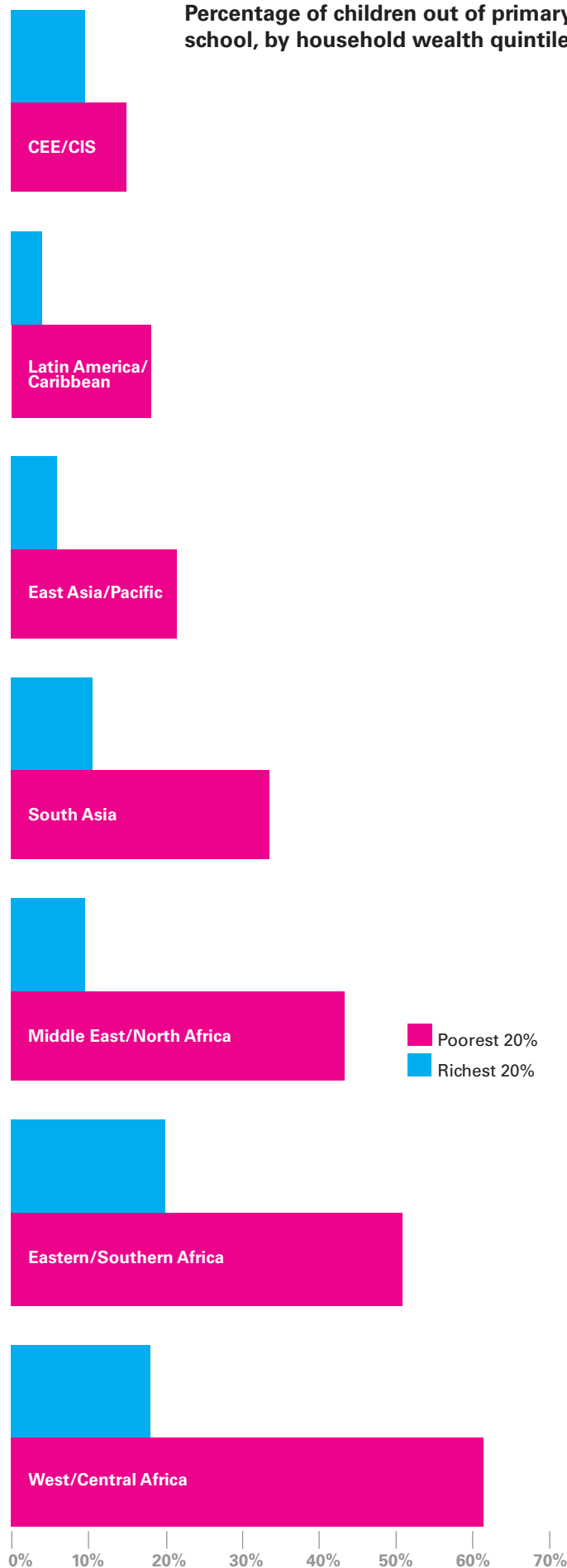
The education level of the mother clearly plays a major role in determining whether or not a child goes to school. This underlines the importance of getting as many girls and future mothers into school as soon as possible and encouraging them to stay on to complete their education.

Geographic location

Children's chances of going to school partly depend on where they live. Fully 30 per cent of rural children in developing countries are out of school compared with 18 per cent of those living in urban areas. Among the multiple contributing factors are that in rural areas children are likely to have to travel much further to reach the nearest school; their parents are less likely to have been educated and to value education; and it is often harder to attract good teachers to the countryside.

Globally some 82 per cent of children out of primary school live in rural areas. There is some regional variation, with Latin America/Caribbean showing the lowest rates (60 per cent of those out of school are rural children) and Eastern/Southern Africa the highest (87 per cent). The 84 per cent rural component of children out of school in India contributes

Percentage of children out of primary school, by household wealth quintile



hugely to the worldwide figure because of the country's large child population.

Among those children out of school who live in rural areas, girls are often the most deprived. For example, in Ethiopia, for every 100 boys in school in urban areas there are 97 girls; but for every 100 boys in school in rural areas there are only 76 girls. In Burkina Faso, there are 91 girls in urban areas and 57 girls in rural areas per 100 boys in school.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Recent UNICEF estimates of secondary school participation in the developing world⁸ indicate that no more than 39 per cent of children of secondary-school age are attending secondary school (as measured by the secondary net attendance ratio, SNAR). The analysis reveals that a further 27 per cent of secondary-school-age children attend primary school – either repeating courses they have failed or simply having started school late – which highlights how vital it is that children start school at the right age and progress through it with minimal repetition.

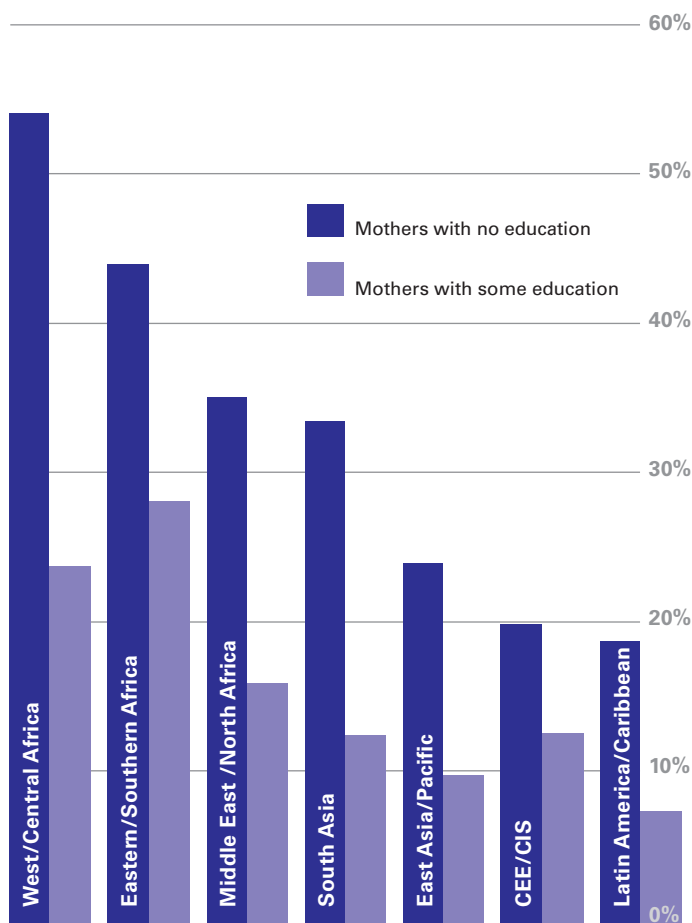
The experiences of different regions diverge even more at secondary than at primary level. In CEE/CIS, though there

has been a significant fall off in secondary participation since 1990, the SNAR is, at 70 per cent, still higher than in any other region. In sub-Saharan Africa, by contrast, a mere 20 per cent of children of the appropriate age participate in secondary school. In East Asia/Pacific and Middle East/North Africa broadly half of children are in secondary school while in Latin America/Caribbean and South Asia the ratios are 44 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively.

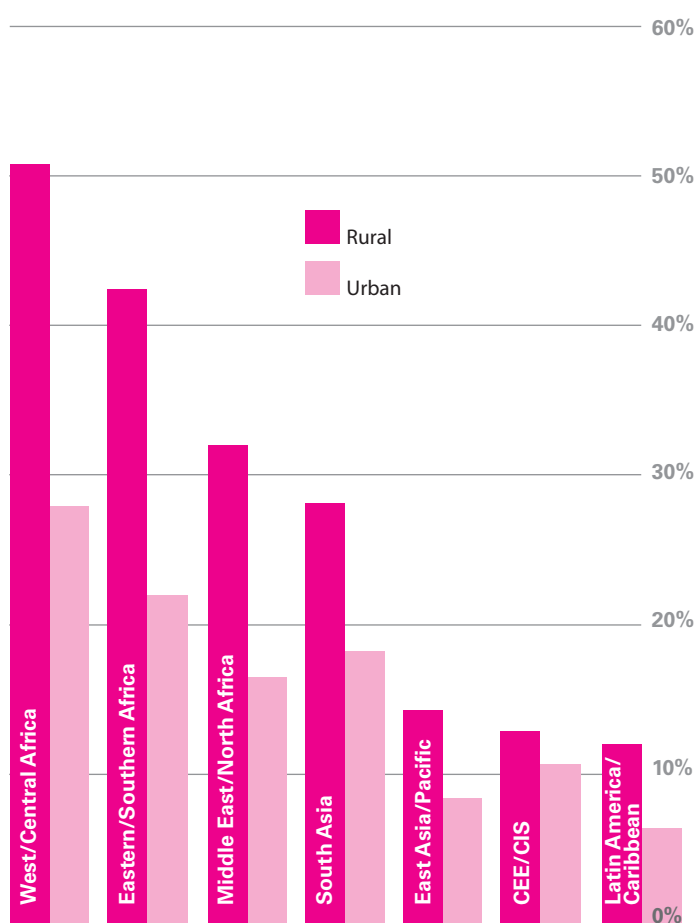
The most pressing concern in secondary education is to eliminate gender disparity by the end of 2005. Of 75 countries surveyed, 22 were on course to meet the goal of gender parity at secondary level and 21 needed to make an additional effort. Meanwhile, 25 countries were far from the goal, of which 15 were in the West/Central Africa region. The country with the lowest ratio of girls to boys in secondary school – 41 girls per 100 boys – was Yemen.

The gender gap at the secondary level is most pronounced in the South Asia and Middle East/North Africa regions. In South Asia, 44 per cent of boys of secondary school age are in secondary school compared with only 36 per cent of girls, while in Middle East/North Africa 54 per cent of boys and 43 per cent of girls are in secondary school.

Percentage of children out of primary school, by mothers' education



Percentage of children out of primary school, by area of residence



In Latin America/Caribbean the gender gap favours girls, with 47 per cent participating in secondary school compared with only 41 per cent of boys. This clearly exacerbates the regional gender trend evident at the primary level and highlights the need to better understand and address those factors that impede educational participation by boys.

Significant gains in terms of gender equality can be made at the secondary-school level. Through education, girls can become more empowered and self-confident as they acquire

the range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values critical for negotiating their place in society. In this regard, many of the benefits normally attributable to education issue from the secondary rather than primary level, which underlines the importance of building on any gains at the primary level with high secondary participation rates.

GENDER PARITY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Secondary net attendance ratios^a

Countries and territories	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^b
Yemen	56.0	78.2	32.4	0.41
Guinea	36.8	48.6	23.8	0.49
Côte d'Ivoire	38.0	48.8	28.5	0.58
Mozambique	43.1	54.0	31.7	0.59
Benin	47.2	58.6	35.2	0.60
Mali	29.2	36.2	22.4	0.62
Niger	13.7	16.9	10.6	0.63
Senegal	29.6	36.2	23.6	0.65
Chad	46.0	56.0	36.6	0.65
Iraq	50.3	60.1	40.3	0.67
Burkina Faso	15.3	18.2	12.4	0.68
Central African Republic	47.3	56.3	38.4	0.68
Cambodia	50.4	60.0	40.6	0.68
Togo	64.6	75.4	51.8	0.69
Turkey	59.2	69.3	49.5	0.71
Sierra Leone	37.7	43.1	31.9	0.74
Gambia	47.5	54.9	40.4	0.74
Zambia	58.6	67.3	49.6	0.74
Guinea-Bissau	48.7	55.7	41.6	0.75
Nepal	71.3	80.4	61.8	0.77
Burundi	35.5	40.0	31.7	0.79
Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	64.3	72.0	56.6	0.79
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	66.1	74.0	58.1	0.79
India	63.7	70.6	56.2	0.80
Cameroon	61.3	67.2	55.3	0.82
Guatemala	51.4	55.7	47.4	0.85
Nigeria	68.6	74.0	63.0	0.85
Eritrea	73.0	78.5	67.3	0.86
Uganda	76.0	81.4	70.7	0.87
Mauritania	47.2	50.1	44.4	0.89
Zimbabwe	70.7	74.7	66.3	0.89
Angola	75.9	80.3	71.6	0.89
Tanzania, United Republic of	40.1	42.4	38.2	0.90
Malawi	73.4	77.0	69.6	0.90
Egypt	79.6	83.4	75.4	0.90
Tajikistan	76.3	79.9	72.7	0.91
Equatorial Guinea	79.9	83.3	76.1	0.91
Rwanda	39.4	41.0	37.8	0.92

Secondary net attendance ratios^a

Countries and territories	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^b
Ghana	70.5	73.5	67.3	0.92
Gabon	84.8	88.3	81.6	0.92
Kenya	80.3	83.1	77.3	0.93
Madagascar	48.9	50.3	47.4	0.94
Haiti	78.4	81.0	75.9	0.94
Bolivia	82.6	85.3	80.0	0.94
Sudan (Northern)	63.2	64.8	61.5	0.95
Peru	87.8	89.9	85.6	0.95
Swaziland	70.8	72.1	69.4	0.96
Viet Nam	79.0	80.6	77.5	0.96
Albania	46.7	47.4	46.0	0.97
Sao Tome and Principe	54.1	55.0	53.3	0.97
Bangladesh	60.0	60.9	59.1	0.97
Bosnia and Herzegovina	86.7	88.0	85.3	0.97
Comoros	37.9	38.4	37.5	0.98
Myanmar	68.5	69.2	67.8	0.98
Azerbaijan	95.1	96.1	94.1	0.98
Turkmenistan	85.4	85.6	85.3	1.00
South Africa	91.2	91.2	91.1	1.00
Uzbekistan	93.8	93.8	93.7	1.00
Indonesia	60.7	60.5	61.0	1.01
Dominican Republic	90.8	90.3	91.3	1.01
Colombia	73.9	73.1	74.8	1.02
Suriname	81.1	80.2	81.9	1.02
Kyrgyzstan	86.2	85.4	87.1	1.02
Kazakhstan	95.7	94.6	96.9	1.02
Brazil	81.7	80.5	82.9	1.03
Venezuela	87.7	86.2	89.2	1.03
Moldova, Republic of	86.3	84.6	88.1	1.04
Armenia	94.3	92.6	96.1	1.04
Guyana	85.8	83.9	87.8	1.05
Trinidad and Tobago	87.6	85.4	89.8	1.05
Namibia	84.0	81.5	86.3	1.06
Philippines	80.9	76.9	84.9	1.10
Nicaragua	62.0	58.2	65.9	1.13
Lesotho	73.0	68.6	77.6	1.13
Mongolia	76.5	71.6	80.8	1.13

□ Shaded countries and territories are on course to meet the goal of gender parity in secondary education (GPI from 0.96 to 1.04).

^a Secondary net attendance ratios are based on household surveys (Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys), 1998-2003.

^b Ratio of girls' to boys' secondary net attendance ratio (SNAR).

Policies to abolish school fees appear to have made an impact in the region.

Eastern/Southern Africa will require a massive rate of increase in the NE/AR – an average of 2.75 per cent per year – if universal primary education is to be realized by 2015. This despite a statistical gender parity for the region and having maintained the world's second-highest AARI – 0.9 per cent a year – in NE/AR over the period 1980 to 2001. Yet the region had only 62 per cent of primary-school-age children in school and, despite its relatively small population compared with Asia, it accounted for 19 per cent of the world's total number of children out of primary school.

In many countries of the region, progress towards the goal of education for all has been massively disrupted by HIV/AIDS. The pandemic has ravaged education systems in a multitude of ways. It has deprived schools of teachers and managers who were struck down in their prime. It has forced orphaned children to assume the burden of care for the family, making school attendance an impossibility. And it has undermined the traditional safety net of the extended family, straining community resources to the breaking point.

Against this background, and notwithstanding the long road yet to be travelled to education for all, countries in the

demand. The countries that have made such bold policy decisions deserve the extra encouragement and funds that debt relief and increased aid can provide; they have demonstrated to the rest of the developing world what is possible in the push towards universal primary completion.

Gender parity remains a vital issue in the region, despite UNICEF projections for 2005 showing the net attendance of girls and boys to be level at 65 per cent. In recent years there has been a strong movement to improve girls' educational opportunities in southern Africa and in most of eastern Africa through qualitative improvements such as child-friendly schools, life skills education that is gender responsive, school-feeding programmes, teacher development and child participation. The gains in gender parity owe much to these actions, including support to national efforts provided by the African Girls' Education Initiative and efforts by partners in the UN Girls' Education Initiative. The Girls' Education Movement (GEM) is a further manifestation of this, with girls themselves serving as activists for change. Girls' participation in school increased by an average of 0.5 percentage points a year over boys' during the period from 1980 to 2001.

EASTERN/SOUTHERN AFRICA: STILL A WAY T

region have posted some notable achievements by showing strong political will and making universal primary education an absolute priority. Some of the measures that appear to have made an impact in the region include policies to abolish school fees and other charges. Indeed, the abolition of tuition fees has become more generalized in the region since the 1980s – a period of economic austerity – and has proved to be one of the keys to swift progress in primary enrolment.

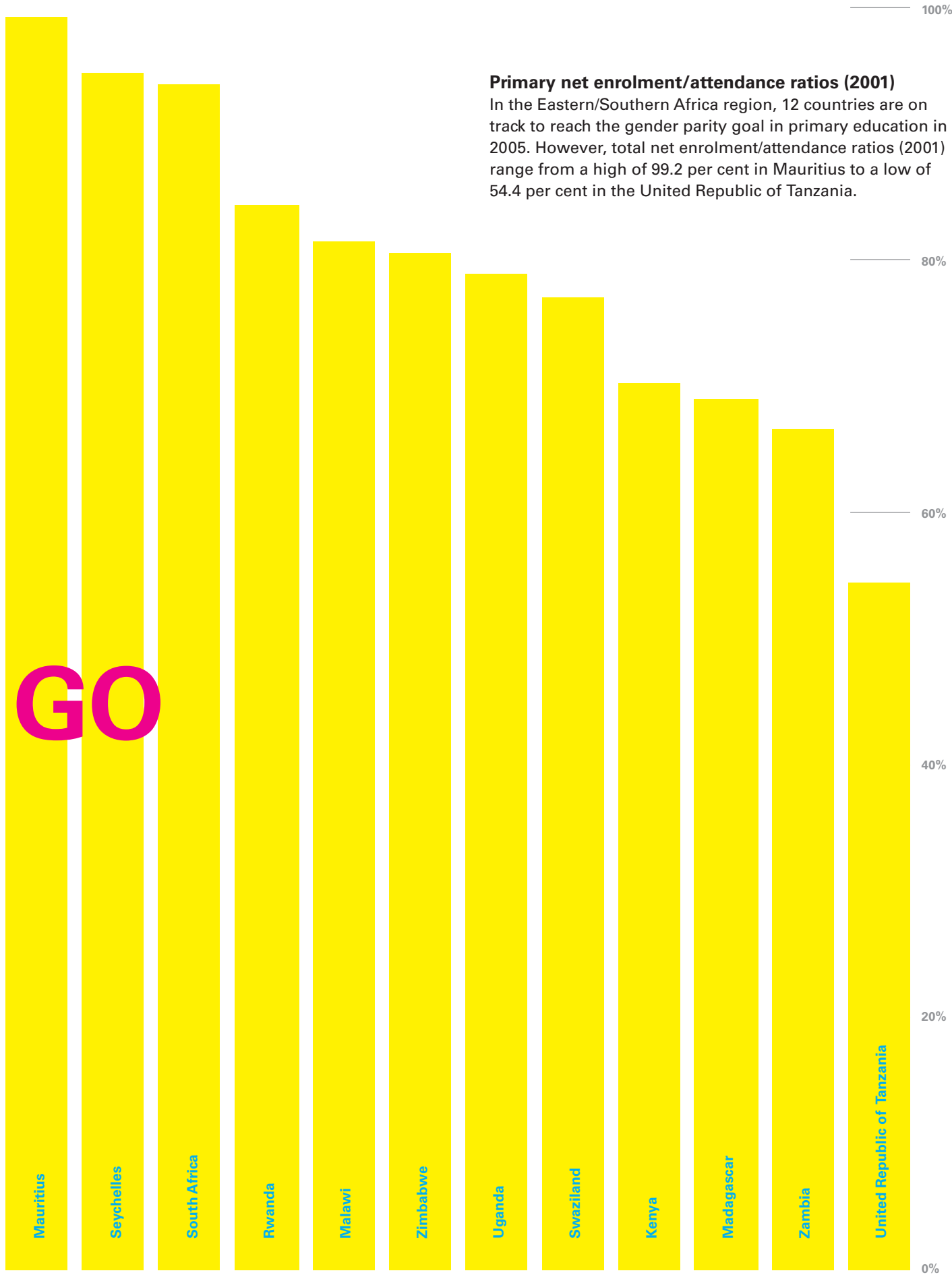
Malawi's abolition of fees for primary education in 1994 stimulated an enormous demand from children, and the experience of other countries has been similar. In the United Republic of Tanzania in 2002 the abolition of school fees caused primary school enrolment to jump from 1.4 million to 3 million; in Kenya in 2003 it boosted numbers by 22 per cent in the first week alone. Uganda's variant of the model, offering free primary education to the first four children in each family, has also proved popular and successful.

For countries that have abolished school fees, the main difficulty has been to safeguard quality education through adequate classroom accommodation, supply of materials and sufficient numbers of teachers to cope with the extra

The region includes countries that are within touching distance of universal primary education, such as Mauritius, Seychelles and South Africa (all well over 90 per cent in NE/AR in 2001). But it also includes three East African countries that are still a world away from seeing all their children in primary school and that make the overall regional statistics much lower. In 2001 the NE/AR in Eritrea was just 42.9 per cent, in Ethiopia 30.6 per cent and in Somalia an unimaginable 10.8 per cent. Ethiopia alone had 7.8 million of the world's children out of primary school in 2001, a number exceeded only by India.

It is encouraging that many countries that have made significant progress towards universal primary education are now facing a demand for secondary education from children who are ready to move on. In Kenya, for example, the massive response from children hungry for education is now feeding through to secondary level. There was an almost 12 per cent increase in the number of children sitting for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in 2004. Yet less than half of those who left primary school could be accommodated in the country's 4,000 public secondary schools.⁹

GO



The gender gap in the region is particularly wide.

The challenge the world faces in order to meet the MDG of universal primary education by 2015 is greatest in West/Central Africa. In 2001 the NE/AR in the region was just 55 per cent, despite having increased at an average annual rate of 0.8 per cent since 1980. More than a third of the 21 countries worldwide in which net primary school participation is below 60 per cent are in the region. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria, moreover, contributed 5.3 million and 7.7 million, respectively, to the total number of children out of school in 2001, numbers only exceeded in three other countries: Ethiopia, India and Pakistan.

The only countries in West/Central Africa that are currently close to universal primary participation are among the smallest in terms of population: Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe. At the other extreme, in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Niger, fewer than two children in every five benefit from primary education.

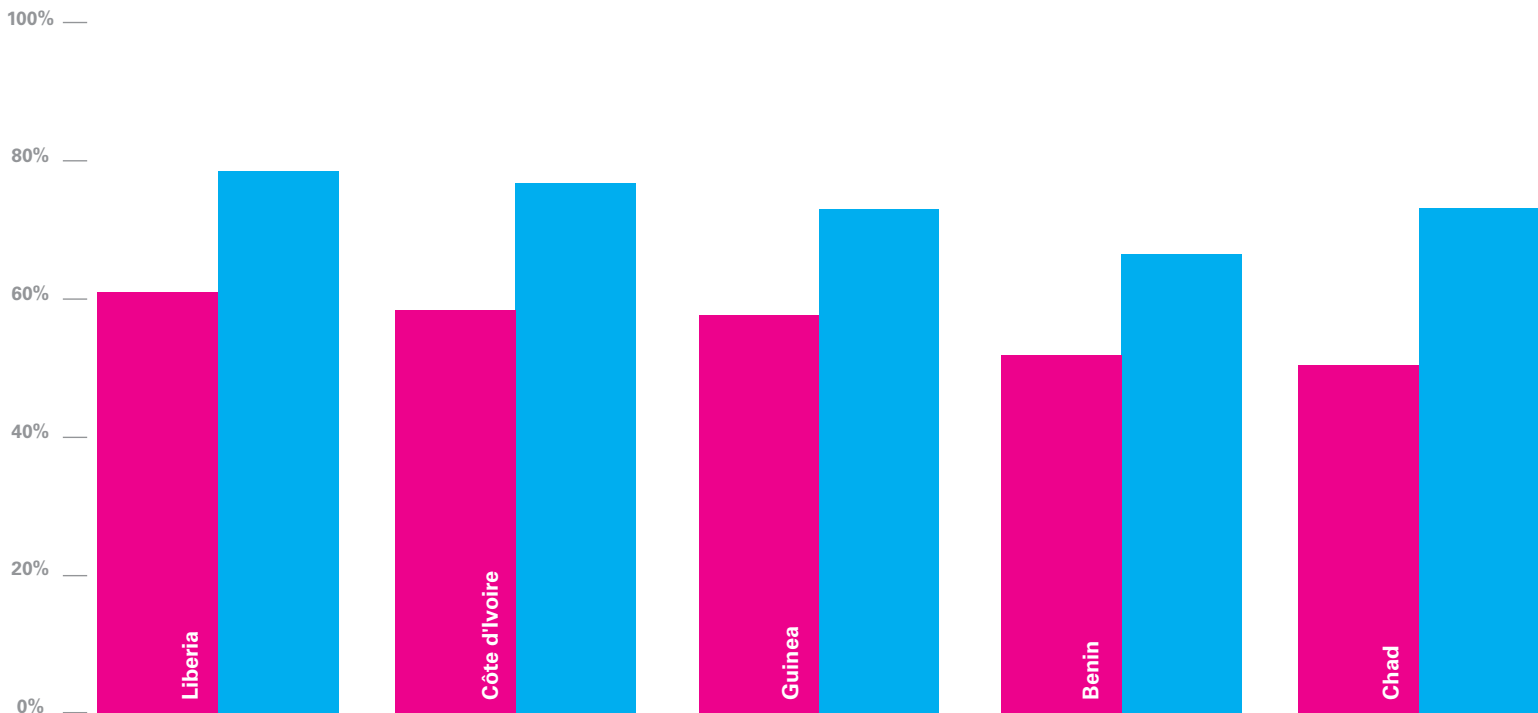
The gender gap in West/Central Africa is particularly wide, with a GPI of just 0.90 according to UNICEF projections for 2005 based on attendance data. Only five countries –

Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Mauritania and Sao Tome and Principe – are on track to meet the gender parity goal in primary education in 2005. (Net enrolment/attendance estimates in 2001 showed Cape Verde also to be on track.) The countries in the region in which girls are most disadvantaged educationally are Chad and Niger.

High repetition and drop-out rates are common, and transition rates from the first to the fifth grade are very low. In Chad, for instance, only 1 child in 10 reaches the fifth year of school without repeating.¹⁰ Teacher shortages, low teacher salaries and few opportunities for professional development add to the poor quality of education in many countries of the region.

This region has also been disproportionately blighted by emergencies, with major armed conflicts having taken place between 1990 and 2003 in Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone.¹¹ The damage done by war to the educational prospects of children in these countries has been incalculable. Among the most notable marks of progress, however, have been the back-to-school

WEST/CENTRAL AFRICA MEASURES NEEDED



campaigns in the Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. In Liberia, for example, following the signing of the peace agreement in August 2003, a nationwide back-to-school campaign mobilized over 7,200 teachers and oriented them in rapid education response, thereby providing access to schooling for an estimated 830,000 children.

Some of the lessons learned in these back-to-school campaigns in West/Central Africa and other regions have been incorporated into essential learning packages. Using the same kinds of interventions in terms of logistics, services and supplies will help accelerate access to a basic education of good quality in stable countries of the region.

Another promising intervention is the child-friendly school model, used in most countries of the region; in Nigeria and Senegal it has been taken a step further towards the establishment of a national standard.

Estimates based on attendance data indicate that Sao Tome and Principe is the only country in the region to be on target

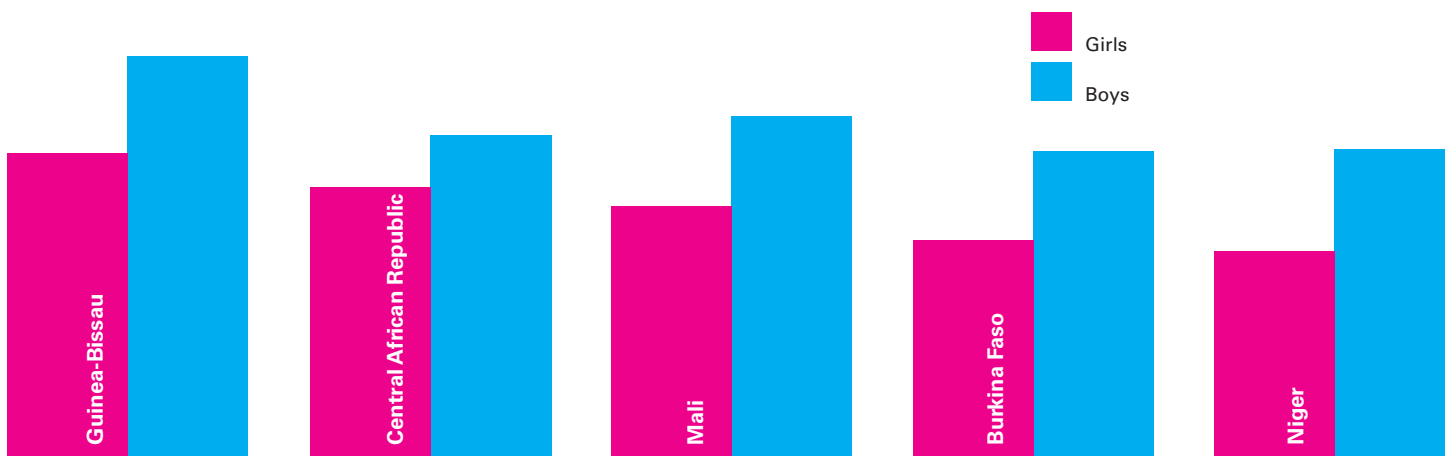
to meet gender parity at the secondary level, although just over one half of children in that country attend secondary school. Secondary net attendance rates are lowest in Niger (13.7 per cent) and Burkina Faso (15.3 per cent).

Governments in this region are constrained by poverty and heavy external debt repayments, often to the detriment of education spending. They struggle to keep pace with the demand for places in schools from a population in which fertility rates are still high and the numbers of children are still rising every year. In a region in which the AARI in NE/AR required to reach primary education for all by 2015 is 3.2 per cent, emergency measures are needed – along with emergency levels of international support and funding.

CA: EMERGENCY

Primary net enrolment/attendance ratios (2001)

In 10 countries of the West/Central Africa region, the gender parity index is lower than 0.85.



Despite improvements, children's participation in primary education remains low.

The primary NE/AR in South Asia is not only below the global average but is the lowest in the world outside sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, progress has been made. Over the period 1980 to 2001, NE/AR improved by an average of 0.9 per cent a year, the second-largest regional rate of increase worldwide.

Despite improvements region-wide, children's participation in primary education remains at an unacceptably low level. In 2001, South Asia accounted for more than a third of all the world's children out of school. India alone accounted for 26.8 million of the 115 million of the children not in primary school globally (23 per cent), while Pakistan had 7.8 million (7 per cent) and Bangladesh 3.8 million (3 per cent). There is a wide variation in the educational provision of the region's countries, ranging from Sri Lanka, which had already achieved universal primary education, and Maldives, which was close to it when the tsunami wiped out 20 years of progress in 20 minutes, to Afghanistan and Bhutan, where little more than half the primary-school-age population is in school.

rise by 3.1 per cent. The comparable annual rates of increase for Nepal would be 2.3 per cent (2.6 per cent for girls) and for India 1.7 per cent (1.9 per cent for girls).

Six of the eight countries in the region have been specially targeted by UNICEF as part of its '25 by 2005' Initiative, aimed at accelerating progress on gender parity. Of these, Bangladesh has been the most successful in increasing the participation of girls in primary school and, according to UNICEF projections, is on target to meet gender parity by 2005, along with Maldives and Sri Lanka (projections are pre-tsunami).

The demand for secondary education throughout the region has grown as more pupils have graduated from primary school, with enrolment increasing from around a third to approximately half of all children between 1990 and 2000.¹²

At the secondary level in India, however, the position is reversed. A UNICEF survey in 2000 showed that 12.3 per cent of girls had dropped out of secondary school compared

SOUTH ASIA: 42 MILLION OUT OF S

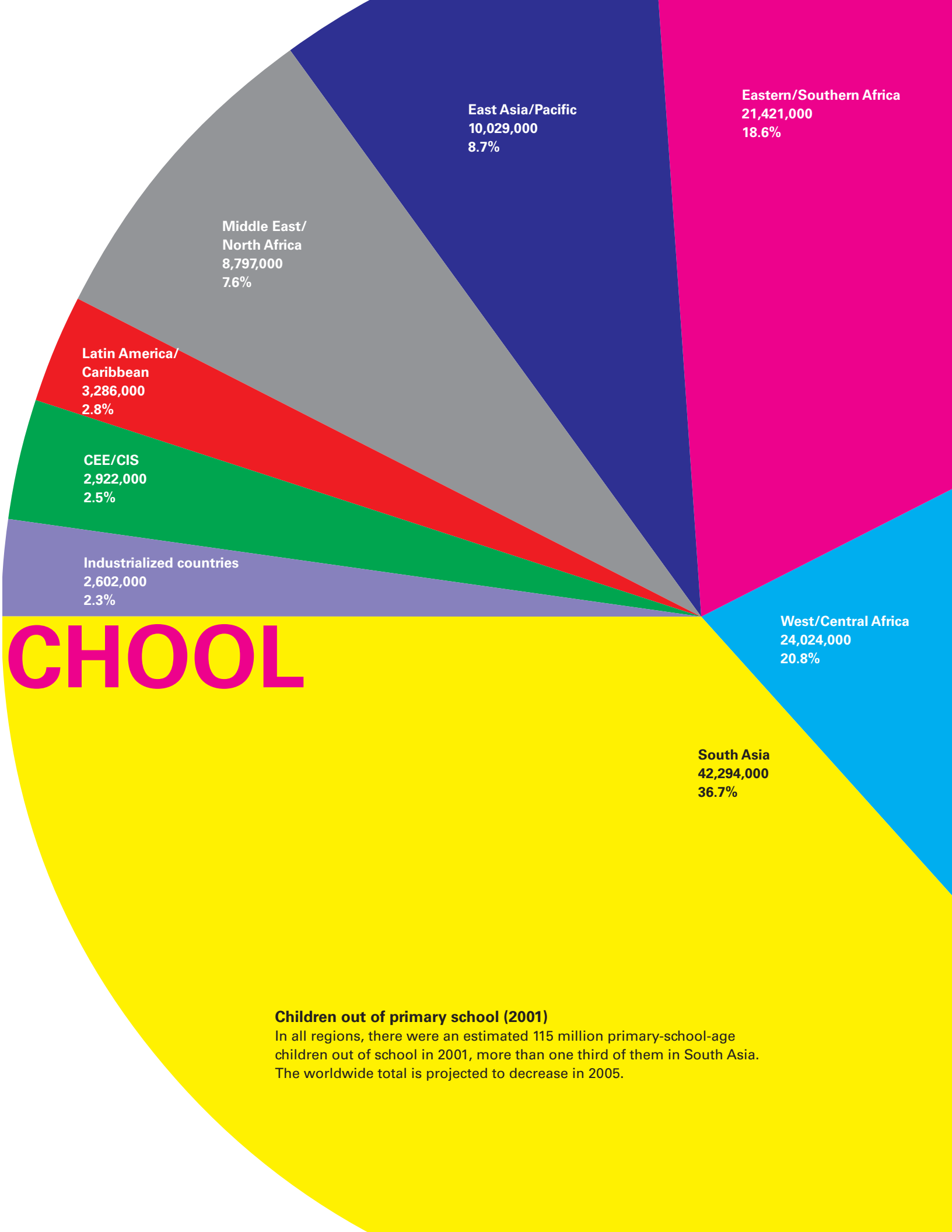
Despite an AARI in primary participation by girls that has been more than twice as high as for boys throughout the period 1980 to 2001, the gender gap is still unacceptably wide, with 80 per cent of boys in school compared with only 75 per cent of girls, according to UNICEF projections for 2005. Social structures that include caste and in which women's status is low are a barrier to girls' education in the region, particularly in India and Nepal.

The countries with the widest gender gaps in the region are Pakistan, where UNICEF projections for 2005 show a GPI of just 0.83, and Nepal, 0.89. In addition, Afghanistan in 2001 had the widest gender gap of all in South Asia.

In the region as a whole there are 94 girls in school for every 100 boys – lower than the global average – with Nepal (89) and Pakistan (83) both scoring disappointingly low on this particular index of gender discrimination. To achieve universal primary education by 2015, Pakistan would have to increase participation at an average of 2.6 per cent per year – but girls' participation in that country would have to

with 9.9 per cent of boys. UNICEF surveys show that large disparities in favour of boys remain at the secondary level in Nepal, with a GPI of 0.77, and in India, with a GPI of 0.80.

It is clear that most countries of the region will require radical strategies and bold measures to build on and accelerate progress. The large numbers of children out of school in South Asia require that improvements be made in absolute terms and not just in percentages, which mask the true picture.



CHOOOL

Children out of primary school (2001)

In all regions, there were an estimated 115 million primary-school-age children out of school in 2001, more than one third of them in South Asia. The worldwide total is projected to decrease in 2005.

Tremendous strides have been made over the last 25 years.

The Middle East/North Africa region has made tremendous strides in the provision of primary education over the past 25 years. The region achieved by far the world's highest AARI in NE/AR with 1.4 per cent a year. If these average annual rates of progress were maintained, the region would be well on track to meet the goal of universal primary education by 2015.

The region is inevitably more diverse than its averages, however, as seen in the picture for the individual countries and territories. Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia are all pushing close to universal primary provision. At the opposite pole are countries where the education system is not as developed and where even the impressive AARI recorded in the region would be insufficient to ensure that all children were in school by 2015.

school by 2015. Presently only 60 girls per 100 boys attend primary school in Yemen.

Quality of education, school dropout rates and the gender gap remain problems in the region, with gender a challenge particularly in Djibouti, Sudan and Yemen. UNICEF projects that 84 per cent of girls in the region will participate in primary school compared with 90 per cent of boys in 2005; in other words, 94 girls in school for every 100 boys, one of the lowest ratios in the world. This is despite the huge advances in girls' education in Middle East/North Africa in recent decades.

With a projected GPI of 1.05 in 2005, Bahrain goes against the regional trend by having more girls than boys in primary school.

The gender gap widens at the secondary level, with only 43 per cent of girls and 54 per cent of boys in school. Of the

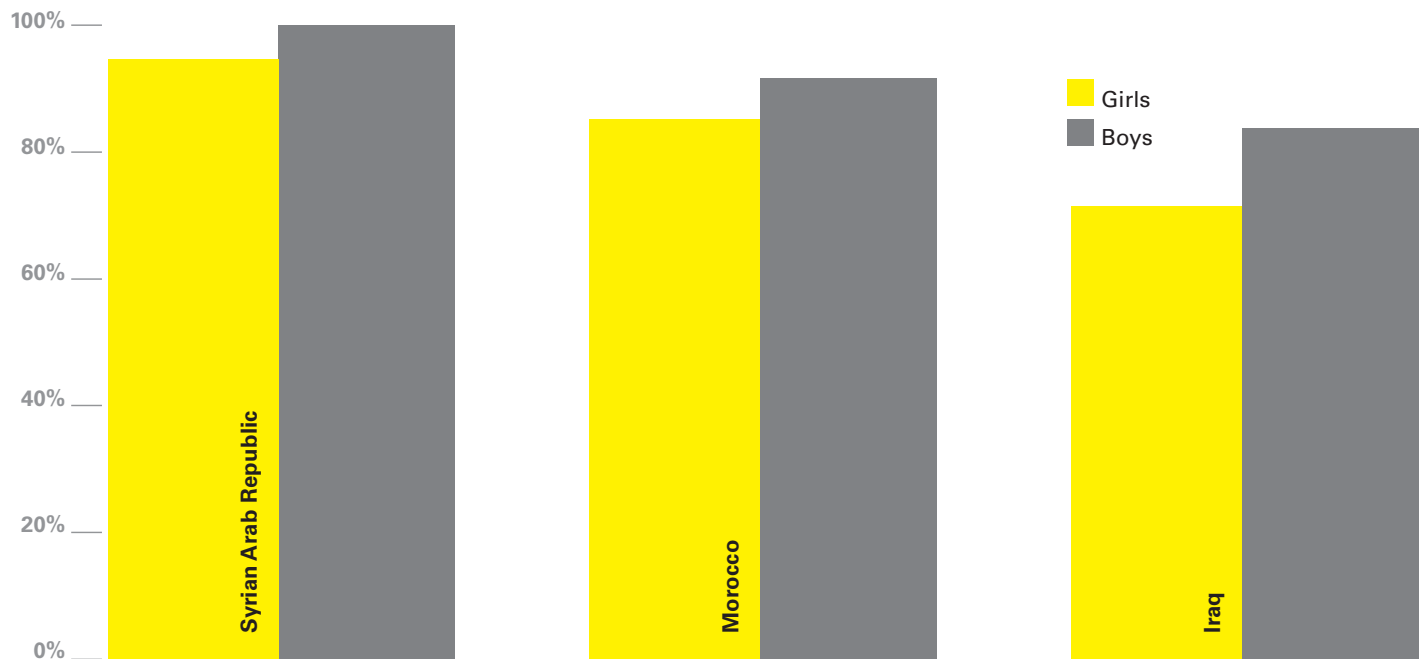
MIDDLE EAST/ NORTH AFRICA: BEYOND THE AVERAG

The recent achievements of two countries at opposite ends of the educational spectrum are particularly worthy of recognition. Tunisia has a strong record, with enrolment high at all levels of the system, almost universal enrolment in grade 1 and gender parity in both primary and secondary levels (female students now outnumber male students at the tertiary level).¹³ Meanwhile, Yemen, which had already maintained an AARI in primary NE/AR of 1.96 per cent between 1980 and 2001, adopted a participatory strategy for basic education and allocated more than 20 per cent of its budget (6 per cent of gross domestic product) to education. In March 2003 it was one of 10 countries to receive extra financial resources from the international donor community under the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative.¹⁴

The resources will be much needed. Yemen needs to increase girls' primary participation by 3.9 per cent a year and boys' by 2.1 per cent a year if all children are to be in

three countries in the region surveyed for secondary-school attendance, Egypt fares best, with total attendance of 80 per cent and 90 girls per 100 boys in school. Yemen, with 41 girls per 100 boys in secondary school, and Iraq, with 67 girls per 100 boys, fared less well. Total net secondary attendance is estimated at less than 60 per cent in the latter two countries.

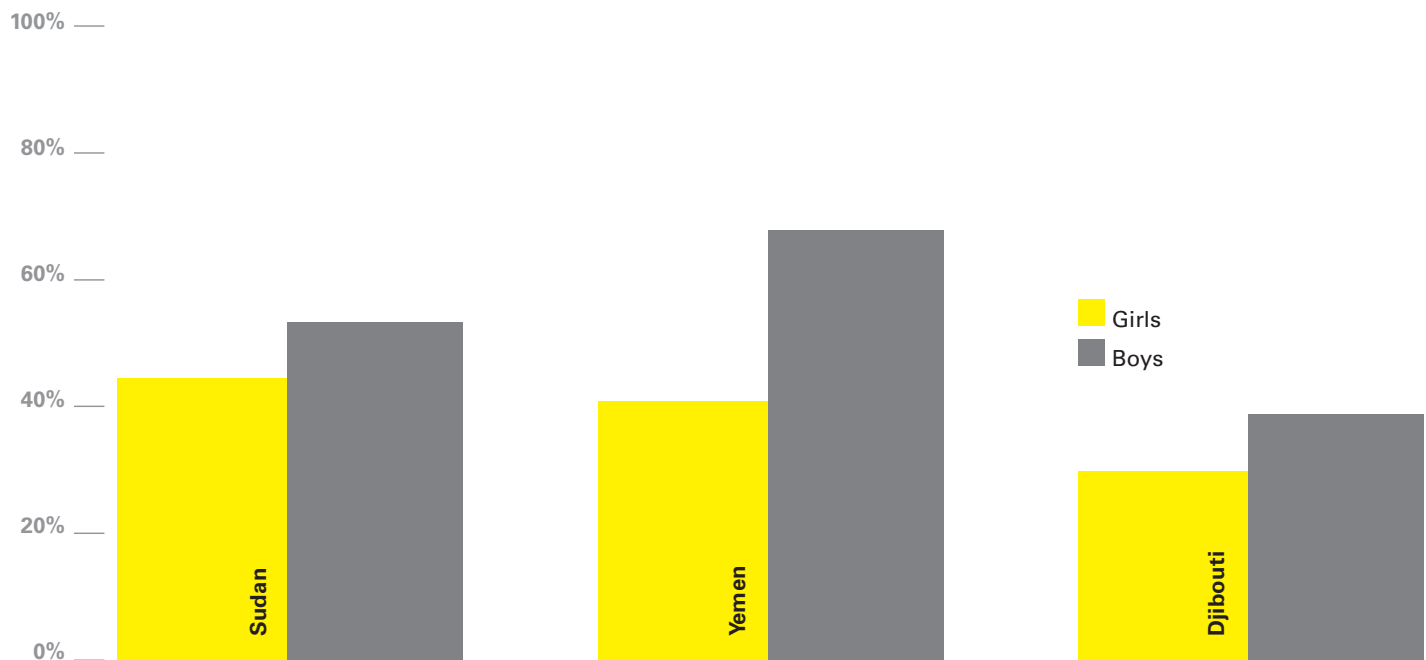
More significant than these numbers, however, is the concern that education largely reproduces and reinforces the wider social discrimination and economic and political disparities experienced by girls and women in many countries of the region. In that regard, education systems generally need to be more gender responsive.



ES

Primary net enrolment/attendance ratios (2001)

The Syrian Arab Republic, Morocco and Iraq will require additional efforts to meet the gender parity goal in primary education in 2005; Sudan, Yemen and Djibouti are far from the goal.



Social, economic and demographic upheaval has affected education systems.

CEE/CIS had a primary NE/AR of 88 per cent in 2001, exceeded only by East Asia/Pacific and Latin America/Caribbean in the developing world. It did, however, also show a lower AARI in primary NE/AR between 1980 and 2001 (0.35 per cent) than any other developing region. In part this reflects the strong base from which the region was working, as governments had long tended to make education – of both boys and girls – a priority.

However, an analysis of individual country data shows that the regional average is only as high as 0.35 per cent because of the 0.7 per cent annual average increase in Turkey. All the other countries in the region for which data are available recorded an AARI of less than 0.1 per cent except Bosnia and Herzegovina (0.2 per cent). In many countries, the number of children in primary school actually dropped during the 1990s, largely due to population declines, though the NE/AR of the primary-school-age group nonetheless grew.¹⁵

The profound social, economic and demographic upheaval in the region since 1990 has adversely affected national education systems. While many countries are maintaining or even

As always, the regional averages cloud the fact that some countries have a greater distance to travel to reach universal primary participation than others, even if the disparities between nations are not as great as in most other regions. The highest NE/ARs in 2001 are in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (97.5 per cent), Albania (97.2 per cent) and Tajikistan (96.0 per cent). The lowest ratios are found in the countries most disrupted during the Balkan wars, Serbia and Montenegro (76.2 per cent) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (86.2 per cent), as well as in Azerbaijan (79.9 per cent). Serbia and Montenegro in particular suffered a catastrophic drop in primary participation during the 1990s, the period dominated by civil war and international sanctions.

The averages also mask the disparities that exist within countries. Discriminatory practices and non-inclusive education systems work against the participation of children of ethnic minorities, whose attendance is generally lower than that of other children, and against children with disabilities. Disparities are particularly marked at pre-primary level, with significantly higher coverage in urban than in rural areas.

CEE/CIS: SHRINKING BUDGETS

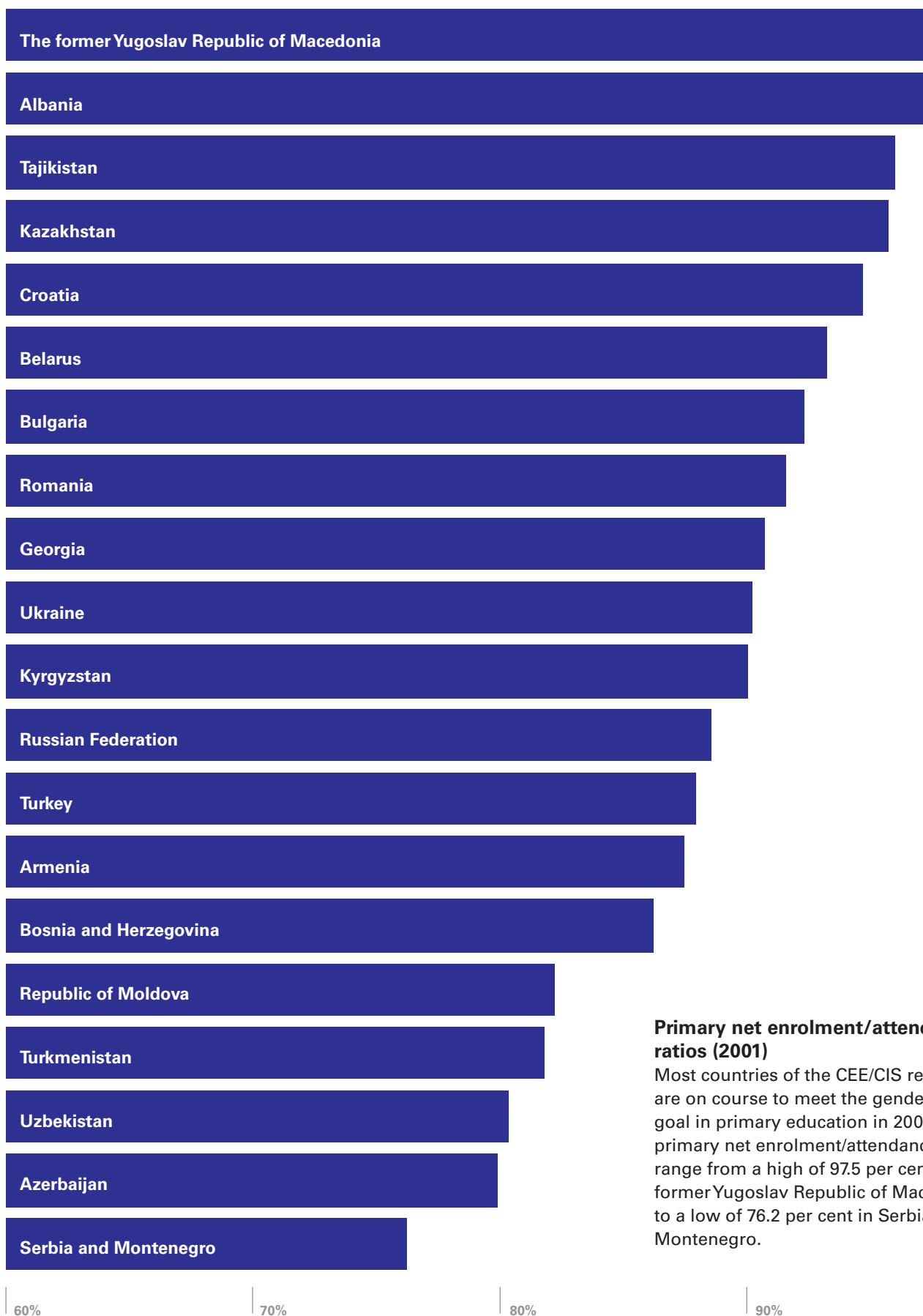
increasing the percentage of public resources allocated to education as before the transition, others – the Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in particular – have seen a drop in public spending on education as a percentage of GDP. Another example is Kyrgyzstan, where public expenditure on education dropped from 6.0 per cent of GDP in 1991 to 4.5 per cent in 2002.¹⁶

At the same time, in many countries families are often finding it difficult to meet the rising costs of textbooks, uniforms and school supplies and even kindergarten fees. Conflict and ethnic tensions have also had an impact on children's school attendance, particularly in the northern Caucasus, Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) and Central Asia.

The improvement in the provision of primary education in the region is not fast enough to put it on track for universal primary education by 2015. An AARI of 0.84 per cent would be required, but the relatively high starting levels of participation certainly make achievable the acceleration necessary to reach the goal.

In overall regional terms, gender parity is expected to be achieved at the primary level by 2005. Indeed all individual countries are on track to meet the 2005 target except Tajikistan (0.95), with Turkey projected to increase from 0.93 in 2001 to 0.96 in 2005. (Turkey is one of the 25 countries identified by UNICEF for accelerated efforts in girls' education as part of its '25 by 2005' Initiative.) Country data do not reflect the disparities that are often more pronounced within minority groups, such as the Roma, in which girls face higher risks of non-attendance and dropout than boys. Nor do they reflect gender disparities that are still emerging post-transition as a result of the breakdown of the social construct.

Secondary education is also well developed across the region, and enrolment has risen significantly in recent years in Bulgaria and Turkey but has declined in Belarus, Estonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and the Russian Federation.¹⁷ Gender parity is also common at the secondary level, with Tajikistan (0.91) and Turkey (0.71) again the countries in which girls are most disadvantaged.



Primary net enrolment/attendance ratios (2001)

Most countries of the CEE/CIS region are on course to meet the gender parity goal in primary education in 2005. Total primary net enrolment/attendance ratios range from a high of 97.5 per cent in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to a low of 76.2 per cent in Serbia and Montenegro.



Regional averages can mask differences among and within individual countries.

Reducing disparities and improving educational quality are two critical issues for Latin America/Caribbean in its push to achieve the MDGs related to education. Progress in the region has been steady throughout the 1990s and into the first years of the 21st century, putting the region on track to achieve the universal primary completion goal by 2015. NE/AR grew by an average of 0.6 per cent a year between 1980 and 2001, and the region is now within touching distance of education for all.

As always, however, regional averages can mask differences among and within individual countries. While the region as a whole needs to continue improving its NE/AR by an average of only 0.4 per cent a year to meet the 2015 goal, some countries are much further away from universal primary education and will need to step up their efforts significantly in order to achieve it. Haiti, the poorest country in the region, will require a 3.3 per cent increase a year – it still had only 54 per cent of children in primary school in 2001, and recent civil upheavals and natural disasters have not helped its prospects. Guatemala will require an increase of 1.07 per

will have to work hardest to ensure that boys' participation in primary school matches that of girls are Caribbean nations such as the Bahamas (which has a GPI of 1.05), Haiti (GPI of 1.08) and Saint Kitts and Nevis (GPI of 1.12). In some countries, such as Grenada and Guatemala, the gender gap goes the other way, with more boys than girls in school.

Educational prospects in the region are particularly affected by the wide disparities within many societies. The disparities between rich and poor, and between urban and rural populations, are evident throughout the region but are especially marked in Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay. The educational divide between groups of different racial, ethnic or linguistic origin is, furthermore, a notable problem in Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama.¹⁸ Children with disabilities and other health impairments are also often excluded from schooling; the silence on this issue must be broken if this group is to claim its right to a basic education.

LATIN AMERICA/ CARIBBEAN: WIDE DISPARITIES

cent a year; its total primary enrolment/attendance in 2001 was 85 per cent.

The region as a whole and the large majority of countries are on course to achieve gender parity at the primary level by the 2005 target, with a UNICEF-projected GPI for the region of 1.02. The greatest problem in terms of gender disparity is at the secondary level, where significantly more girls (47 per cent) are enrolled than boys (41 per cent).

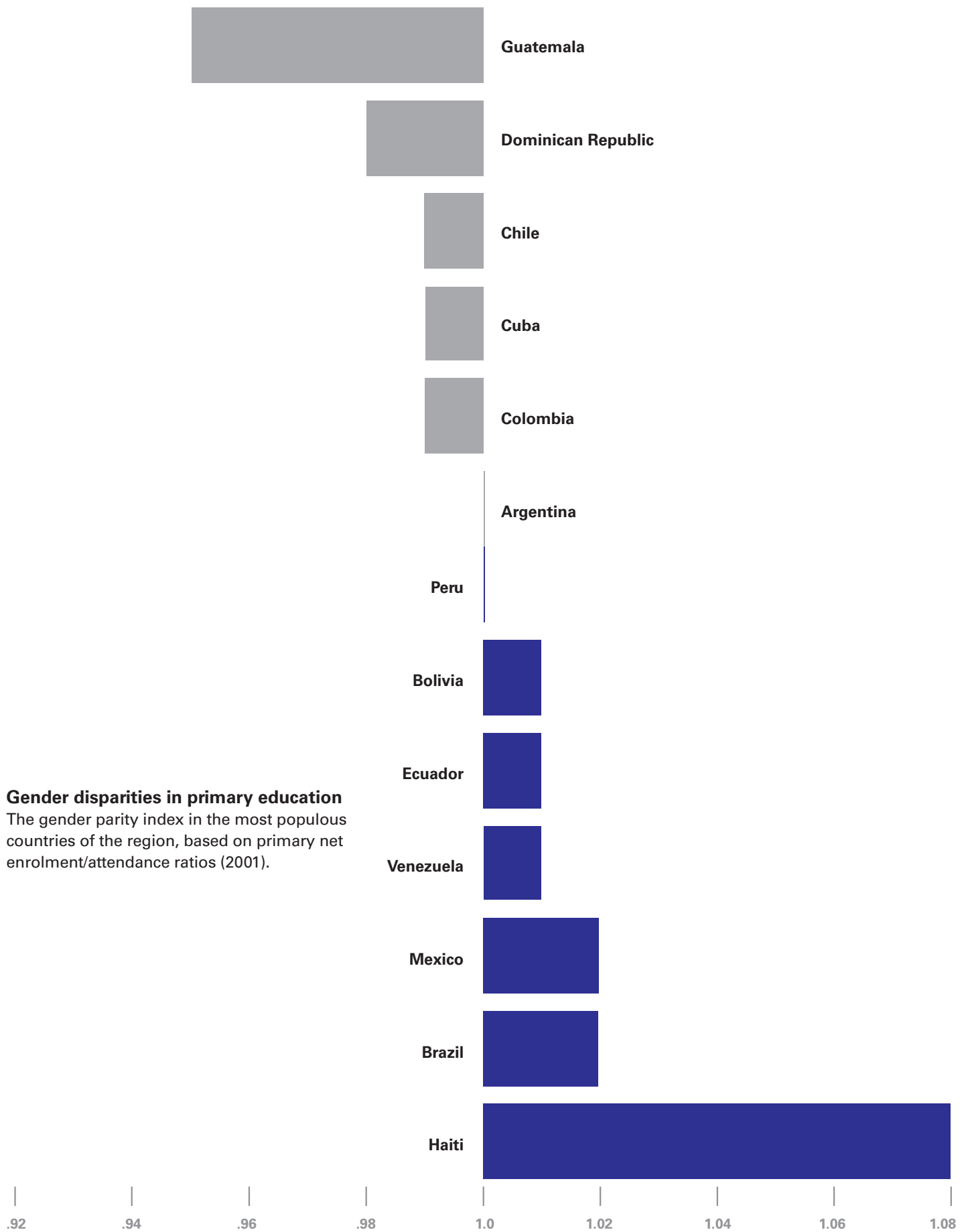
In general, however, the question is still open as to how far gender parity is contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment in any of these countries. Such favourable indicators do not always translate into advances for women once they leave the educational process – gender disparities in political participation and fair pay in employment are two examples of particular relevance in Latin America/Caribbean.

In most countries in the region the gender gap goes one way, with more girls than boys in school. The countries that

Most countries in the region have realized the importance of pre-primary education in preparing children for school. Throughout the 1990s there was steady growth in the provision of pre-primary education, mostly by the State using both formal and non-formal approaches and including significant non-governmental involvement. Thus, while the median-level gross pre-primary enrolment ratio was below 42 per cent in the region's countries in 1990, it had risen to 63 per cent by 2000. Pre-school provision was particularly well developed in Aruba, Barbados, Chile, Cuba, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Venezuela. Children of pre-school age in the Bahamas, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay are much less well served.¹⁹

UNICEF projections for the secondary level show five countries in the region – Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Suriname and Venezuela – to be on course to achieve gender parity, and Guyana, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago having gender gaps that favour girls.

Gender disparities in primary education
The gender parity index in the most populous countries of the region, based on primary net enrolment/attendance ratios (2001).



The region appears to be on track to meet the 2015 goal of universal primary education.

Seen over the period 1980 to 2001, East Asia/Pacific has made steady progress towards the goal of universal primary education. Data from household surveys indicate an AARI of 0.5 per cent in the region's NE/AR over this period. Yet the overall statistics hide a more complex story.

Net primary enrolment in East Asia/Pacific actually fell over the decade from 1990 to 2000.²⁰ The economic crisis of the 1990s had a real impact on enrolment rates in Indonesia, the Philippines and countries of the Mekong subregion (Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam).

Another factor in the decline was a fall off in China, where primary enrolment had been almost universal in 1990 but had dipped substantially in the ensuing decade. In almost all other countries in the region, however, there was consistent progress at virtually every level of education.

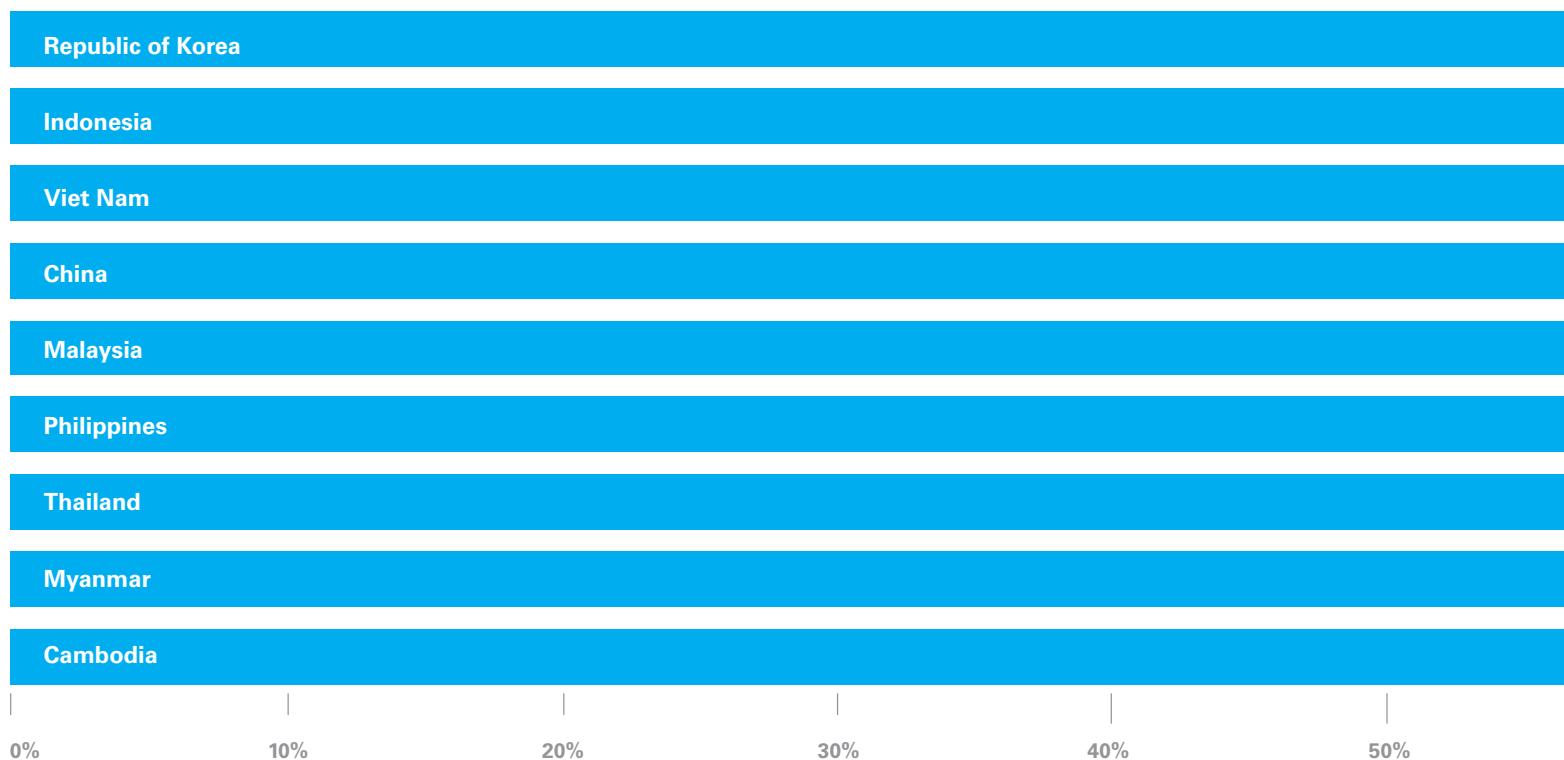
In 2001, the region accounted for 9 per cent of the world's children out of primary school. Just under half of these come from China, where there are 4.5 million children not in school.

The region appears to be on track to meet the 2015 goal of universal primary education, with the required AARI in NE/AR being only 0.4 per cent. Most of the countries in the region need only to maintain their AARI over the years since 1980 to attain the target.

There is still a great deal of work to do. Just as China's huge population means that any setback there will adversely affect statistics for the whole region, that country's real achievement towards universal primary education hides the plight of many less populous countries that are a long way from reaching the goal. The lowest NE/AR in the region, for example, is in Timor-Leste, still recovering from the trauma of its recent national birth: At independence in 2002, under two thirds of primary-school-age children attended school.

The situation in Cambodia is not much better. The NE/AR here in 2001 was just 65 per cent, which means an AARI of 2.5 per cent would be required to meet the goal of universal primary education. Among the other countries that require significantly greater annual rates of increase in order to meet the goal are Papua New Guinea (1.9 per cent), Myanmar (1.3 per cent) and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (1.2 per cent).

EAST ASIA/PACIFIC: A



The other key education MDG, on gender parity, has been broadly achieved in the region at the primary level, thanks to an AARI in girls' NE/AR of 0.7 per cent over the period 1980 to 2001 (boys' NE/AR was 0.3 per cent). As a result, UNICEF projects a GPI for the region of 1.01 in 2005. Seventeen countries are on course to meet gender parity at the primary level, including the most populous nations.

But even where parity will be met, as in Cambodia, Myanmar and Nauru, the full challenge of ensuring a primary education for all children remains. And yet to be seen is the extent to which these numbers will translate into gains in gender equality and women's empowerment.

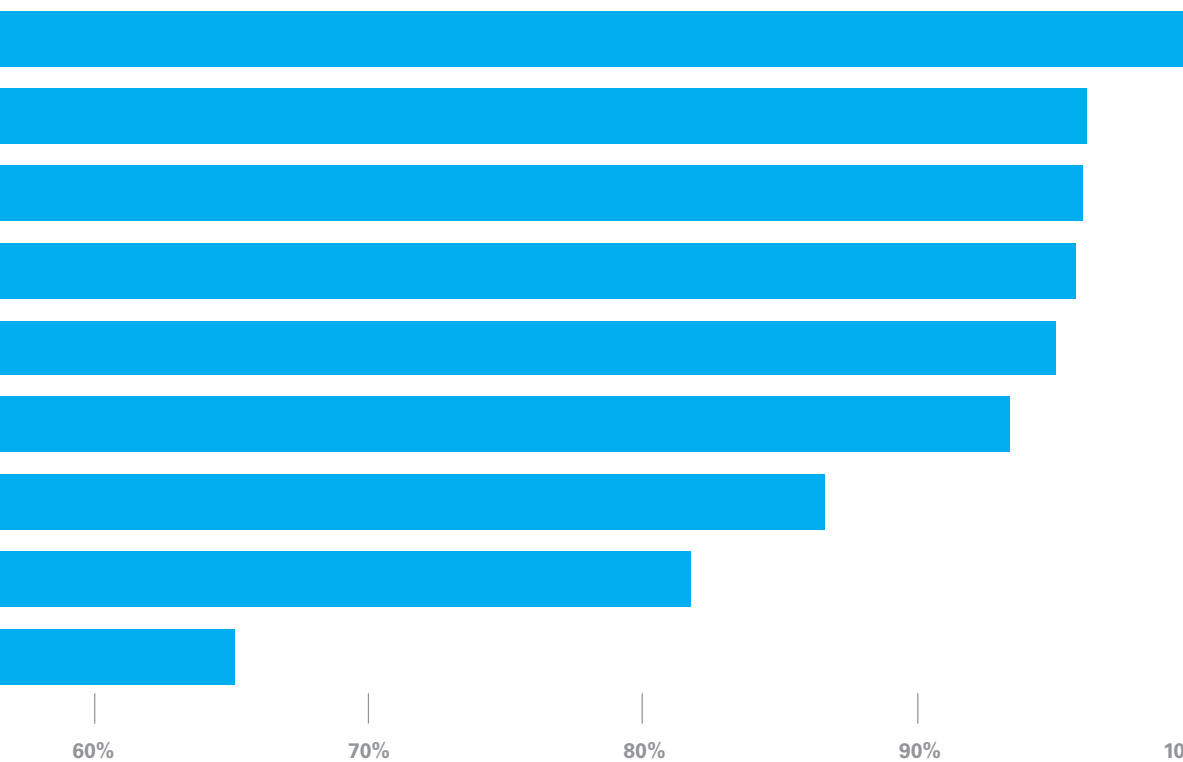
The countries and territories that have the hardest work ahead to meet the gender parity goal in primary education are Papua New Guinea (GPI 0.90), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (0.92), Palau (0.93) and Niue (0.94).

Household surveys of secondary net attendance indicate that Indonesia, Myanmar and Viet Nam are on track to reach gender parity at the secondary level. Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic show a disparity of 68 girls

and 79 girls, respectively, per 100 boys in secondary school; while boys lag in Mongolia and the Philippines, where the disparity at the secondary level favours girls.

Governments of the region are waking up to the need to expand compulsory basic education from primary to include lower secondary level. Secondary net attendance in the region ranges from a low of 50 per cent in Cambodia to highs of 79 per cent in Viet Nam and 81 per cent in the Philippines, according to survey data.

COMPLEX STORY



Primary net enrolment/attendance ratios (2001)

Primary net enrolment/attendance ratios in 2001 in nine populous countries of the East Asia/Pacific region that are on track to meet the gender parity goal for primary education in 2005.

The needs of marginalized groups are not always adequately met.

The concept of education for all may seem less relevant in industrialized countries, many of which have a century of commitment to universal primary education behind them. Compulsory education and considerable national wealth have not, however, necessarily delivered schooling of high quality for all children. Industrialized countries accounted for 2 per cent of all the children of primary school age out of school in 2001, for example, and overall NE/AR still falls just short of the 100 per cent mark. This highlights the great difficulty in reaching those last elusive few percentage points that confirm universal primary completion.

Education systems in the industrialized world continue to be challenged by problems of inequity. The needs of marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities and recent immigrants, are not always adequately met. There is also a growing gender divide to the disadvantage of boys. Projected net attendance rates in industrialized countries in 2005, for example, show 100 per cent of girls in school but only 98 per cent of boys.

Girls are also showing consistently higher standards of attainment, and this is causing policy makers to question whether established methods of classroom instruction are capable of countering this reverse gender gap.

A minority of industrialized countries were still some way short of universal primary NE/AR in 2001. The group includes some that only joined the European Union in 2004 (having formerly been considered part of the CEE/CIS region) such as the Czech Republic (88.5 per cent), Latvia (89.2 per cent) and Slovakia (87.0 per cent). But long-established industrialized nations are also to be found in this group.

Secondary education approaches universality only in the industrialized world, with most countries requiring children to stay in school until the age of 16. Notwithstanding the effect of legal compulsion, net participation rates in secondary school fall below 100 per cent in many rich countries.

INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES NOT THERE YET

GOING FORWARD: AID FLOWS TO EDUCATION

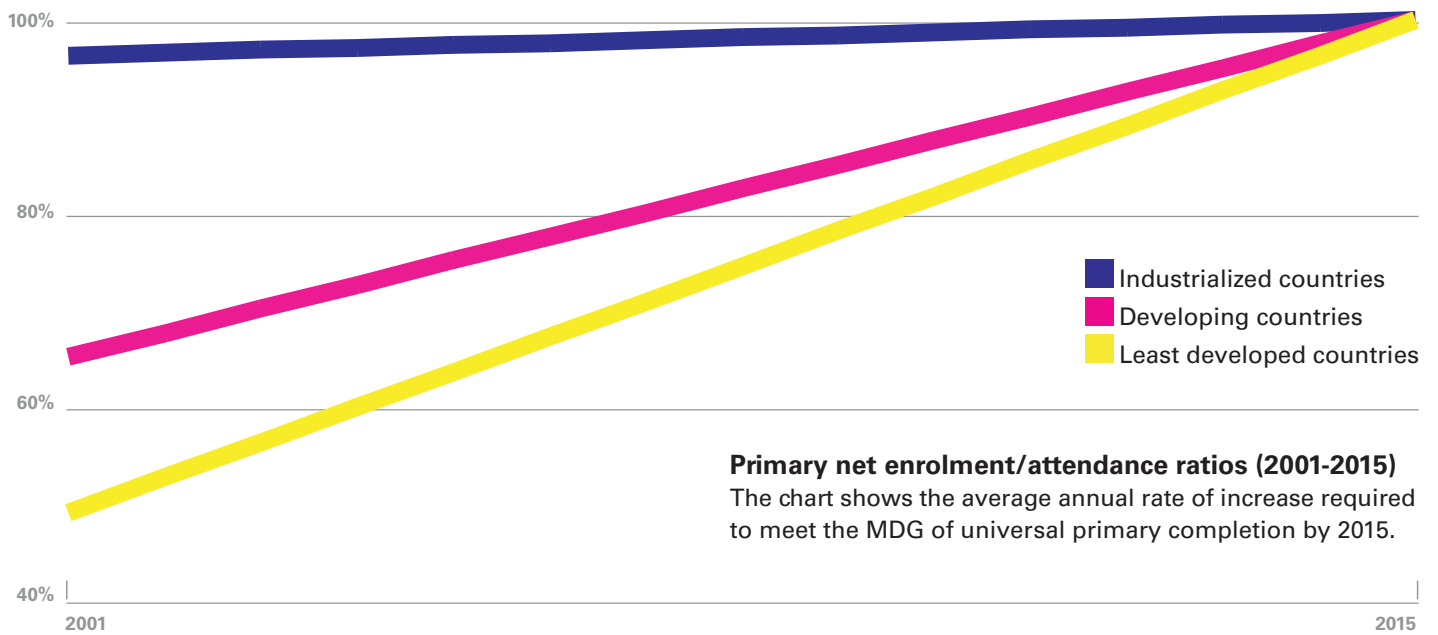
The international community has consistently proclaimed its commitment to Education for All and to the education MDGs – notably at the World Education Summit in Dakar (Senegal) and the Millennium Summit in New York, both in 2000. In 2002, moreover, donor countries at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey (Mexico) renewed their commitment to the MDGs and to increasing the aid resources available for development.

Overall levels of official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries have shown a modest increase in recent years – with a 7 per cent increase between 2001 and 2002 and a further rise of 3.9 per cent between 2002 and 2003.²¹ However, this represented only 0.25 per cent of donor countries' combined gross national income (GNI). Only five countries – Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden – have met the UN ODA target of 0.7 per cent of GNI, though Belgium, Finland, France and Ireland have now set firm dates by which they will achieve it.

Aid flows to education have also shown a modest upturn. In 2002, ODA commitments to education exceeded \$4 billion for the first time since 1999 and represented about 9 per cent of total commitments.²² However, only about 23 per cent of this money is targeted specifically at basic education.

Some governments have already shown the way forward. The Government of Norway, in particular, contributed more than \$51 million to the UNICEF-supported actions in the area of girls' education in 2003-2004, and the Government of Sweden gave more than \$22 million. The same governments, along with those of Finland and New Zealand, are also supporting the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative.

In an extraordinary expression of solidarity with developing countries, the UK Government announced in 2005 that it plans to spend \$2.68 billion over the next three years to help get more girls into school. It also supports the UN Girls' Education Initiative and the EFA Fast-Track Initiative.



NTRIES:

In January 2005, the Government of Spain agreed to cancel Argentine debt in the amount of \$78 million, which will instead be invested in education. Debt-for-education swaps are an increasingly important issue in Latin America, and will be addressed further at the Ibero-American Summit in 2005. It is hoped that the Spain-Argentina swap will establish a precedent for future initiatives of this type.

The UK Government has also been marshalling support for a new push towards the MDGs. In February 2005, finance ministers of the G8 group of industrialized countries reiterated that the rates of increase in development assistance and debt relief hitherto are insufficient if the MDGs are to be achieved. Their recognition that a quantum leap is required is greatly welcomed, though the mechanism by which extra resources are to be raised has yet to be determined.

Education is not an optional add-on – it is a human right.

Progress for children in education is a multi-layered story. It is important to assess how robust and entrenched any progress is and to avoid being lulled into a false sense of security by apparent improvements in numbers like enrolment/attendance/completion, which can be transient or superficial. There are countries that appear to have achieved gender parity and high levels of total enrolment but are still plagued by gross gender disadvantages in society, and where education does not appear to have much of an impact on negative practices like gender-based violence. Equally, there are countries where gains made over many years are wiped away in a matter of hours by a major natural disaster, or more tragically eroded away by years of civil conflict.

In addition, the goals of gender parity and universal primary completion present moving targets, rather than static numbers to be reached. Generally, the level of difficulty tends to increase as progress is made towards these goals, so that reaching the last 5 per cent of children out of school, or eliminating the last few percentage points

disadvantaged countries, battling against formidable odds, and anything seems possible. Look at the dividends gained from bold government decisions to abolish school fees, and it is reasonable to wonder why the remaining challenges cannot be met. Look at the spectacular achievements of countries rising from the ashes of war or other emergencies, and it becomes clear that countries not affected by such calamities should surely be able to do better.

It is largely a matter of perspective and priorities – backed by commitment, determination and resources. The outpouring of sympathy and private charity all around the globe in the wake of the Asian tsunami suggests that there are renewed opportunities for the world to put the demands of common humanity above the assumptions of business as usual – and for governments to be held to the promises that they made at the Millennium Summit.

There are already three major initiatives in the field straining to achieve the educational goals, each complementing the other. Within the overall Education for All movement,

ENDNOTE: A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES

of gender disparity, can present a formidable challenge. Nevertheless, progress made to date indicates that the MDGs relating to education are still eminently achievable. By 2015 it is still possible that every girl and boy in the world will attend and complete primary school. The litmus test as to whether this will be achieved is the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by the end of 2005 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Look at the numbers of children currently out of school, particularly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and the task is liable to seem impossible. Look at the current average annual rates of progress, and it is easy to extrapolate a date far in the future, rather than one just 10 years away. Look at the current levels of aid for basic education, and the estimated extra sum per year of \$5.6 billion²³ needed to achieve universal primary education by 2015 might seem problematic.

On the other hand, look at the incredible achievements in AARI over a 20-year period by some of the most

the Fast-Track Initiative, which was launched in 2002, is a global partnership of donors and developing countries, spearheaded by the World Bank, that aims to accelerate the progress of low-income countries towards universal primary education. UNICEF's '25 by 2005' Initiative aims to help all countries eliminate gender disparities in education, with a special focus on 25 of the nations most at risk of failing to do so.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, led by UNICEF, was established as an Education for All flagship and partnership framework following the 2000 World Education Summit in Dakar to harness the energy of key stakeholders for a sustained campaign to improve the quality and availability of girls' education. The partnership embraces the UN system, governments, donor countries, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, and communities and families, providing stakeholders with a platform for action and galvanizing their efforts to get girls into school and promote gender equality in education.

At national and local levels, moreover, there is now a vast level of expertise and experience of what works and what does not that can be brought to bear on this problem if only the impetus and the resources were directed where they are needed. There is practically no problem in education that does not have a solution already tried and tested elsewhere.

Among the most important policies and strategies to be employed in pursuit of education for all must be the removal of school fees and related charges; the scaling-up of proven interventions that have worked for improving participation and completion rates on a small scale and at local levels; and the application of transformative measures that can help countries achieve a quantum leap in school participation rates, through the rapid and equitable distribution of an essential learning package that is gender sensitive and quality oriented.

In addition to such policies and strategies, the underlying ideology that drives education policy and investments needs to change in quite radical ways. Education is not an optional add-on, to be funded if and when the economy improves – it is a human right. When education systems work on this principle they will go the extra mile to guarantee schooling to the most marginalized and disadvantaged, the majority of whom are almost always girls.

The abolition of fees is, of course, not the end of the story. It requires major funding to replace lost revenues. In the short term, the extra demand for school that it unleashes means huge pressure on the system: Existing school buildings prove too small, teachers are in short supply and more classroom resources are needed. There will still be many hard-to-reach children who will have to be approached by special measures and initiatives, from grants to impoverished families to setting up community schools in temporary buildings. But making education free as a matter of right is the first prerequisite in creating a national ethos for universal primary education.

In some countries intensive work will need to be done to ensure that girls are in school because of the positive experiences they encounter there, rather than in spite of the difficult circumstances, unfriendly learning environments and hostile conditions that they currently endure while in school. In all countries it is important to improve the quality of data and analysis throughout the education field and not rely so heavily on enrolment patterns and trends, which can result in wrong conclusions and recommendations.

A close and constant eye should be trained on the interim targets, and leaders called to account if they are falling short in their commitments. But let no one use the interim indicators to claim that the goal of universal primary education is beyond us. It is realistic, it is affordable, it is achievable. And it is our children's birthright.

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- 2 United Nations Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision Population Database*, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>.
- 3 The rate of progress is measured by calculating the AARI in the proportion of the population with at least primary education. Data from household surveys (DHS and MICS) were used to estimate the likelihood of school attendance (at primary, secondary or higher level) in different age groups; the AARI is the average of the observed change of this likelihood.
- 4 The AARI required to meet the 2015 goal is calculated by subtracting the NE/AR in the year of the most recent estimate (c. 2001) from 100 per cent and dividing the result by the number of years in the period beginning in the year of estimate and ending in 2015. For example, when the year of estimate is 2001, AARI is calculated by subtracting the NE/AR in 2001 from 100 per cent and dividing the result by 14.
- 5 The gender parity index (GPI) is the ratio of girls' to boys' NE/AR. Countries are considered on course to meet the 2005 goal if their GPI is between 0.96 and 1.04.
- 6 In 10 countries greater increases in net enrolment/attendance ratios were observed among boys rather than girls: Trinidad and Tobago; Guyana (both with NE/AR above 95 per cent); Botswana, Lesotho and Uzbekistan (all with NE/AR above 80 per cent); and Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Yemen (all with NE/AR below 60 per cent).
- 7 A UNICEF regression analysis of data for 68 countries identified the net effects of five background variables (child's age, child's sex, place of residence, household wealth and mother's education) on the likelihood of children's primary school attendance. In 63 countries, child's age, household wealth and mother's education were statistically significant. In at least 30 countries, child's sex and place of residence had no significant direct net effects. One way to interpret this result is that child's sex and place of residence may be operating via the significant factors of household wealth and mother's education.
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- 22 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005*, UNESCO, Paris, 2004, p. 188.
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GENDER PARITY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

Countries and territories	Primary NE/AR (c. 2001) ^a				Primary NAR (2005) ^c				AARI observed (1980-2001)			AARI required for 2015 goal		
	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^b	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^d	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
EASTERN/SOUTHERN AFRICA														
Burundi	53.5	58.9	48.1	0.82	56.8	61.2	52.4	0.86	0.83	0.59	1.08	3.32	2.94	3.71
Comoros	55.1	59.9	50.2	0.84	64.3	68.5	60.5	0.88	1.54	1.43	1.73	2.81	2.51	3.11
Ethiopia	30.6	33.1	28.0	0.85	34.6	37.0	32.1	0.87	1.02	0.98	1.03	4.96	4.78	5.14
Eritrea	42.9	46.1	39.6	0.86	48.5	50.6	46.0	0.91	1.41	1.13	1.61	4.08	3.85	4.32
Angola	61.5	66.0	56.9	0.86	67.8	68.8	67.2	0.98	0.90	0.39	1.46	2.27	2.00	2.53
Somalia	10.8	11.6	10.1	0.87	12.1	12.6	12.1	0.96	0.32	0.24	0.50	6.37	6.31	6.42
Mozambique	59.7	63.5	56.0	0.88	63.7	66.5	60.7	0.91	0.99	0.75	1.19	2.88	2.61	3.14
Zambia	66.6	66.9	66.3	0.99	68.2	67.1	69.1	1.03	0.39	0.04	0.70	2.39	2.36	2.41
Tanzania, United Republic of	54.4	54.3	54.5	1.00	58.1	55.7	60.1	1.08	0.91	0.34	1.41	3.26	3.26	3.25
Malawi	81.5	81.5	81.5	1.00	85.0	83.3	86.5	1.04	0.89	0.44	1.25	1.32	1.32	1.32
Seychelles	94.8	94.9	94.7	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.37	0.36	0.38
Madagascar	69.0	68.6	69.4	1.01	74.7	74.2	75.1	1.01	1.41	1.40	1.43	2.21	2.24	2.18
Swaziland	77.0	76.6	77.4	1.01	80.0	79.0	80.9	1.02	0.74	0.59	0.87	1.64	1.67	1.61
Uganda	78.9	78.4	79.4	1.01	82.6	80.0	84.8	1.06	0.92	0.41	1.35	1.51	1.54	1.47
Zimbabwe	80.5	80.0	81.0	1.01	82.4	81.1	83.5	1.03	0.62	0.34	0.84	1.50	1.54	1.46
Kenya	70.2	69.7	70.8	1.02	73.2	71.0	75.1	1.06	0.73	0.33	1.08	2.13	2.16	2.09
South Africa	93.9	92.9	94.9	1.02	96.0	94.6	97.4	1.03	0.53	0.43	0.62	0.44	0.51	0.36
Mauritius	99.2	98.5	100.0	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.05	0.11	0.00
Rwanda	84.3	83.1	85.4	1.03	89.3	86.4	91.7	1.06	1.25	0.81	1.58	1.12	1.20	1.04
Botswana	81.1	79.3	82.9	1.05	86.0	84.7	87.4	1.03	1.23	1.35	1.13	1.35	1.48	1.22
Namibia	78.4	75.9	80.9	1.07	81.3	78.6	83.9	1.07	0.71	0.66	0.76	1.54	1.72	1.36
Lesotho	84.7	81.4	88.0	1.08	86.0	83.3	89.0	1.07	0.35	0.48	0.26	1.10	1.33	0.86
WEST/CENTRAL AFRICA														
Chad	58.3	69.8	46.8	0.67	62.1	73.4	50.6	0.69	0.94	0.91	0.95	2.98	2.16	3.80
Niger	34.6	41.1	27.8	0.68	37.6	45.0	30.2	0.67	0.76	0.97	0.60	4.67	4.21	5.16
Burkina Faso	35.5	41.5	29.4	0.71	38.2	44.6	31.7	0.71	0.68	0.77	0.59	4.61	4.18	5.05
Guinea-Bissau	45.4	53.1	37.7	0.71	51.4	58.5	44.3	0.76	1.01	0.90	1.11	3.42	2.93	3.90
Mali	38.6	44.8	32.2	0.72	43.1	49.7	36.6	0.74	0.65	0.70	0.62	3.61	3.25	3.99
Côte d'Ivoire	63.8	73.5	54.0	0.73	67.8	77.0	58.6	0.76	1.00	0.88	1.15	2.59	1.89	3.29
Benin	53.9	61.0	46.8	0.77	59.6	66.7	52.1	0.78	0.96	0.95	0.89	2.88	2.44	3.33
Guinea	61.9	69.5	54.0	0.78	65.7	73.3	57.9	0.79	0.95	0.95	0.97	2.72	2.18	3.28
Liberia	69.9	78.6	61.1	0.78	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.88	1.34	2.43
Central African Republic	43.0	46.8	39.3	0.84	46.1	48.4	43.8	0.90	0.79	0.41	1.13	4.07	3.80	4.34
Equatorial Guinea	85.0	91.6	78.3	0.85	87.3	92.1	82.2	0.89	0.58	0.13	0.98	1.07	0.60	1.55
Togo	63.4	67.7	59.1	0.87	68.7	72.3	64.8	0.90	1.31	1.15	1.42	2.61	2.31	2.92
Senegal	58.4	61.9	54.8	0.89	62.0	65.3	58.6	0.90	0.90	0.85	0.94	2.97	2.72	3.23
Nigeria	61.9	65.5	58.1	0.89	66.2	68.6	63.2	0.92	1.07	0.78	1.27	2.72	2.46	2.99
Sierra Leone	40.9	42.8	39.0	0.91	43.1	44.3	41.7	0.94	0.55	0.38	0.67	4.22	4.08	4.36
Gambia	73.9	77.1	70.7	0.92	79.0	82.5	75.5	0.92	1.28	1.33	1.20	1.86	1.63	2.09
Congo, Dem. Republic of the	34.8	35.7	33.8	0.95	37.5	35.5	39.3	1.11	0.39	-0.03	0.78	3.84	3.78	3.90
Cameroon	74.4	76.4	72.5	0.95	78.4	79.2	77.4	0.98	0.98	0.70	1.21	1.83	1.69	1.96
Sao Tome and Principe	97.4	100.0	94.7	0.95	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00	0.96	0.33	1.43	0.19	0.00	0.38
Ghana	61.0	62.2	59.7	0.96	64.4	64.3	64.1	1.00	0.87	0.52	1.11	2.79	2.70	2.88
Mauritania	66.7	68.2	65.2	0.96	72.5	72.9	72.0	0.99	1.46	1.17	1.69	2.38	2.27	2.48
Gabon	79.6	80.1	79.2	0.99	83.7	82.9	84.4	1.02	0.81	0.56	1.05	1.36	1.32	1.39
Cape Verde	98.9	99.4	98.3	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.08	0.04	0.12
Data not available: Congo														
MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA														
Yemen	54.6	67.8	40.7	0.60	64.4	79.6	48.5	0.61	1.96	2.36	1.54	3.03	2.14	3.95
Djibouti	34.3	38.7	29.8	0.77	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.69	4.38	5.01
Sudan	48.9	53.3	44.4	0.83	56.4	59.2	53.6	0.91	1.25	0.98	1.53	3.19	2.92	3.47
Iraq	77.8	83.8	71.5	0.85	84.2	87.3	80.5	0.92	1.07	0.58	1.50	1.39	1.01	1.78
Saudi Arabia	59.6	62.1	57.0	0.92	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.89	2.71	3.07
Morocco	88.5	91.7	85.2	0.93	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.82	0.59	1.05
Syrian Arab Republic	97.4	100.0	94.7	0.95	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.19	0.00	0.38
Egypt	92.5	94.5	90.4	0.96	96.7	98.0	95.4	0.97	1.05	0.86	1.25	0.54	0.39	0.69
United Arab Emirates	83.9	84.9	82.7	0.97	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.15	1.08	1.23
Algeria	96.9	98.0	95.7	0.98	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.22	0.14	0.31
Kuwait	88.9	89.1	88.7	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.79	0.78	0.81
Qatar	98.8	99.5	98.0	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.09	0.04	0.14
Lebanon	91.6	91.7	91.6	1.00	93.7	92.8	94.5	1.02	0.53	0.29	0.73	0.60	0.60	0.60
Tunisia	97.8	98.0	97.7	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.15	0.14	0.17
Oman	76.1	75.6	76.6	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.71	1.74	1.67
Bahrain	92.2	91.9	92.6	1.01	93.8	91.5	95.9	1.05	0.38	-0.10	0.81	0.55	0.58	0.53
Jordan	94.9	94.3	95.5	1.01	97.2	95.1	99.2	1.04	0.59	0.20	0.94	0.37	0.41	0.32
Occupied Palestinian Territory	98.6	98.2	99.0	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.10	0.13	0.07
Iran, Islamic Republic of	86.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.96	...	...
Data not available: Libyan Arab Jamahiriya														

Countries and territories	Primary NE/AR (c. 2001) ^a				Primary NAR (2005) ^c				AARI observed (1980-2001)			AARI required for 2015 goal		
	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^b	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^d	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
SOUTH ASIA														
Afghanistan	53.1	65.5	39.6	0.60	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.91	2.88	5.03
Pakistan	60.7	67.6	53.4	0.79	65.9	71.6	59.6	0.83	1.04	0.80	1.23	2.62	2.16	3.11
Nepal	66.2	71.1	61.0	0.86	73.7	77.8	69.3	0.89	1.48	1.33	1.65	2.25	1.93	2.60
Bhutan	50.7	53.3	48.0	0.90	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.52	3.34	3.71
India	76.9	80.3	73.3	0.91	80.0	81.8	77.4	0.95	0.77	0.38	1.02	1.65	1.40	1.91
Sri Lanka	100.0	99.9	100.0	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maldives	97.5	97.0	98.1	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.18	0.21	0.14
Bangladesh	79.3	78.4	80.2	1.02	83.9	80.6	86.2	1.07	1.15	0.55	1.50	1.48	1.55	1.41
CEE/CIS														
Turkey	87.9	91.0	84.8	0.93	90.8	92.4	89.1	0.96	0.72	0.35	1.09	0.86	0.64	1.09
Tajikistan	96.0	98.7	93.3	0.95	96.3	98.7	93.7	0.95	0.06	0.00	0.12	0.29	0.09	0.48
Kyrgyzstan	90.0	91.7	88.4	0.96	90.2	91.6	88.7	0.97	0.04	-0.01	0.07	0.71	0.60	0.83
Turkmenistan	81.8	82.8	80.8	0.98	82.1	82.9	81.2	0.98	0.05	0.01	0.08	1.21	1.15	1.28
Bosnia and Herzegovina	86.2	87.3	85.1	0.97	87.0	87.5	86.4	0.99	0.20	0.05	0.33	0.99	0.91	1.07
Azerbaijan	79.9	80.6	79.2	0.98	80.2	80.6	79.7	0.99	0.06	0.00	0.12	1.44	1.39	1.49
Uzbekistan	80.3	80.8	79.9	0.99	80.3	80.8	79.8	0.99	0.00	0.02	-0.01	1.40	1.37	1.44
Moldova, Republic of	82.2	82.5	81.9	0.99	82.3	82.5	82.0	0.99	0.02	0.00	0.03	1.27	1.25	1.29
Armenia	87.5	87.9	87.0	0.99	87.6	88.0	87.1	0.99	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.90	0.86	0.93
Romania	91.6	91.9	91.3	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.60	0.58	0.62
Bulgaria	92.3	92.9	91.8	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.55	0.51	0.59
Croatia	94.7	95.1	94.3	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.38	0.35	0.41
Serbia and Montenegro	76.2	76.1	76.4	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.58	1.60	1.57
Ukraine	90.2	90.3	90.1	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.70	0.69	0.71
Georgia	90.7	90.9	90.5	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.66	0.65	0.68
Albania	97.2	97.3	97.0	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.19	0.18	0.20
Russian Federation	88.6	88.0	89.2	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.82	0.86	0.77
The former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	97.5	97.0	98.0	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.18	0.22	0.14
Kazakhstan	95.7	94.8	96.7	1.02	95.9	94.9	96.8	1.02	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.30	0.37	0.24
Belarus	93.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.48	...	...
EAST ASIA/PACIFIC														
Papua New Guinea	73.0	76.8	68.9	0.90	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.93	1.66	2.22
Lao People's Dem. Republic	82.8	86.1	79.4	0.92	85.9	87.5	84.2	0.96	0.79	0.35	1.21	1.23	1.00	1.47
Palau	96.6	100.0	93.1	0.93	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.23	0.00	0.46
Niue	97.2	100.0	94.1	0.94	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.20	0.00	0.42
Timor-Leste	64.0	65.0	63.0	0.97	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tuvalu	97.9	100.0	95.6	0.96	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.14	0.00	0.29
Thailand	86.7	88.0	85.5	0.97	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.95	0.86	1.04
Cambodia	65.3	65.8	64.7	0.98	67.8	66.5	68.5	1.03	0.64	0.17	0.95	2.48	2.44	2.52
Tonga	95.8	96.0	95.5	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.30	0.28	0.32
Viet Nam	96.2	96.5	95.9	0.99	96.7	96.7	96.7	1.00	0.17	0.07	0.26	0.29	0.27	0.32
Indonesia	96.3	96.7	95.9	0.99	98.4	97.8	99.0	1.01	0.52	0.27	0.78	0.26	0.23	0.29
Myanmar	81.9	81.8	82.0	1.00	85.0	84.5	85.5	1.01	0.79	0.69	0.88	1.29	1.30	1.29
Malaysia	95.2	95.1	95.3	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.34	0.35	0.34
Samoa	96.8	96.9	96.6	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.23	0.22	0.24
Korea, Republic of	99.8	100.0	99.7	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.01	0.00	0.03
China	95.9	95.6	96.3	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.29	0.32	0.27
Fiji	99.7	99.5	100.0	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.02	0.04	0.00
Philippines	93.5	92.4	94.6	1.02	93.8	92.6	95.0	1.03	0.07	0.05	0.10	0.47	0.54	0.38
Vanuatu	93.7	92.9	94.6	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.45	0.51	0.39
Kiribati	98.9	97.9	100.0	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.07	0.14	0.00
Nauru	81.0	79.6	82.4	1.04	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.12	1.20	1.03
Mongolia	90.1	88.2	92.0	1.04	87.5	85.3	89.8	1.05	-0.64	-0.74	-0.55	0.71	0.84	0.57
Micronesia, Federated States of	95.8	91.9	100.0	1.09	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.30	0.58	0.00
Data not available: Brunei Darussalam, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Marshall Islands, Singapore, Solomon Islands														
LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN														
Grenada	86.0	91.0	81.0	0.89	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.93	0.60	1.26
Guatemala	85.0	86.9	82.9	0.95	88.7	89.9	87.2	0.97	0.92	0.76	1.07	1.07	0.94	1.22
Dominican Republic	97.3	98.5	96.0	0.98	98.6	99.8	97.3	0.98	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.20	0.11	0.28
Chile	86.5	87.0	86.0	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.04	1.00	1.08
Colombia	89.4	89.7	89.1	0.99	90.5	90.6	90.3	1.00	0.27	0.23	0.31	0.76	0.74	0.78
Cuba	97.1	97.4	96.7	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.21	0.19	0.24
Guyana	98.1	98.5	97.7	0.99	98.9	99.7	98.1	0.98	0.16	0.23	0.09	0.13	0.10	0.16
Saint Lucia	99.0	99.5	98.4	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.07	0.03	0.11
El Salvador	90.7	90.6	90.9	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.66	0.67	0.65
Jamaica	95.9	95.7	96.1	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.29	0.31	0.28
Barbados	97.7	97.4	97.9	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.17	0.18	0.15
Panama	99.2	99.3	99.0	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.06	0.05	0.07
Argentina	99.8	100.0	99.6	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.01	0.00	0.03
Peru	99.9	99.7	100.0	1.00	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00	0.33	0.13	0.52	0.01	0.02	0.00
Uruguay	89.8	89.6	90.1	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.73	0.75	0.71
Paraguay	92.0	91.6	92.3	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.57	0.60	0.55
Venezuela	94.2	93.7	94.8	1.01	95.4	94.8	96.0	1.01	0.29	0.28	0.30	0.41	0.45	0.37
Bolivia	95.7	95.5	96.0	1.01	97.9	96.5	99.3	1.03	0.55	0.25	0.82	0.30	0.32	0.28
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	96.5	95.9	97.2	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.25	0.30	0.20
Belize	97.9	97.5	98.2	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.14	0.17	0.12

(continued on next page)

Shaded countries and territories are on course to meet the goal of gender parity in primary education (GPI from 0.96 to 1.04 in 2001).

... Data not available. ^a Years of NE/AR estimate range from 1998 to 2002. ^b Ratio of girls' to boys' primary NE/AR.

^c Net attendance ratio (NAR). ^d Ratio of girls' to boys' NAR.

Countries and territories	Primary NE/AR (c. 2001) ^a				Primary NAR (2005) ^c				AARI observed (1980-2001)			AARI required for 2015 goal		
	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^b	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI ^d	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN (continued from previous page)														
Ecuador	99.4	98.9	100.0	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.04	0.08	0.00
Nicaragua	86.7	86.0	87.4	1.02	89.2	88.0	90.4	1.03	0.63	0.51	0.74	0.95	1.00	0.90
Honduras	87.4	86.7	88.3	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.90	0.95	0.84
Costa Rica	90.8	90.0	91.5	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.66	0.71	0.61
Trinidad and Tobago	91.4	90.5	92.4	1.02	92.1	91.3	93.0	1.02	0.18	0.21	0.16	0.61	0.68	0.54
Brazil	94.5	93.6	95.5	1.02	95.9	94.8	97.0	1.02	0.35	0.31	0.40	0.39	0.46	0.32
Mexico	99.1	98.3	99.9	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.06	0.12	0.01
Suriname	98.6	97.3	100.0	1.03	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00	0.46	0.34	0.57	0.10	0.19	0.00
Bahamas	92.9	90.9	95.1	1.05	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.50	0.65	0.35
Haiti	54.3	52.2	56.6	1.08	59.0	55.7	62.4	1.12	1.17	0.88	1.46	3.26	3.42	3.10
Saint Kitts and Nevis	86.2	81.5	91.5	1.12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.92	1.24	0.57

Data not available: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica

INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES														
New Zealand	99.3	99.6	99.0	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.05	0.03	0.08
Netherlands	99.4	100.0	98.8	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.04	0.00	0.09
Spain	99.6	99.9	99.3	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.03	0.01	0.05
Czech Republic	88.5	88.5	88.4	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.82	0.82	0.83
Slovenia	95.3	95.2	95.3	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.34	0.34	0.33
Malta	95.4	95.4	95.5	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.33	0.33	0.32
Lithuania	97.0	97.0	97.0	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.22	0.22	0.22
Luxembourg	97.1	97.1	97.1	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.21	0.21	0.21
Israel	98.0	97.9	98.1	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.14	0.15	0.13
Poland	98.2	98.0	98.3	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.13	0.14	0.12
Estonia	98.8	98.7	99.0	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.09	0.10	0.07
Belgium	99.1	99.0	99.1	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.07	0.07	0.06
Greece	99.3	99.4	99.3	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.05	0.05	0.05
Sweden	99.5	99.7	99.3	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.03	0.02	0.05
Canada	99.6	99.5	99.7	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.03	0.03	0.02
Italy	99.6	99.7	99.4	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.03	0.02	0.04
France	99.7	99.6	99.8	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.02	0.03	0.01
Switzerland	99.7	99.7	99.7	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.02	0.02	0.02
Finland	99.8	99.7	99.8	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.02	0.02	0.01
Iceland	99.8	99.8	99.7	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.02	0.01	0.02
Norway	99.8	99.7	99.9	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.02	0.02	0.01
Denmark	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.00	0.00	0.00
Japan	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.00	0.00	0.00
United Kingdom	100.0	100.0	99.9	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.00	0.00	0.01
Latvia	89.2	88.6	89.8	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.77	0.82	0.73
United States	93.7	93.1	94.4	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.45	0.49	0.40
Australia	95.2	94.8	95.6	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.37	0.40	0.34
Cyprus	98.5	98.2	98.8	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.11	0.13	0.09
Hungary	98.8	98.4	99.2	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.09	0.11	0.06
Portugal	99.0	98.7	99.3	1.01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.07	0.09	0.05
Germany	83.8	83.1	84.7	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.01	1.06	0.96
Slovakia	87.0	86.2	87.9	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.93	0.98	0.87
Austria	89.9	89.2	90.6	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.72	0.77	0.67
Ireland	95.5	94.7	96.3	1.02	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.32	0.38	0.26

Data not available: Andorra, Holy See, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino

REGIONAL SUMMARIES														
Eastern/Southern Africa	61.5	62.2	60.9	0.98	65.1	64.8	65.3	1.01	0.89	0.65	1.10	2.75	2.70	2.79
West/Central Africa	54.7	58.7	50.7	0.86	58.0	61.0	54.7	0.90	0.82	0.58	1.00	3.24	2.95	3.52
South Asia	74.0	77.7	70.1	0.90	77.5	79.7	74.6	0.94	0.88	0.50	1.12	1.86	1.59	2.14
Middle East/North Africa	81.3	84.6	77.9	0.92	86.9	89.5	83.8	0.94	1.39	1.24	1.49	1.34	1.10	1.58
CEE/CIS	88.3	89.5	87.1	0.97	89.7	90.1	89.4	0.99	0.35	0.15	0.59	0.84	0.75	0.92
Latin America/Caribbean	94.3	93.9	94.7	1.01	96.7	95.8	97.6	1.02	0.60	0.47	0.73	0.41	0.44	0.38
East Asia/Pacific	94.3	94.4	94.2	1.00	96.2	95.5	96.9	1.01	0.48	0.27	0.67	0.41	0.40	0.41
Industrialized countries	96.3	96.0	96.6	1.01	98.7	97.9	99.5	1.02	...	...	...	0.26	0.29	0.24
Developing countries	65.2	67.7	61.5	0.91	68.6	70.0	65.8	0.94	0.86	0.57	1.07	2.49	2.31	2.75
Least developed countries	49.1	51.7	45.9	0.89	52.8	54.4	50.3	0.92	0.92	0.67	1.10	3.64	3.45	3.86
World	82.2	83.8	80.5	0.96	85.6	87.2	83.9	0.96	0.86	0.57	1.07	1.27	1.16	1.39

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