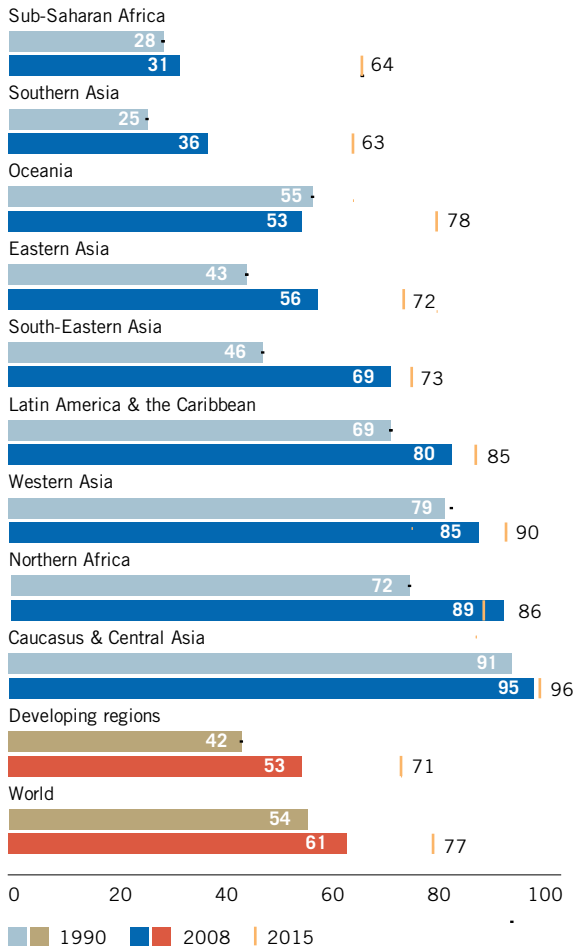


Over 2.6 billion people still lack flush toilets and other forms of improved sanitation

Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility, 1990 and 2008 (Percentage)



The world is far from meeting the sanitation target. In fact, at the current rate of progress, it will take until 2049 to provide 77 per cent of the global population with flush toilets and other forms of improved sanitation. Almost half the population of developing regions and some 2.6 billion people globally were not using an improved form of sanitation in 2008.

That year, an estimated 1.1 billion people did not use any facility at all and practised open defecation, which poses enormous health risks, particularly for poorer segments of the population who are most exposed to the dangers of inadequate human waste disposal. Globally, open defecation rates have declined by one third, from 25 per cent of the population in 1990 to

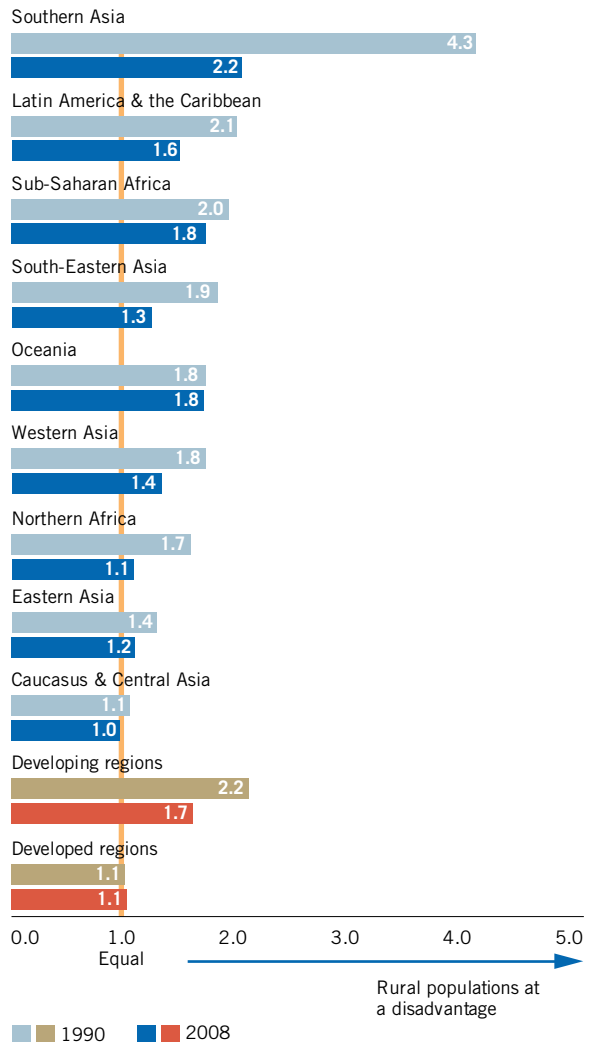
17 per cent in 2008. Almost two thirds of the people who practise open sanitation reside in Southern Asia.

Northern Africa is the only region that has already surpassed the MDG sanitation target, increasing coverage from 72 per cent in 1990 to 89 per cent in 2008.

The International Year of Sanitation in 2008 gave much needed impetus to the debate on sanitation. And in various regions, yearly sanitation conferences are held to ensure that sanitation remains on the political agenda and receives the attention it deserves.

Gaps in sanitation coverage between urban and rural areas are narrowing

Urban/rural ratio of the proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility, 1990 and 2008

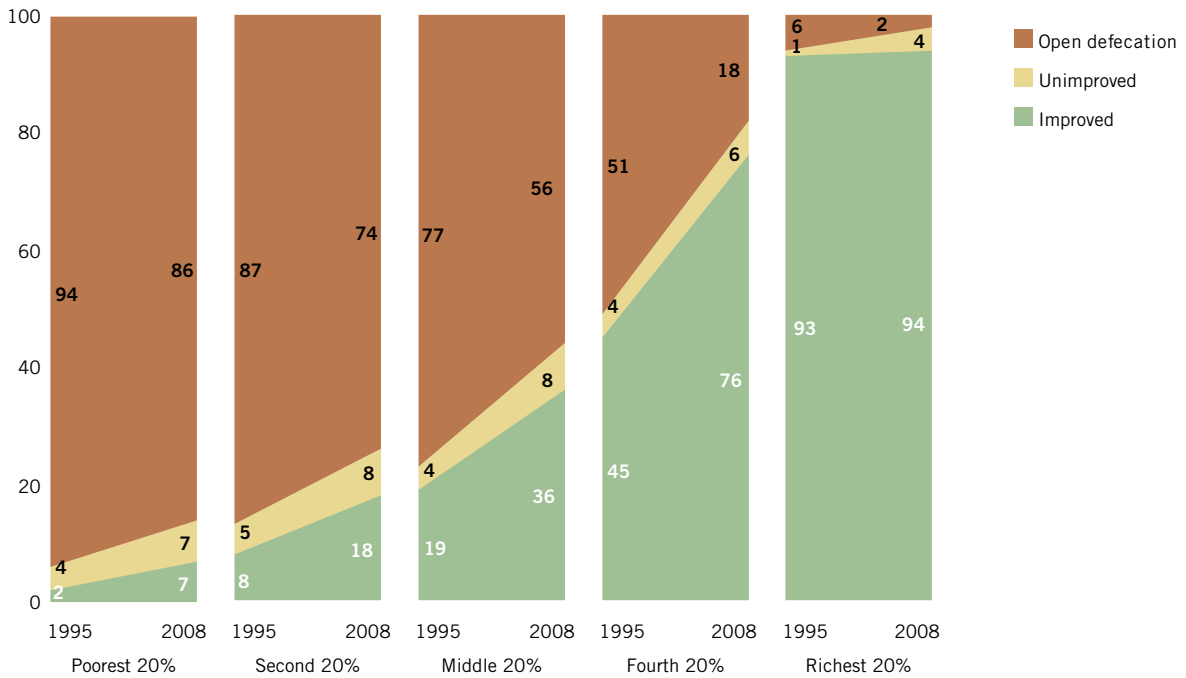


Rural populations everywhere are disadvantaged when it comes to improved sanitation, though disparities with urban areas are decreasing in all regions. Globally, an urban resident is 1.7 times more likely to use an improved sanitation facility than someone living in a rural area. Inequalities are most stark in Southern

Asia, where an urban resident is 2.2 times more likely to use an improved facility than a rural resident. Still, this represents significant improvement since 1990, when an urban resident was 4.3 times more likely to use an improved sanitation facility than a person living in a rural area.

Improved sanitation has failed to reach the poorest households in parts of Southern Asia

Proportion of population by sanitation practices and wealth quintile, Southern Asia, 1995 and 2008 (Percentage)



An analysis of trends over the period 1995-2008 for three countries in Southern Asia shows that improvements in sanitation have disproportionately benefited the wealthy. Sanitation coverage for the poorest 40 per cent of households has hardly

increased, and four out of five people in the bottom two quintiles continue to practise open defecation. The most progress was made by those in the fourth wealthiest quintile, while the richest 20 per cent of the population has maintained its very high coverage level.