

CHILDREN:

The Missing Link Between Poverty and Development

Poverty Facts and Figures (from *State of the World's Children 2005*)

Working definition of poverty:

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY EXPERIENCE DEPRIVATION OF THE MATERIAL, SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL RESOURCES NEEDED TO SURVIVE, DEVELOP AND THRIVE, LEAVING THEM UNABLE TO ENJOY THEIR RIGHTS, ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL OR PARTICIPATE AS FULL AND EQUAL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

Over half the children in the developing world live without basic goods and services.

- One in six children is severely hungry; one in seven has no health care at all; one in five has no safe water and one in three has no toilet or sanitation facilities at home.
- Over 640 million children live in dwellings with mud floors or extreme overcrowding; and over 300 million children have no TV, radio, telephone or newspaper.
- Over 120 million children are shut out of primary schools, the majority of them girls.

Poverty undercuts a family or community's capacity to care for children. Globally:

- 180 million children work in the worst forms of child labour.
- 1.2 million children are trafficked each year.
- 2 million children, mostly girls, are exploited in the sex industry.

Children living in rural areas are twice as likely to be deprived of goods and services, and three times as likely not to attend school, as their peers in urban areas.

Income-poverty measures do not adequately explain how children experience poverty. India and Senegal have similar levels of per-capita income but Indian children are more at risk of malnutrition while Senegalese children are more at risk of losing out on schooling.

While the global economy expanded during the 1990s, income inequalities grew both across and within countries. In developing countries, children of families in the poorest quintile are more than twice as likely to die before age five as children in the richest quintile.

Economic sanctions can have devastating effects on children. Under-five mortality rates more than doubled in Iraq, from 50 per 1,000 in 1990, to 125 per 1,000 in 2002. In Haiti, acute malnutrition rose from 3.4 per cent in 1990 to 7.8 per cent in 1994-95, and school enrolment fell from 83 per cent in 1990 to 57 per cent in 1994.

Child poverty has risen notably in richer countries. Only four developed countries – Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States – have fewer children living in low-income households than in the late 1980s. In 2000, only Finland, Norway and Sweden had child poverty rates below 5 per cent.

An additional US\$40-70 billion each year is needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The world spends almost 1 trillion dollars annually on defence, and many countries, including some of the poorest, continue to budget far more for military armaments and personnel than for health or education.