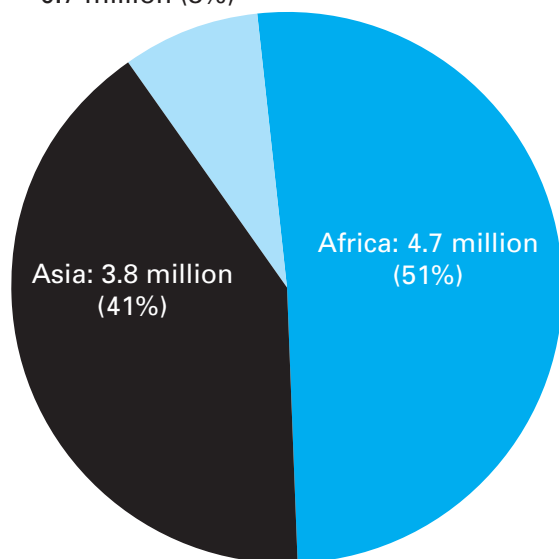


The centrality of Africa and Asia in the global challenges for children and women

The continents of Africa and Asia* present the largest global challenges to the survival of children and women. Their progress in such critical areas as child and maternal health, nutrition and education, among others, is pivotal to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Deaths of children under five, 2007

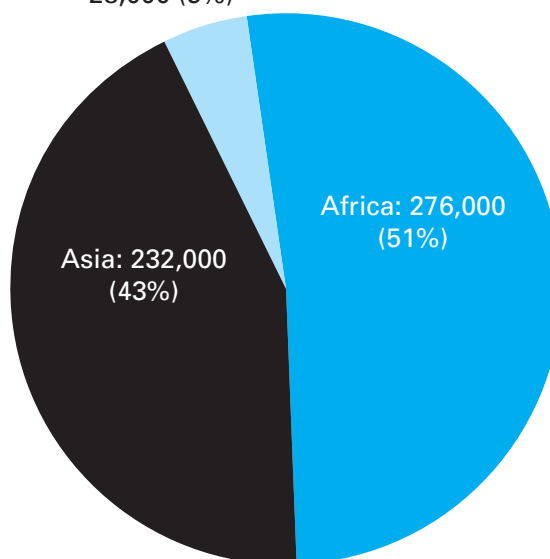
Rest of the world:
0.7 million (8%)



Source: UNICEF global databases.

Maternal deaths, 2005

Rest of the world:
28,000 (5%)



Source: UNICEF global databases.

Deaths among children under five

- In 2007, 9.2 million children died before age five. Africa and Asia together accounted for 92 per cent of these deaths.
- Half of the world's under-five deaths occurred in Africa, which remains the most difficult place in the world for a child to survive until age five.
- Although Asia has seen a remarkable reduction in the annual number of child deaths since 1970, it still accounted for 41 per cent of global under-five deaths in 2007.

Maternal deaths

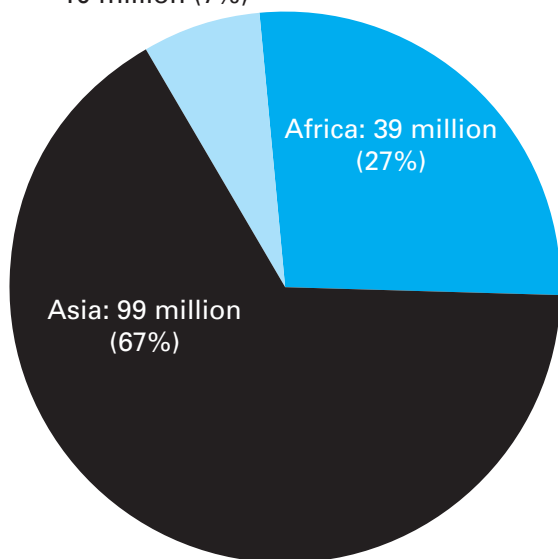
- In 2005, the latest year for which firm estimates are available, an estimated 536,000 women died from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Almost all – 95 per cent – of these maternal deaths occurred in Africa and Asia.
- Africa is the continent with the highest rate of maternal mortality, estimated at 820 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2005. Asia's rate of maternal death is 350 per 100,000 live births.
- In Africa, the lifetime risk of maternal death is 1 in 26, four times higher than in Asia and more than 300 times higher than in the industrialized countries.

The full burden of maternal and child deaths in Africa and Asia – for each continent and for the two combined – is frequently understated due to the lack of continent-wide estimates for key Millennium Development Goal indicators. This panel presents a snapshot of key child and maternal indicators for Africa and Asia, and in their totality provides a complementary perspective to the regional breakdown presented in the Statistical Tables, pages 113-157 of this report.

Aggregating the data on children from these two vast continents provides a stark reminder of the overwhelming importance of making rapid progress across both Africa and Asia if global development goals are to be realized. In the push to accelerate progress at the continental level, however, the often startling disparities in the status of women and children and in rates of progress within countries and continents must not be forgotten. The issue of disparities and inequalities affecting children will be examined in greater detail in future editions of *The State of the World's Children*.

Underweight children under five, 2007

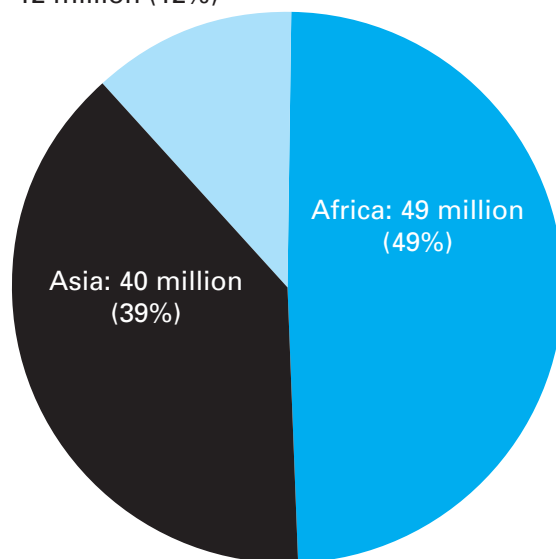
Rest of the world:
10 million (7%)



Source: UNICEF global databases.

Primary-school-age children out of school, 2007

Rest of the world:
12 million (12%)



Source: UNICEF global databases.

Nutritional status of young children

- In 2007, 148 million children under age five in the developing world were underweight for their age.
- Two thirds of these children live in Asia, and just over one quarter live in Africa.
- Together, Africa and Asia account for 93 per cent of all underweight children under age five in the developing world.

Primary education

- In 2007, 101 million children of primary school age were not in school.
- Almost half of these children live in Africa, and 39 per cent live in Asia.
- Across the two regions, approximately 20 per cent of girls and 16 per cent of boys of primary school age are either not enrolled or are not attending primary school.

* Africa includes all member states of the African Union. Asia includes the countries in the UNICEF regions of East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia. Numbers may not always add up due to rounding.