People in the Americas are healthier today than they were 15 years ago, when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted. Life expectancy in the region has increased, and mortality has declined, despite an aging population. The following graphs illustrate progress to date on the health-related MDGs and targets in Latin America and the Caribbean. They also highlight the technical cooperation between PAHO’s secretariat—the Pan American Sanitary Bureau—and PAHO Member States that contributed to these advances. The data used are the most recent available from PAHO Member States. Additional data will need to be collected and analyzed at the regional, subregional, country, and subnational levels to provide a final accounting of the region’s performance on the health-related MDGs.

More details on the region’s progress toward the health-related MDGs may be found in the 2015 PAHO report “Progress on the Health-related Millennium Development Goals.”

September 2015
MDG 1 Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty
Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
1.8 Proportion of underweight and stunted children under 5, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990-2013

By 2013, Latin America and the Caribbean as a subregion had already exceeded the MDG targets for reducing hunger. Nevertheless, 11 countries had not met the targets at the national level, and some 37 million people remained hungry, without access to sufficient food to meet their caloric needs.

Some PAHO Governing Body resolutions related to MDG 1
CD51/DIV/7 Health and the Millennium Development Goals: From Commitment to Action (PAHO Director’s Annual Report 2011), 51st PAHO Directing Council, 2011.

Figure 1. Proportion of underweight and stunted children under 5, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990-2013

Figure 2. Hunger worldwide and in Latin America and the Caribbean (in millions of people affected), 1990-2014
MDG 4 Reduce child mortality

Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-5 mortality rate

By 2013, Latin America and the Caribbean had achieved the MDG 4 target for reducing child (under 5) mortality and were on track to achieve the target reductions for infant (under 1) mortality by 2015. This progress resulted from improvements in interventions including immunization, oral rehydration, and prenatal care, as well as improvements in education and reduced poverty. However, the mortality declines in Latin America have been greater than in the Caribbean, and under-1 mortality remains twice as high in the latter.

Some PAHO Governing Body resolutions related to MDG 4

CD44/12 Integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI) and its contribution to child survival in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, 44th PAHO Directing Council, 2003.


Source: PAHO, 2015.
MDG 5 Improve maternal health

Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

Maternal mortality in the Americas as a whole and in Latin America and the Caribbean as a subregion has declined respectively an average of 2.0% and 2.2% per year since 1990. This improvement fell far short of the annual 5.5% declines that were needed to meet the MDG target of achieving a total reduction of 75% by 2015. Improving access to and quality of sexual and reproductive health care for women remains a major challenge in the region. This includes care before conception, during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as neonatal care. It also means attention to the social determinants of maternal health.

Some PAHO Governing Body resolutions related to MDG 5


MDG 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (HIV)

Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

Although Latin America and the Caribbean both reduced the incidence of HIV between 1990 and 2013, the number of people with HIV in Latin America actually increased by 33% between 2003 and 2013, while the number in the Caribbean declined 11%. However, the number of new HIV infections in children fell 22% in Latin America and 72% in the Caribbean between 2001 and 2013.

Some PAHO Governing Body resolutions related to MDG 6 (HIV)

MDG 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (Malaria)

Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Thirteen of the 21 malaria-endemic countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean achieved the regional target of reducing malaria cases by 75% between 2000 and 2013, and five other countries are close to this target. This progress has led to greater interest in and accelerated efforts toward elimination of malaria, and 14 countries have expressed commitment to that goal. Nevertheless, some 120 million people in 21 countries remain at risk of malaria.

**Source:** PAHO, 2013.

Some PAHO Governing Body resolutions related to MDG 6


MDG 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (TB)

Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Latin America and the Caribbean exceeded the global target of reducing tuberculosis (TB) prevalence and deaths by 50% between 1990 and 2015. Nevertheless, TB continues to cause suffering and death, especially in countries of the region that fall in the lowest quartile of the United Nations Human Development Index.

Some PAHO Governing Body resolutions related to MDG 6


MDG 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Latin America and the Caribbean will have achieved the MDG target for access to safe drinking water by the end of 2015, but major gaps remain in access for rural populations. Improving such access is one of the most effective public health interventions. Progress has also been made in increasing access to basic sanitation services, but not enough for the region to meet the MDG sanitation target by 2015. Equity gaps also remain a major challenge: while 88% of the region’s urban population has access to sanitation, the figure for the rural population is only 64%.

Some PAHO Governing Body resolutions related to MDG 7


CD50.R14 Pan American Centers (takes note of the signing of the agreement between the Government of Peru and PAHO for the transformation of the Pan American Center for Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences, CEPIS, into the Regional Technical Team on Water and Sanitation, ETRAS, located in Peru), 50th PAHO Directing Council, 2010.

MDG 8 Develop a global partnership for development
Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

Eighteen of 20 Latin American and Caribbean governments surveyed in 2010 reported having a public health or social security system that provides medicines, including essential medicines free of charge. In addition, 85% of governments surveyed reported having programs that cover the cost of medicines for treatment of noncommunicable diseases.

Some PAHO Governing Body resolutions related to MDG 8

Figure 1. Procurement of medicines with the support of the PAHO Strategic Fund and related interventions, Latin America and the Caribbean, by year, 2004-2010

Source: PAHO, 2014.

Figure 2. Purchases of medicines through the Strategic Fund, product category, Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010

Source: PAHO, 2014.

REMAINING CHALLENGES
Maternal, neonatal and infant mortality, and as chronic malnutrition remain very high among the poorest segments of the population.

Reproductive health methods are used insufficiently, which is reflected in elevated rates of fertility among adolescents and in the persistence of HIV/AIDS, particularly among young people ages 15 to 24 years.

Access to basic sanitation lags behind, access to safe water, particularly among the poorest communities and residents of rural areas.

CONCLUSIONS
• Information systems: continue strengthening health information systems, particularly on the targets identified in SDG 3: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
• Collaborating Centers: widen and deepen the functioning of the PAHO/WHO network.
• Access to universal health coverage: continue increasing the coverage of health services to achieve universality.
• Health in all policies: include health in all policies that have an impact on social determinants and promote an inter-sectorial approach.
• Environment: mitigate the health effects of environmental risks, promoting multi-sectorial cooperation.
• Equity: reduce and eventually eliminate health-related inequalities that are arbitrary, unnecessary, avoidable and unfair.
PAHO and the MDGs
Progress on the health-related Millennium Development Goals

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