

# Fact Sheet

---

## Poverty in Asia

- Asia has two-thirds of the world's population – China alone has a population of 1.3 billion people
- Almost two out of three of the world's poorest people live in Asia
- There are around 650 million people in Asia living on less than \$1 a day [Source: World Bank, Global Economic Prospects 2006]
- China and India account for a third of the world's people. In relative terms, this is five times the population of the European Union
- There are 882 million undernourished people living in Asia.

## Growth in Asia

- Trade within Asia is growing at nearly three times the global rate, with China emerging as the biggest trading partner for most Asian countries.
- China alone produced profits of \$4.4bn for US companies in 2003
- However, growth rates and progress towards poverty reduction are uneven between and within countries. For example, in Vietnam the economy has grown at an average of 7% a year over the past decade. However, malnutrition rates in children remain among the highest in Asia. The under-five malnutrition rate, although decreasing from 45% in 1995 to 26% in 2004, remains high compared with other countries in the region
- Developing countries in Asia will spend more than US\$1 trillion over the next five years on infrastructure (Asian Development Bank)
- Supported by a pool of hard-working and increasingly well-educated workers, China has become an engine for growth in Asia and the global economy. The World Bank forecast that in 2005, China's economy would grow by 8.3%, pushing East Asia's growth to 6%
- Excluding Japan, Asia's share of world exports rose from 23% 1985 to 38% in 2002.

# Fact Sheet

---

## **Asia 2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty**

- DFID, in partnership with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, will host a conference in London on 6-7 March: “Asia 2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty”, whereby key opinion formers and ministers across Asia will set the agenda for halving poverty in Asia by 2015
- The conference will also focus on progress made by Asia in meeting the Millennium Development Goals which were agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000. Nearly 190 countries have subsequently signed up to them
- The MDGs range from halving global poverty and hunger to protecting the environment, improving health and sanitation and tackling illiteracy and discrimination against women
- We want these targets to be achieved by 2015. While significant progress is being made towards meeting some of the targets in some countries, in many areas, progress is patchy or slow. For example, whilst Vietnam has reduced the number of people living on less than \$1 a day to 2% of its population, 34% of the population in Cambodia and 36% of the population in Bangladesh are still living on that amount.

The Department for International Development (DFID) recognises that the Millennium Development Goals have a crucial part to play in reducing poverty and encouraging progress in the developing world.

# Fact Sheet

---

To help meet these goals, DFID has been active in many Asian countries including:

- **India:** since the early 1990s India has lifted 12 million people out of poverty every year. Since 1999, DFID has spent £1.13bn towards development assistance in India (Source: Statistics for International Development; 2004 - 2005)
- **Bangladesh:** DFID support to the Government of Bangladesh will help to provide 17 million children with free primary education. DFID's programme aid budget for 2005/6 and 2006/7 is £125m a year
- **China:** a joint World Bank-DFID tuberculosis control programme is on course to treat over 500,000 patients and save over 120,000 lives by 2009
- **Afghanistan:** 12 million children have been immunised against polio and 16 million against measles since 2002. This has saved an estimated 30,000 lives. The UK has committed £500 million over five years to help rebuild and develop Afghanistan
- **Nepal:** between 1993 and 2000 deaths related to pregnancy more than halved (from around 1,500 to 740 per 100,000). Since 1997 DFID has supported Nepal's safer motherhood programmes, covering about 3.5 million people (15% of the population).

**For further information, please contact:**

Department for International Development Press Office: +44 (0)20 7023 0600

Rakhee Vyas:

+ 44 (0)207 067 0279

# Fact Sheet

---

---

Press enquiries: 0870 990 5431

Public enquiries: 0845 300 4100 (overseas +44 1355 84 3132)

Website: [www.asia2015conference.org](http://www.asia2015conference.org)