

Millennium Development Goals

Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



2002





Millennium Development Goals
Report for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
2002



United Nations
Riyadh

Contents

1.	Millennium Development Goals (IDT/MDG) Overview of Progress Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity for Tracking Development Goals	1
2.	Development Context	5
3.	Extreme Poverty	9
4.	Nutrition and Food Security	11
5.	Health and Mortality	13
6.	Education	15
7.	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women	17
8.	Water and Environmental Sustainability	19
9.	HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases	23
10.	References	25



Millennium Development Goals Report

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2002

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TARGETS / MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The decade of 1990s is a very remarkable period of time signalling the launching of the first Human Development Report in 1990 that urged the governments of the world to initiate people centred development. Through a series of Global Conferences and Summits and the subsequent respective follow-up Conferences, this ultimate goal was put forward when the world leaders and the United Nations System pledged enactment to global development during the twenty first century.

The agreements and resolutions of the United Nations Global Conferences and Summits have outlined the International Development Targets (IDTs). They were reinforced at the respective follow-up conferences, with the targets reconfirmed at the follow-up Social Summit in 2000. The IDTs were first adopted by the OECD/DAC in 1996 and endorsed again in 2000 together with the World Bank, IMF in the publication entitled "A Better World for All". At the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, one hundred forty nine (149) Heads of State and representatives of government from some 180 countries adopted the Millennium Declaration. In this Declaration, an augmented set of targets with corresponding indicators were agreed upon and now known as the Millennium Declaration Development Goals (MDGs). As part of the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and as requested by the General Assembly, United Nations Country Teams are requested to generate progress reports in programme countries, and mobilise efforts and resources to support the respective governments to achieve the goals. The targets outlined in this report are based on the MDGs and identified as follows:

1. Halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015.

2. Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger between 1990 and 2015.
3. Reduce child mortality rates to two-third by 2015.
4. Reduce maternal mortality ratio to three-quarter by 2015 and achieve universal access to safe and reliable contraceptive methods by 2015.
5. Achieve universal access to primary education by 2015.
6. Empower women and eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005.
7. Halve the proportion of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water by 2015.
8. Implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015.
9. Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

The United Nations Country Team in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has prepared this report that analytically outlines the existing trends, challenges and prospects of the national socio-economic development in the country. The report will be followed by a series of initiatives and activities to support the government in achieving the goals. It is structured in the following manner:

- Status and Trends: They provide a convenient update on the progress of individual country in meeting their individual development targets and reducing poverty.
- Challenges for Achieving the Goal: They describe the development challenges that confront each country in meeting the targets.
- Supportive Environment: It outlines the nature of the supporting policy environment.
- Priorities for Development Assistance: They identify the specific priorities for development cooperation.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: They highlight the needs for strengthening data gathering and statistical capacity building.

This is structured within the development contexts of the Kingdom. On the basis of the economic status, the Kingdom is a donor country and classified by the United Nations as a Net Contributing Country (NCC) that finances all its technical cooperation programmes with the UN

System. The production of this report is the first in a series of other follow-up initiatives that will further enable the UN Country Team to support the government in achieving its Millennium Development Targets

Overview of Progress								
Goals	Will development goal reached?				State of supportive environment			
Extreme Poverty Half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Nutrition and Food Security Halve the proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Halve the proportion of underweight children under five years old by 2015	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Health and Mortality Reduce under-five mortality by two thirds by 2015	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Reduce maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters by 2015	Probably	potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Universal access to safe/reliable reproductive health services (contraceptive methods) by 2015	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Education Achieve universal access to primary education by 2015	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Gender Equality Achieve equal access for boys and girls to primary and lower secondary schooling by 2005	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Achieve equal access for boys and girls to upper secondary education by 2005	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Water and Environment Halve the proportion of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water by 2015	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
Implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
HIV/AIDS Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	lack of data	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak

Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity						
Goal	Existing capacity for:					Quality of survey info
	Data Gathering	Statistical tracking	Statistical analysis	Statistics into policy	Monitoring & evaluation	
Extreme Poverty	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>
Nutrition and Food Security	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>
Under-five mortality	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>
Reproductive health	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>
Education	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>
Gender Equality	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>
Water	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>
Environment	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>
HIV/AIDS	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong <i>Fair</i> Weak	Strong Fair Weak	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>	Strong Fair <i>Weak</i>



Development Context

THE ECONOMY

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone a substantial transformation over the past three decades. From a subsistence economy mainly dependent on traditional small scale agriculture and trade, about three decades ago, to a presently modern, albeit, developing economy, characterised with growing diversification of production and income, evolving inter-sector linkages, and expanding regional and global economic integration. This transformation was made possible by: (a) the substantial increase in oil export revenues brought about by the upward revision in the prices of crude oil and increased world demand since the 1970's; and (b) the national strategy that used this newfound wealth in social and economic development. The development of the country has been guided since 1970, by well-prepared and comprehensive seven medium-term (5 years) plans that embodied the national goals and aspirations as they evolved over the last three decades.

The principal themes of Saudi development have been to raise the standard of living of the people, improve the quality of their lives and enhance their capabilities. The historical pattern of development plans allocations has been consistent with the above goals. Expenditure on the development of human resources rose from 20.6 percent of the total development expenditures in the First Plan (1970-1974) to 51.5 percent in the Sixth Plan (1995-1999). Over the same period, expenditures on health and social services more than doubled reaching 20.6 percent of total development expenditures, which brought human development related expenditures to more than 70 percent of total development expenditures of the sixth Development Plan.

Saudi Arabia ranked 71 in 2000 according to the UNDP Human Development Report, a result of good progress made on all the components of the HDR Index. Life expectancy at birth

reached 71.6 years rising from a modest average level of 53.9 years over 1970-1975 period. Over the same period adult literacy registered 76.3 percent of those 15-year-olds and older, rising from 39.2 percent in 1970, while income per capita increased from USD 1,006 in 1970 to USD 11,367 in 2000. The latter level is, however, well below the peak of USD 16,880 in income per capita reached back in 1980.

Another important and strategic goal of Saudi economic development has been economic diversification aiming at reducing the rather heavy dependence on hydro-carbon natural resources for economic output as well as public revenues. This dependence has left fiscal policy at the mercy of cyclical and some times, unpredictable developments of the world oil market. Furthermore, diversification is dictated by the imperative of sustainable development given the depletable nature of these resources. The Kingdom has been successful on this front as reflected in the historical development of the relative weight of the Oil and Gas sector in the national economy, which decreased over the past three decades from 55.8 percent of GDP in 1970 to 33.6 percent in 2000. Furthermore the share of non-oil income in total government revenues increased from 9.7 percent to 16.9 percent over the same period. Notwithstanding the above achievements, full diversification remains one of the major challenges facing the Kingdom over the coming years.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Notwithstanding the impressive progress made so far by the Kingdom on the various fronts of social and economic development, making new gains and sustaining them over the long term while simultaneously meeting the needs of a fast growing population and ever increasing expectations, pose several challenges to the development process. Most of these challenges have been recognised and adequately addressed by the current Seventh National Development Plan (2000-

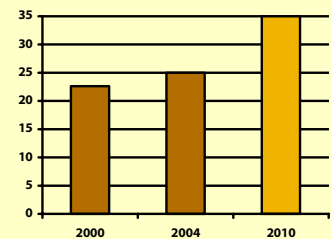
Box 2.1

Selected Targets of the Seventh National Development Plan (2000 – 2004)

- Average annual GDP growth of 3.16 percent.
- Raise the share of the non-oil private sector in GDP from 50.6 percent in 1999 to 55.4 percent in 2004.
- Grow total capital investment at 6.85 percent annually.
- Increase the ratio of nationals in total employment from 44.2 percent in 1999 to 53.2 percent in 2004

Figure 2.1

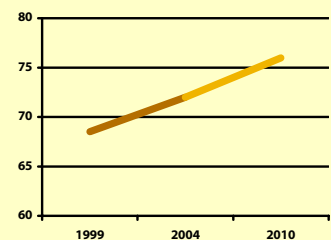
Investment Contribution to GDP (Percentage)



Source: Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency Annual Report 2000

Figure 2.2

Non-oil Sector Contribution to GDP (Percentage)



Source: Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency Annual Report 2000

2004). The most important development challenges are the following:

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

This important and strategic goal is being addressed by economic restructuring aimed at increasing productivity and expanding the role of the private sector. The government has also been providing substantial direct and indirect support to diversifying economic activities in the agriculture, industrial and services sectors.

PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT OF NATIONAL WORKFORCE

While expatriate labour constitutes a sizeable share of private sector employment (61% in 2000), evidence has been emerging lately of a growing unemployment among the ranks of the national workforce estimated at around 8 percent in year 2002. Given the relatively high rate of growth of about 3.9 percent expected for the national population in working age over the medium term, this problem is expected to become critical and pose a major policy challenge. The Kingdom has been expeditiously responding to this multifaceted issue, by implementing various appropriate policies and measures aimed at rationalising the inflow and the employment of expatriate labour. Additional policies include targeting employment generating economic growth, and reforming the human resource development sectors toward raising their

efficiency and output quality and improving the match up between the national manpower supply on the one hand and the needs of the economy on the other.

GLOBALISATION

The rapid changes in the global economic order and the expected accession to the WTO pose significant challenges to the Kingdom's economy. The imperative of economic diversification entails the expansion of non-oil exports, which in turn requires that Saudi firms and businesses improve their competitiveness. A task expected to become more challenging with increasing trade liberalisation under the WTO framework. Consequently, economic and administrative reforms are being implemented which aim at improving economic efficiency and productivity. Among those measures are privatisation of a number of services, developing effective regulatory regimes and facilitating competition, undertaking price and subsidy reforms, encouraging private sector investment including FDI, strengthening and deepening the financial sector, and undertaking public sector reforms, among other measures.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Economic and social development in the Kingdom has been guided since 1970 by comprehensive five-year national development plans. As the economy expanded and grew more complex and diversified the planning and fiscal management processes became ever more demanding and called for more sophisticated policy instruments, strong analytical capacities and diverse approaches to problem solving and resolution. Furthermore, as the role of the private sector in the overall economy grew in size and importance, the planning process tracked this evolution by gradually shifting the planning paradigm from the directive to the indicative. This movement is expected to continue in the future as the government go forward with its privatisation program, and its role focused on providing the appropriate institutional, legal and regulatory environment most conducive to social and economic development and for protecting the economically and socially disadvantaged.

Box 2.2

Key Development Indicators

Indicators	Value	Year
Population size	21 Million	2000
Population growth	3%	2000
Life expectancy at birth	71.6 years	2000
Real GDP per capita (PPP)	US\$ 11,367	2000
Poverty Headcount ratio (% of population below international poverty line)	n.a.	
Poverty Headcount ratio (% of population below national poverty line)	n.a.	
Estimates HIV prevalence rate Among adults 15 – 49 years(per 100,000)	0.17	1999
Population with access to safe water supplies	98%	2000
Proportion of underweight children under five	7%	1999
Net primary enrolment rate	98%	1999
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	96%	1999
Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	22	1999
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000)	52	1999

The Kingdom, in its latest five-year plan has adopted strategic planning to complement the medium term planning system and the shorter fiscal management process. This development has been motivated by the need to properly address some vital national issues that are characteristically of long term nature such as resource development and utilisation. Issues such as: Economic restructuring, human resource development, technology development (R&D), water and land management in a semiarid environment, and optimal utilisation of the oil and gas resources, among others, all require long-term analysis and perspective.

In view of the world market economies and the liberation of global trade as well as the increasing role of the private sector's partnership, policy reforms have become essential. The economic models, which have been tailored for the prospects of the Saudi economy, will support the intended policy framework. The economic policies include the following:

1. The incentive systems will be improved to further stimulate foreign and domestic investments and create more employment opportunities for Saudis. These will include: (a) enhancement of investment related systems and measures, particularly with relevance to the investment of foreign capital to create competitiveness on the regional and international levels; (b) creation of the appropriate investment environment that is characterised by economic stability; (c) establishment of foreign investment related tax system; (d) unification and simplification of investment and custom related procedures; (e) development of the appropriate investment related legal system and procedures; and (f) formulation of the necessary regulations and rules.

2. In collaboration with the specialised government institutions, the newly

established "Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority" is mandated to carry out investment responsibilities.

3. The government's expenditures will be rationed to reduce expenses and maximise effectiveness.

4. The public non-oil revenues will be increased and the budget deficits will be reduced to the minimum.

5. The cost of living will be maintained at a moderate level.

6. Money related policies and systems should be improved in relation to the long-term economic prospects.

7. The national development plan outlines a number of policies to achieve balanced foreign trade for the Kingdom. These include: (a) continued institutional improvement of foreign trade; (b) encouragement of the private sector's contributions to foreign trade; (c) enhancement of trade cooperation with the Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); (d) expansion of economic and commercial collaboration with the outside world; (e) strengthening the competitive capabilities of Saudi products in the local markets to counter the imported products; and (f) encouragement of the foreign and domestic investments' flow towards productive projects that will contribute to the development of non-oil exports.

8. In view of the importance of the non-oil private sector contribution to the GDP, the government aims at further diversifying the economy. The forecasted average annual growth rate of the non-oil sectors will be 4.1 percent. This will be achieved through the growth of the commodity sectors and services sectors by 5.04 percent and 3.44 percent respectively. As a result, the contributions of these sectors will rise to 71.6 percent by year 2004 as compared with 68.4 percent in 1999 (Ministry of Planning Seventh Development Plan, 2000)



Extreme Poverty

Halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015

STATUS AND TRENDS

Social welfare and solidarity have been among the pillars of the development strategy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This important objective is pursued by insuring that all citizens share the fruits of economic development across the various segments of the society in all regions. Provision of public services and basic commodities at affordable prices has been one of the main components of this strategy. Government subsidies dispensed for basic commodities and essential services amounted to USD 1,364 million in 2000. Furthermore, for those segments of society with the risk of being left behind or are handicapped to equitably share the fruits of development, publicly and privately run programs are in place to offer them the necessary help and assistance. Families and individuals in distress are assisted through a number of programs conducted by the Deputy of Social Affairs of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The amount dispersed on these programs reached USD 797.4 million in 1999. Furthermore, private charities and benevolent societies whose number is estimated at about 230 are quite active all around the country offering various types of assistance to those in need. Consequently, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty is believed to be minimal.

An important factor that contributes to the low incidence of extreme poverty in Saudi Arabia is one that is rooted in the culture and social traditions of the country. Strong family solidarity which permeates, not only the nuclear family, but the larger and more extended family relations stretching as far as tribal boundaries in the rural areas, help protect those segments most at risk of poverty and need: the elderly and the orphaned young. Estimates of national poverty levels do not yet exist for lack of up to date survey data. No urban, rural, or national poverty lines have yet been estimated, and although poverty levels in the Kingdom are thought to be

relatively low due to the welfare oriented social policies and other factors referred to above. The need for improving the measurement and monitoring of poverty rates and related socio-economic variables and indicators is well recognised and appreciated by policymakers and planners. Consequently, ongoing comprehensive surveys are being conducted which is expected to fill the existing gap in information. Furthermore, poverty monitoring and policy responses are expected to appreciably strengthen upon the completion of the on-line Geographic Socio-Economic Information System, which is expected to provide relevant development indicators on all urban, suburban and rural centres of the Kingdom.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THE GOAL

POTENTIAL RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT

The rate of growth in the national manpower is estimated at a high 4.7 percent, a rate that is expected to persist for the foreseeable future due to the demographics of the Kingdom. The share of those below 12 years of age equals 38.3 percent of the total population, while at the same time; the population of Saudis is growing at a relatively high rate of 3.4 percent per annum. These trends pose serious challenges to economic and social policy given the need to provide productive employment opportunities for all the newcomers to the workforce on top of those that are presently unemployed, which are estimated at 15 percent of the workforce.

RAPID GROWTH OF URBAN CENTRES

The Kingdom's main cities have been growing at relatively high rates, well above the average growth in overall population, reflecting a persisting rural to urban migration. Major cities like Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran-Alkhubar, are growing at high rates that are straining the capacities to meet the resulting needs for expanded

Box 3.1

Status at a Glance

Will the target be reached by 2015?

Probably Potentially Unlikely Insufficient Data

State of Supporting Environment

Strong Fair Weak but improving Weak

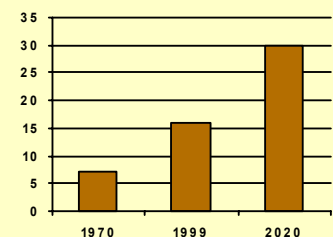
Box 3.2

Summary of Targets from the Seventh Development Plan (2000 – 2004)

- Improve people's income with annual GDP growth rate of 3.16%
- Establish national poverty line
- Re-institute regional and local economies
- Articulate socio-economic development indicators
- Create and balance the distribution of employment opportunities by year 2004
- Continue provision and expansion of basic services (health, education, safe potable water, etc.) coverage

Figure 3.1

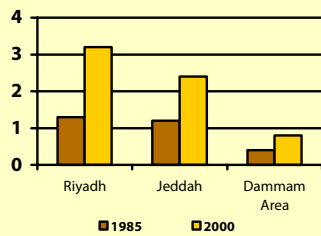
Population Projection (Millions)



Source: Statistical Yearbook, Ministry of Planning, 1999

Figure 3.2

Urbanization Population (Millions)



Source: Statistical Yearbook, Ministry of Planning, 1999

infrastructure and other vital public services. While the five cities/national urban centres of the Kingdom are well kept and relatively free of slums and other undesirable consequences of urbanization, persistent high growth, if not checked, may increase the risk of urban poverty; an outcome that can materialize if an extended period of low economic growth and high unemployment is ever faced by the Kingdom.

INSUFFICIENT MONITORING CAPACITY

The successful prevention and alleviation of poverty requires, among other things, the presence of efficient information and monitoring system of social and economic indicators with full and uniform geographical coverage. The absence of personal taxation and any other institutional socio-economic information gathering and reporting system for individuals in the Kingdom, regular, up-to-date, and complete information on income, consumption, and other relevant information are not easily available. Consequently, this information has to be collected by census and periodic surveys. Developing the information collection and processing capacity for conducting social and economic surveys on regular bases are of paramount importance, which is well appreciated by the Government.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has always considered the welfare and well-being of its citizens the central goal of its social and economic development. In this vein, the current Seventh National Development Plan has placed strategic emphasis on a set of policies, while aimed at economic growth, diversification, and employment of nationals, would also help reduce the incidence rate of poverty and its levels.

The priority given to regional development, especially of rural and remote areas, aim to generate local growth and employment opportunities that will help stem the inflow to the urban centres, and the consequent growth in size of cities. Furthermore, the Plan calls for strengthening the capacity of social institutions in order to better serve the needy, and supporting NGO's and other voluntary societies concerned with providing support for those in need.

Lastly, building national and regional capacity in information and statistics has been a priority area for the Saudi Government. Substantial effort is presently being expended into streamlining and institutionalising various social and economic surveys, which would help improve the policy responses to social and economic issues and challenges.

PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The Kingdom has had a long relationship of cooperation with UN System Agencies. This relationship has covered many priority areas of economic and social development. Future development assistance in the following areas will enhance the capacity to prevent the incidence of poverty, and realise sustainable and equitable socio-economic development:

1. Improve the capacity of policy formulation and analysis by providing assistance in building economic models and other analytical tools. This should enhance the effectiveness of development programming; improve the allocation of production factors and the targeting of those segments of society most susceptible to economic distress.
2. Enhance the capacity of the national and regional statistical agencies in order to improve the coverage and monitoring of economic and social indicators. This should target capacity building in the design and conduct of various surveys, survey data analysis and interpretation, etc.
3. Build capacity in population policy analysis and promote family awareness and educational programs.
4. Create opportunities and promote venues for cooperation with NGO's including voluntary societies, charities and others, with the aim of providing assistance in capacity building and regional and global networking.

Box 3.3

Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of Monitoring Environment

Assessment

Data-gathering capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Quality of recent survey information	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical tracking capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical analysis capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning & resource allocation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak



Nutrition and Food Security

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of undernourished people and the proportion of underweight children under five years old

STATUS AND TRENDS

NUTRITION

Economic development has succeeded in eliminating malnutrition and hunger in the Kingdom. The growth in income and the consequent improvement in purchasing power, coupled with the wide availability of food products at usually affordable prices, have placed the Kingdom in the ranks of developed countries in this respect. Average per capita daily intake of calories, proteins, and fats reached 2,950 calories, 82.0 grams, and 85 grams respectively in 1999. While it is appreciated that these national averages do not tell how the various income segments of the population, particularly those at the bottom of the income scale are fairing, the more relevant outcome-type indicators however, seem to support the above assessment. According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2001, the percentage of undernourished people in the total population stood at 3 percent over the period 1996-1998, while the rate of underweight children below the age of five was estimated at 14 percent for the period 1995-2000. Furthermore the ratio of infants born with below average birth weight was estimated at 7 percent for the period 1995 to 1999.

The sufficiency of food availability notwithstanding, the state of nutrition as reflected in the above outcome indicators is also dependent on lifestyles and dietary habits that are usually more difficult to gauge and influence. Recognizing these constraints, the Kingdom has been expending great efforts in informing and educating the general population, particularly heads of households and mothers, about proper feeding habits and the importance of balanced diets. Several programmes are conducted by public and private agencies, including media campaigns, and direct counselling, among others, with the aim of further improving the state of nutrition. Specialised social workers and counsellors are located in most

hospitals, medical centres, schools, and community centres, among other places, to dispense specialized advice and counselling to the public.

FOOD SECURITY

Enhancing the state of food security has been a strategic objective of the Kingdom since the earliest years of its development. This policy is further motivated by another vitally important development objective; which is economic diversification. The agricultural sector, along with the industrial and services sectors are the foundation of the diversification policy. Consequently, and as a result of substantial government support and attention, agricultural output has made strident gains over the decades, bringing the levels of self-sufficiency in many product categories to highly satisfactory levels. Planted crop production grew at an average annual rate of 7.5 percent over the period 1972-2000 to 10.3 million metric tons in 2000. Also substantial amounts of fish, poultry and beef products are produced locally, while the balance of the supply is available through imports from well-diversified sources.

While higher self-sufficiency levels are indeed possible, maximization of the Kingdom's agricultural output has to be cognizant of the constraints imposed by limited renewable water resources and agricultural land. Therefore, the evolution of the Kingdom's agricultural policy has been in the direction of supporting and emphasizing water efficient agriculture by adapting and employing advanced technology, while rationalizing the output of water intensive crops. Furthermore, strong policy emphasis is being directed towards water conservation and water saving schemes, which are vital for long-term growth and sustainability of the domestic food supply.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THE GOALS

Increasing urbanization and consequent changes in life styles, characterized by

Box 4.1

Status at a Glance

Will the target be reached by 2015?

Probably Potentially Unlikely Insufficient Data

State of Supporting Environment

Strong Fair Weak but improving Weak

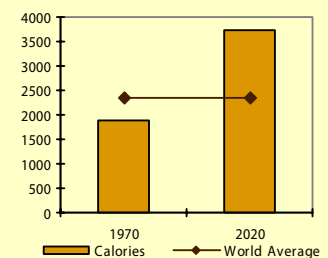
Box 4.2

Summary of Targets from the Seventh Development Plan (2000 – 2004)

- Upgrade nutritional standards and specifications
- Sustain availability of food with good nutritional standards
- Health and nutritional surveillance
- Health and nutritional education
- Sustain food security
- Induce agricultural policy reform
- Improve water management and resources
- Institutionalise farming system
- Build the capacity of agricultural marketing system
- Upgrade economic efficiency of agriculture.

Figure 4.1

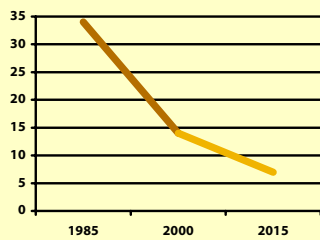
Daily Supply of Calories



Source: Assessment of Economic and Social Development in the ESCWA Region, ESCWA, 2000

Figure 4.2

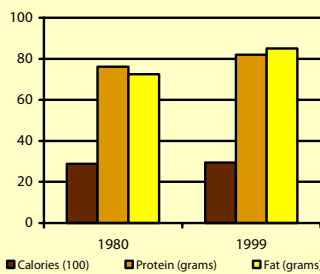
Under Weight Children Under 5 (Percentage)



Source: Seventh national Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 4.3

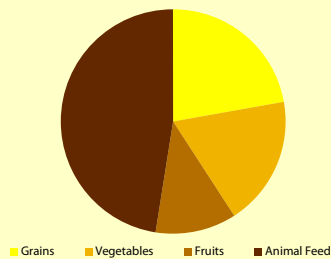
Daily Per Capita Food Supply



Source: Statistical Yearbook, Ministry of Planning, 1999

Figure 4.4

Crop Production in 2000 (1000 Metric Tones)



Source: Seventh national Development Plan 2000-2004

higher food availability, but decreasing levels of activity, is leading to higher incidence of obesity. Obesity is usually associated with serious chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some forms of cancer. The challenge is to raise the public awareness of the importance of proper dietary habits, such as the importance of quality of food and balanced diets. Also the importance of moderation in food intake and of physical activity and exercise.

Sustainability of domestic food supply is considered a main challenge to agricultural policy. The challenge lies in the present water balance, where agriculture constitutes about 89.2 percent of total water demand, while renewable water supply constitutes only 38 percent of total water supply. Raising the water efficiency of domestic agriculture, through innovative irrigation schemes, increased water conservation rates, higher levels of recycling, further rationalization of water intensive crop production, and moving toward less water intensive crops, is a vitally important national goal.

Increasing the capacity, effectiveness and coverage of educational and direct support programmes to identify, locate and treat cases of malnutrition, obesity, and other nutrition related issues in all regions of the Kingdom; especially in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, improving the quality and efficiency record keeping around the Kingdom's health and social centres toward enhancing the national statistical database are considered essential for monitoring the nutritional state of a rapidly growing population and changing lifestyles.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The strong welfare focus of public policy, complemented by a strong private sector commitment towards social solidarity,

rooted in the Kingdom's values and traditions, provide a very strong support in the fight prevent the incidence of poverty or malnutrition.

Full national media coverage (satellite and land television, radio, telephony, and the Internet), allow for conducting educational and information campaigns with a universal reach. Furthermore, the extension of health, educational, and social services to the remote regions of the Kingdom, improve the outreach of policy. Also the easy access by road, and air transport to all the population centres, coupled with an open and highly competitive food sector, insure the geographical availability of food products at affordable prices and in sufficient quantities.

Good capacity in food quality control and safety inspection, help safeguard the quality of the national diet and food supply. Furthermore, responsible public agencies are usually very alert to local and international developments that may pose potential risks to the food supply and public health.

The water resource constraint is fully recognized and appreciated by the Government and most citizens. It ranks at the top of national priorities and is the focus of development policy. Water conservation and rationalization of its use are increasingly guiding policy, while resources are being increasingly invested in long term solutions that will insure a sustainable water supply that will meet the needs of sustainable economic development.

PRIORITIES FOR UN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

1. Technical assistance in development programming; including rural development, population policy, food & agriculture policy, water management and others.
2. Institutional and technical capacity building at the national and local levels in areas of food security & safety, monitoring and assessment of the food supply, identification of vulnerable groups, and organizing and implementing campaigns on food and nutrition.
3. Technical assistance in building capacity of the national statistical capacity on nutrition and food related health and social issues.

Box 4.3

Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of Monitoring Environment

Data-gathering capabilities
 Quality of recent survey information
 Statistical tracking capabilities
 Statistical analysis capabilities
 Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning & resource allocation mechanisms
 Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Assessment

Strong	Fair	Weak
Strong	Fair	Weak
Strong	Fair	Weak
Strong	Fair	Weak
Strong	Fair	Weak
Strong	Fair	Weak



Health and Mortality

By 2015, reduce under-five mortality rate by two-thirds; maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters and universal access to save/reliable reproductive health services

STATUS AND TRENDS

CHILD MORTALITY

Health services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are highly developed as a result of substantial investment, which have been made over the past three decades, by both the public and private sectors. Health expenditures as a percent of GDP reached an average of 8 percent over the period from 1990 to 1999; of which public expenditures constituted 6.4 percent and the balance of 1.6 percent expended by the private sector.

Consequently, the Kingdom's population enjoys full coverage of primary care services, and the access rate to health services is estimated at 99 percent for the year 2000. There are on average 160 physicians and 340 nurses for every one hundred thousands of the population.

The Kingdom's health authorities have had in place a comprehensive immunization scheme with almost universal coverage. This scheme is enforced by tying the issuance of a final birth certificate to newly born, to receiving full immunization during the first year of birth. Consequently, immunization coverage is quite high, estimated in 2000 at 93 percent against measles and 96 percent against tuberculosis for children under one year old.

Consequently, the under-five mortality rate measured as the number of cases per 1000 live births has dropped from 185 in 1970 to 21.5 in 2000. While the infant mortality rate, which is similarly measured, has dropped from 47 in 1985 to 19 in the year 2000. These rates are expected to continue their decline in the future and the Kingdom will very likely meet or exceed the MDG targets for these two indicators. By 2015, the under-five mortality rate and the infant mortality rate are expected to reach 7 and 6 cases per 1000 live births respectively.

MATERNAL HEALTH

Improved access to health services in general and specialized maternal health in particular, complemented by rising female literacy and educational levels, have helped considerably reduce the incidence of maternal mortality. The ratio is estimated at 10 per hundred thousands live births in 2000. Due to anomalies in the statistics caused by infrequent data updates, it is believed that the actual figure for the indicator is less than what is reported. However, the indicator of the number of births attended by skilled health personal shows a value of 91 percent for the year 2000, rising from 78 percent in 1985.

Given the priority accorded to the health sector by Kingdom's planners and policy makers, and in light of the undergoing reforms aiming at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of health services, it is believed that the Kingdom will be able to meet, if not surpass, the MDG targets on maternal health. By 2015, almost all births will likely be attended by skilled health personnel, since the present shortcoming is thought to be mostly due to social factors rather than to access. On the other hand, the mortality rate is expected to decrease to about 6 percent or less by the year 2015.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THE GOALS

Rapidly increasing demand for health services estimated at around 3 percent has been due to many factors among which are: population growth, growing health awareness due to the spread of literacy and education, changing lifestyles leading to problems of overweight and obesity with increasing prevalence of diabetes, high rate of smokers, and increasing life expectancy leading to an increase in diseases associated with old age. These trends have been pressuring the capacity of the health services system.

Escalating health care costs at a time when many other services are competing for public funds. Alleviating this constraint

Box 5.1

Status at a Glance

Will the target be reached by 2015?

Probably Potentially Unlikely Insufficient Data

State of Supporting Environment

Strong Fair Weak but improving Weak

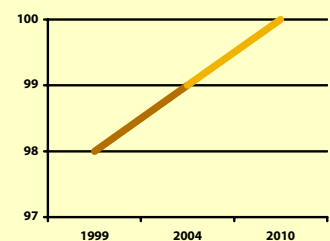
Box 5.2

Summary of Targets from the Seventh Development Plan (2000 – 2004)

- Projected increase in health coverage to 99%
- Reduction of infant mortality rate to less than 22 (per 1,000 live births)
- Reduction of mortality rate for children under 5 years to less than 26 (per 1,000 live births)
- Projected increase in immunization coverage for children less than one year old to 98%
- Increase health supervision for pregnant women to 95%
- Projected increase of births supervised by health professionals to 95%
- Projected reduction in maternal mortality rate to 14 (per 100,000 live births)
- Increase ratio of children whose weights 2.5 kg. And above to 96%
- Increase ratio of under-five children whose weights compatible to their age to 95.3%

Figure 5.1

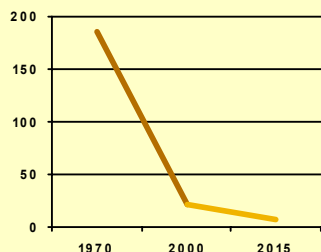
Health Coverage and Projection (Percentage)



Source: Seventh national Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 5.2

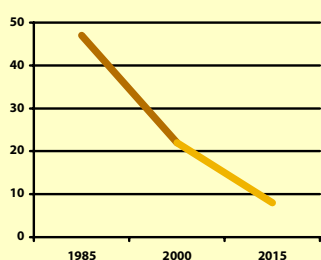
Under 5 Mortality Rate and Projection
(per 1,000 live births)



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 5.3

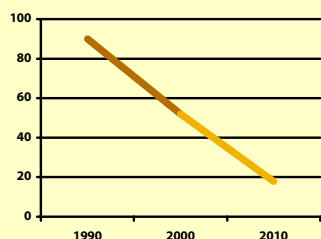
Infant Mortality Rate and Projection
(per 1,000 live births)



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 5.4

Maternal Mortality
(Per 100,000 live births)



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

would require further rationalization in the provision of this service including greater role for the private sector, and improvement in efficiency in all the components and subsystems of the national health service. Furthermore strengthening the system capacity in the remote and rural areas of the Kingdom is also quite vital.

Insufficient data and statistics on some important aspects of health services, makes it more difficult to formulate effective policies and programmes that would meet the growing and ever evolving health needs of the society. Data on the actual distribution of health expenditures on regional and area basis, on the various types of health services, and also on the social and economic and health status of the beneficiaries, are vital for improving the coverage and effectiveness of health services.

Relatively low employment rates of Saudi nationals in the health services sector despite significant expansion of medical education in the Kingdom. In 2000, Saudi nationals accounted for only 20.1 percent of all physicians, 18.6 percent of the nursing staff and 41.4 percent of the supporting staff. Higher rates of national professionals will make for better and more effective delivery of medical services.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Well-developed health service infrastructure with national coverage and across all levels of service, from primary

health services, to specialised medical centres that are accessible to all. Moreover, the health sector assumes high priority in public policy stemming from full awareness and appreciation of its role and impact on social and economic development.

An emerging universal health insurance scheme that will first cover all expatriates in the Kingdom and could later be expanded to cover all the population once all its requisite components are in place.

A dynamic and robust private sector that has been traditionally active in the provision of health services. The role of the private sector is expected to grow as a result of the privatisation strategy, which includes some of the health facilities, while the universal insurance scheme will further support and enhance the role of the private sector in the provision of health services.

PRIORITIES FOR UN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

1. Support in health policy formulation, programming, and health service reforms; including restructuring.
2. Support of capacity building and training of medical and health service professionals.
3. Facilitate experience sharing and networking among health professionals and policy makers on the regional and international levels.
4. Support for improved statistical and information capacity, including public awareness programs and mass educational campaigns.

Box 5.3

Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of Monitoring Environment

Assessment

Data-gathering capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Quality of recent survey information	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical tracking capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical analysis capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning & resource allocation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak



Education

Achieve universal access to primary education by 2015

STATUS AND TRENDS

The Kingdom will definitely achieve universal primary education well before the target year of 2015. Youth literacy rate reached 92.6 percent in 1999, and adult literacy stood at 76.1 percent in the same year. Primary school enrolment ratio registered 96.1 percent in year 2000, resulting from a male enrolment rate of 97.3 percent and 94.8 percent rate for females.

The progress achieved, not only in primary education, but in all three levels of education, have been a direct result of the high priority given to education since the earliest years of modern economic and social development programming in the Kingdom. This has been in recognition of the fundamental importance of human development to the realization of sustainable economic and social goals. Expenditures on education constituted 11.3 percent of GDP in 2000, with the share of primary and secondary allocations reaching 82.2 percent of total public allocations to the education sector. Furthermore, the Kingdom's educational policies paid special attention to female education, and consequently male and female enrolment rates have been rapidly converging in all stages of education; primary, secondary, and tertiary.

The Kingdom provides free education in its public schools, colleges and universities. Furthermore, the Seventh National Development Plan makes primary and secondary level education compulsory for both males and females. In addition the private sector has been assuming an increasing role in the provision of education, historically in primary and secondary education, and more recently in tertiary education.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THE GOAL

The public school system capacity has been subject to increasing pressures generated by relatively rapid population growth and associated demographic factors. This issue

is becoming critical at all schooling levels but is more apparent at college/university (tertiary) level, primarily due to the modest contribution of private education at this stage. Responding to this issue, and on top of adding to capacity of the public school system, the government has been encouraging the private sector to increase its participation in the educational and training sector in general and in higher education in particular. However, this latter policy has to reconcile the issue caused by the classical dichotomy rising from the cohabitation of, on the one hand, a free and sometimes directly subsidized public education, and on the other hand, a for profit private school system.

There is a growing imbalance between the quality and quantity of occupational expertise produced by the educational system and the occupational structure demanded by the economy as reflected in the qualifications and expertise required by present and future employment opportunities. About two-thirds of the total number of male and female students in higher education graduate with degrees in humanities and other fields that are not in great demand by the labour market. Consequently, education policy is under continuous review and assessment with the objective of tuning the system output to better match the needs of economic and social development.

The educational system is increasingly challenged by rapid scientific, technological and other developments, which require a continuous review of the educational curriculum so it stays attuned to developments in the domestic market as well as to relevant international developments. This policy entails: (a) continuous enhancement of educational methodologies; (b) upgrading the educational environment; (c) strengthening the technical capabilities and performance of the educational system; (d) improving the technical capabilities of teachers, instructors and other educational professionals; and (e) enhancing educational governance and management.

Box 6.1

Status at a Glance

Will the target be reached by 2015?

Probably Potentially Unlikely Insufficient Data

State of Supporting Environment

Strong Fair Weak but improving Weak

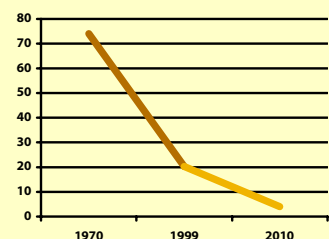
Box 6.2

Summary of Targets from the Seventh Development Plan (2000 – 2004)

- Make primary education mandatory for all boys and girls;
- Update and develop the curricula and teaching methods, and improve and upgrade teachers' skills;
- Address the problem of school dropouts at all levels of schooling;
- Place more emphasis on theoretical and applied research in universities and research centres;
- Encourage the private sector to participate in the provision of higher education;
- Insure the conformity of education policy with labour market requirements.

Figure 6.1

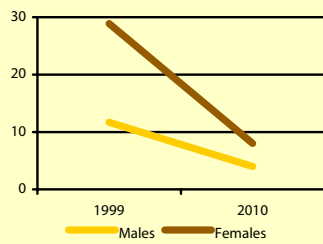
Illiteracy Rate (Percentage)



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 6.2

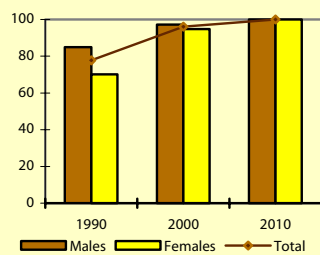
Targeted Illiteracy Rate (Percentage)



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 6.3

Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education (Percentage)



Source: Statistical Yearbook, Ministry of Planning, 1999

3. SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The government maintains human development sectors in general and the education sector in particular at the top of its priorities as reflected in the General Objectives and Strategic Principles for Education in the 7th National Development Plan.

In spite of some reductions in public expenditures, education and health are the least to be affected. The Kingdom has the financial resources to sustain its development institutions, and therefore it is self-sufficient to rely on its national resources. This empowers the country's potentialities to meet its educational targets through the implementation of a series of policies during the period of the present development and thereafter, which include the following:

1. Strengthening of the internal efficiency of the educational system.
2. Improving the academic curricula for all educational levels in accordance with the global scientific and technological advancements and the national development needs.
3. Enhancing the proficiency of educational professionals through in-

service training as well as improving the standards of colleges of education.

4. Inducing the necessary policy and organisational reforms to properly establish and accommodate partnerships with the private sector.
5. Conducting the essential studies for the enhancement of the overall educational system.
6. Improving the effectiveness of educational management and the educational environment.
7. Strengthening the coordination mechanisms of the various educational institutions and exchange of information.

PRIORITIES FOR UN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

1. Technical assistance in curriculum development and upgrade.
2. R&D capacity building in national institutions.
3. Technical assistance in policy formulation and development programming in the education sector.
4. Capacity building in teachers' skill development.
5. Fermenting regional and international cooperation and sharing of experience.

Box 6.3

Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of Monitoring Environment

Assessment

Data-gathering capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Quality of recent survey information	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical tracking capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical analysis capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning & resource allocation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak



Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015

STATUS AND TRENDS

FEMALE EDUCATION

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is well on its way to completely eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education. Girls to boys' ratios in net enrolment reached 0.90, 0.94, and 1.05 respectively in the primary, secondary and tertiary stages of schooling in the year 2000. It is most likely that the millennium goal will be achieved by the target year of 2005 in the primary and secondary stages, while in the tertiary stage the balance is already in favour of females; this also is expected to return to parity by the target year.

The above achievements in girls' education were achieved despite the fact that girls' education was introduced relatively later than that of boys and as late as the 1960's. This however was the result of rapid expansion both horizontally and vertically in education services in general and that in girls' education in particular, a product of the Kingdom's policy that gives priority to the education of women to enable them become more empowered and productive members of society.

Consequently, girls' enrolment across all educational levels grew at an average annual rate of 8.3 percent, compared to 4.2 percent for boys over the period 1975-2000.

The cumulative stock of educated Saudi females was estimated in year 2000 at 41.9 percent of all Saudi females over 12 years of age, according to the Ministry of Education. This is compared to 63.8 percent for males.

Furthermore, female literacy rates have reached 88.8 percent for those between 15 and 24 years of age, and 74.3 percent for all of those ages 15 and above. Relative to male literacy, female literacy rates, as percentage of those of males, reached 95.7 and 83.7 percent respectively for the two age groupings. It should be noted here that adult education and literacy drives, undertaken by the authorities, have also made substantial contribution to female education. This

becomes apparent from the fact that around 37 percent of females who had no formal education can read and write.

FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

The participation rate of females in total employment was estimated at only 9.9 percent in 1999, and out of the total employed females, 31.7 percent are nationals while the balance are expatriate female workers. This participation rate however, is thought to underestimate the role of females in economic activities due to two basic reasons: (a) while total employment statistics include those formally employed in the agricultural sector, females working in agriculture and other traditional occupations however, are not included in the statistics; (b) The employment statistics don't yet take into account females employed in small, family run businesses.

Although there are several factors that explain the low participation by females in economic activity, there is increasing interest in increasing the employment levels of females as economic and social development progressed. Development has created new social and economic conditions, which require higher participation by women in the labour market, in occupations that are compatible with the prevalent cultural norms and social values.

Expansion of female education has encouraged many females to join the labour force and seek employment. Most formally employed females in the Kingdom are working in the services sector, particularly in education, health and social services. It is noted in this regard that Saudi females' participation in the workforce is highest (about 15.5 percent) in the age group 25-34, followed by those with tertiary education (about 52.3 percent). It is clear that females participation rate in the workforce is directly proportional to educational attainment, moderated with marital status, where married women with children may prefer not to work outside the

Box 7.1

Status at a Glance

Will the target be reached by 2015?

Probably Potentially Unlikely Insufficient Data

State of Supporting Environment

Strong Fair Weak but improving Weak

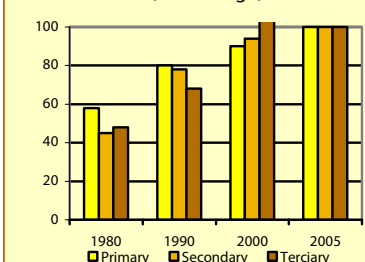
Box 7.2

Summary of Targets from the Seventh Development Plan (2000 – 2004)

- Sustain educational opportunities and other services for women
- Encourage women's entrepreneurship
- Create female oriented job opportunities

Figure 7.1

Girls to Boys Enrolment Ratio (Percentage)



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 7.2

**Female Employment
(Percentage)**



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

home. With the spread of education, female participation in employment is expected to grow appreciably over the coming years.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

While no female as yet occupy a ministerial or a legislative post in Saudi Arabia, many hold sub-cabinet and senior government positions mainly in the education, health or social services sectors. Furthermore, a number of Saudi women hold executive positions in private sector firms, businesses and international organizations.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THE GOALS

The scope and diversity of employment opportunities for females are quite limited and largely concentrated in the girls' education and health services sectors. This issue has been at the top of policy agenda and several measures are already in place with the objective of widening the opportunities for female employment.

There is an urgent need to close the wide mismatch between educational qualifications of graduates i.e. education system output, on the one hand, and the needs of the labour market on the other. This issue however, does effect the employment of all the national workforce; males and females; but has a greater impact on the latter due to reduced job opportunities and other social and cultural factors. Toward dealing with this difficult and multi-faceted challenge, education policies, labour market policies, and other related policies have recently been under

ongoing review and close scrutiny, in order to reach a satisfactory resolution to this important social and economic issue.

There is a great need to improve females' mobility, increase the availability of day-care centres, encourage part-time employment, and support home-based employment, among other facilitating measures for higher female participation in the labour market.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

There is high level of public and private support for female education, and strong awareness of their vital role in social and economic development.

Strong public commitment toward finding long-term solutions to the looming problem of structural unemployment among the national workforce, and recognition of the need for addressing this issue in a fundamental way, and by all stakeholders: the government, the private sector, and the rest of the Saudi society.

PRIORITIES FOR UN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

1. The areas of technical cooperation that were identified in the previous chapter on education are all quite relevant to the issue of promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.
2. Facilitate exchanges of experience on the regional and international levels in the area of female development and empowerment.
3. Strengthen the links between Saudi women NGO's and the UN and other regional and international counterparts.

Box 7.3

Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of Monitoring Environment

Assessment

Data-gathering capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Quality of recent survey information	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical tracking capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical analysis capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning & resource allocation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak



Water and Environmental Sustainability

Halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015
 Implement sustainable strategies and reverse loss of environmental resources

STATUS AND TRENDS

As an economy dependant on energy, whether for government income or economic output, sustainable development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a two dimensional challenge: the first; is the vital need to efficiently transform the energy resource assets into sustainable human, technological, economic, and knowledge assets that will insure decent living standards for present and future generations. The second dimension is the equally vital need to affect the above social and economic objective under an environmentally sustainable regime, which protects and preserve the countries natural resources and other environmental assets.

Protecting the environment and conserving natural resources have been a principle objective of Saudi Arabia's national development strategy. This priority is motivated by the natural endowments of the Kingdom which, with a landmass area of 2.25 million square kilometres, only 5 percent of this area is arable land, 1 percent forests, and another 1 percent of irrigated land, while the remainder 93 percent is arid and semi-arid desert. Moreover, the Kingdom, which is richly endowed with several natural resources, has always had to be cognizant of the relatively limited fresh water and arable land resources

Total water consumption on per capita basis increased rapidly, due to rising standards of living and economic growth, from 669 cubic meters in 1985 to 1010 cubic meters in 2000, and total consumption reached 21.1 billion cubic meters in 2000. It is estimated that 89.2 percent of the water is consumed in agriculture, while 57.4 percent of the water supply comes from non-renewable deep aquifers. In light of this unsustainable trend, the Kingdom's agricultural and water policy has been under a comprehensive review with the aim of reducing water use in agriculture and instilling water saving behaviour in all economic and social activities. Never the less, all residents have

access to safe water resources in both urban and rural areas. Where a public water network does not exist, water is transported by tankers to private or community tanks, or drawn from local wells.

Due to rapid economic development, the Kingdom has witnessed a fast rise in energy consumption over the past three decades. Total primary energy consumption grew at an average annual rate of 11.5 percent over the 1970-2000 period, and at 7 percent over per capita basis. Notwithstanding these high growth rates which are usually expected for a rapidly developing economy, growth in energy consumption has, in recent years, substantially come down from its historical highs due to saturation effects and to conservation policies.

Energy intensity in the economy, which is the reciprocal of energy efficiency, has exhibited similar trends to that of per capita consumption, and is characteristic of the Kingdom's development that gives priority to energy intensive industrial development due to its comparative advantage. This trend is amplified by relatively inexpensive domestic energy supplies on top of warm weather driving high air-conditioning demand. Consequently, it is estimated that carbon dioxide emissions increased from 177.1 million metric tons in 1990 to 267.8 million metric tons in 1996, and on per capita basis from 11.2 to 13.8 tons respectively.

The Kingdom has implemented a number policies aimed at protecting the environment and reducing pollution among which; the complete phase out of leaded gasoline, the substantial reduction in the use of HFC compounds, the almost complete elimination of gas flaring by the oil industry, and the connection of all factories in the industrial cities of Jubail and Yanbu to waste treatment plants, among other measures. Furthermore, the Kingdom has been undertaking the restructuring of the power and water sectors, with market pricing as a main objective, and tariff structures that induce conservation and rational use are already in place.

Box 8.1

Status at a Glance

Will the target be reached by 2015?

Probably Potentially Unlikely Insufficient Data

State of Supporting Environment

Strong Fair Weak but improving Weak

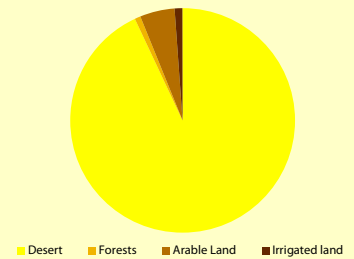
Box 8.2

Summary of Targets from the Seventh Development Plan (2000 – 2004)

- Protect the natural environment throughout the Kingdom, on land and sea against pollution and to develop appropriate systems
- Preserve and enhance the natural resources and conserve wildlife and marine assets of the Kingdom
- Observe the internationally agreed protocols on support of the global environment

Figure 8.1

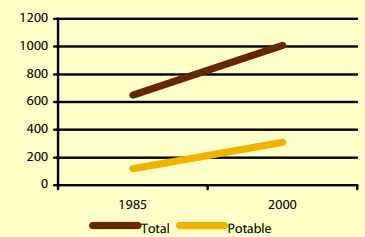
Land Resources in 1999



Source: Seventh national Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 8.2

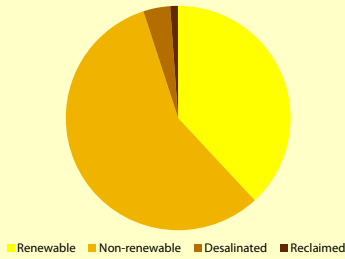
Total and Potable Water Consumption Per Capita (Liters per day)



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Water and Ministry of Planning

Figure 8.2

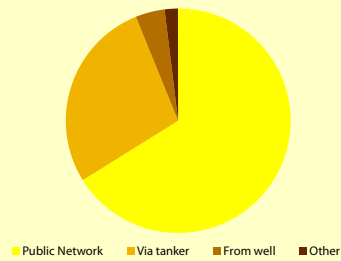
Water Supply in 2000



Source: Seventh national Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 8.3

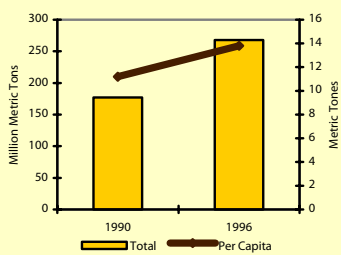
Type of Water Supply in 2000



Source: Seventh national Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 8.4

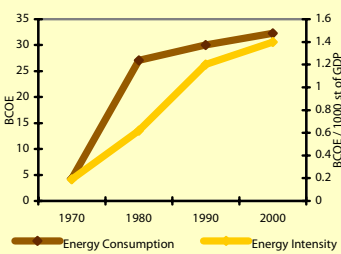
Carbon Dioxide Emissions



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 8.5

Energy Use and Intensity



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

It is estimated that 90 percent of households have proper sanitation service in 2000, with 100 percent service coverage in urban areas and 72 percent in rural areas. It should be noted in this respect that development priority, in terms of provision of basic services and infrastructure, was initially given to main development centres. With this having been mostly achieved, attention was turned to smaller towns and village clusters in various parts of the country. Currently, about 80 percent of the Kingdom's population have access to modern infrastructure, utilities and services, quite an achievement considering the vastness of the territory and the low average population density.

The Kingdom has accorded high priority to the preservation of nature's diversity (the flora & fauna) since the very early stages of economic and social development. A total of fifteen zones with an area of 82 thousand square kilometres, or 3.7 percent of the country's area, are designated as protected national reserves. These zones include a number of coastal areas, habitat for various marine species, including coral reefs. It is expected that additional areas will be brought under protection in the near future. Moreover, a number of previously endangered wild species have been bred in captivity and re-introduced to the wild such as the Reem Gazelle and the Arabian Oryx, among others. Also the Saudi National Commission for Wildlife Conservation (NCWCD) has compiled a complete database with full illustrations on the geographical distribution of large mammals, as well as some important species of birds and wild plants.

Finally, the Kingdom has a number of environmental codes and regulations in effect and has drafted and in the process of adopting the following codes and strategies and guidelines: "A Code of Standards for Control of Hazardous waste", "A National Strategy for health and Environment", "A Work Program and Guideline for Disposing of Medical Waste", and under preparation, "A National Water Strategy and Plan".

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THE GOAL

Achieving economic diversification and a sustainable economic path without undue dependence on oil income and other non-renewable resources remain the main

challenge for the Kingdom. However, rising demand for basic services and infrastructure, which is driven by growth in population and income, would compete with investments that need to be made in productive enterprises, in human resource development, and in technology development, among others, if the diversification objective is to be attained. Thus inducing rational consumption and conservation of resources, while simultaneously diversifying government income, will be an ongoing challenge for the Kingdom for the foreseeable future.

Notwithstanding efforts expended to date on water conservation and rationalization of its use, further policy initiatives are still required since the present water demand/supply balance is not sustainable in the long term. In this vein, the relatively low rates of water network connections and sewage-networked connections limit the potential for increasing the water-recycling rate that is presently a meagre 1 percent of total water consumed. The recycling incentive complements those other health and social benefits of networking the water and sewage services. On the other hand, finding innovative technological solutions to the problem of limited renewable water resources is considered a very important strategic objective for the Kingdom.

The Kingdom has been experiencing rapid urbanization with urban population constituting 64.3 percent of the total population in 2000 rising from about 53 percent in 1985. While a more striking dynamic is the increase in the population of the major cities whose total population constitutes a ratio of 40.8 percent of the total population in 2000, a substantial leap from only 19.1 percent fifteen years ago. These trends represent another main challenge given the implication for the future quality of infrastructure and other public services in the cities, the ability to keep Saudi cities free of slums in the future, and the impact on rural development as a result of rural to urban migration, among others.

Environmental pressures are expected to multiply over the medium to long-term due mainly to continued economic growth in general, and to growth in energy use in particular. The potential risks on public health and welfare could be serious if environmental policies do not rise to meet the challenge. Codes and regulations

should be expanded to cover all polluting activities and continuously updated with the latest scientific knowledge and new technical discoveries. Furthermore, the monitoring and enforcement processes require further integration into public and private sector mechanisms and procedures in order to improve their efficiencies and effectiveness.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental protection is accorded the highest priority by the government, a standing ministerial committee is charged with the responsibility of formulating the strategy and guiding the policy. Furthermore, a specialized agency, the Metrology and Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) is the governmental body responsible for monitoring and environmental protection, for formulating codes and regulations, and for coordination among the concerned agencies of the public and private sectors. Furthermore, the preservation of bio-diversity and the management of wild life reserves and protected areas are the responsibility of another specialized government agency, the national Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD).

The water issue has recently been placed at a high priority track, by separating the water from the ministerial portfolio of agriculture and assigning it to its own ministerial portfolio. This new ministry's first tasks will be to oversee and guide the preparation of a comprehensive water strategy for the Kingdom.

The water sector in general, and the water desalination industry in particular is undergoing restructuring with a view of introducing private competition in supply, which is certain to help strengthen market signals on conservation and rationalization of water use.

The Kingdom is in the process of adopting long term strategic social and economic planning, as a programming tool for development. Adopting a long-term view is considered a more effective approach to dealing with the issues of sustainable development, environmental protection and economic diversification.

PRIORITIES FOR UN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

1. Technical assistance in capacity building in areas of environmental monitoring, protection, and management.
2. Technical assistance and capacity building in long-term policy analysis and economic programming for sustainable development.
3. Technical assistance and capacity building in water resource development and resource management including water conservation.
4. Stimulating and supporting regional and international cooperation programs and promotion of international agendas and protocols on environment and development.

Figure 8.6

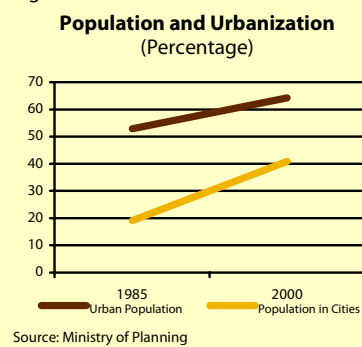
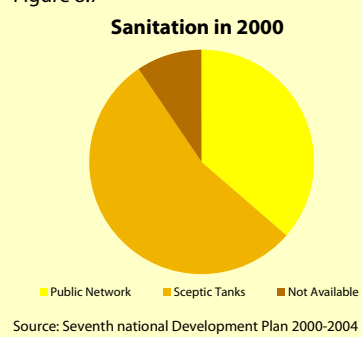


Figure 8.7



Box 8.3

Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of Monitoring Environment

Data-gathering capabilities
 Quality of recent survey information
 Statistical tracking capabilities
 Statistical analysis capabilities
 Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning & resource allocation mechanisms
 Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Assessment

Element	Assessment
Data-gathering capabilities	Strong Fair Weak
Quality of recent survey information	Strong Fair Weak
Statistical tracking capabilities	Strong Fair Weak
Statistical analysis capabilities	Strong Fair Weak
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning & resource allocation mechanisms	Strong Fair Weak
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong Fair Weak



HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases

Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases by 2015

STATUS AND TRENDS

Saudi Arabia has a well-developed health care system, based on a comprehensive primary care system and an extensive system of medical clinics, hospitals, and other health service facilities located in all regions of the country. This capacity has enabled the Kingdom to effectively cope with outbreaks of communicable diseases and epidemic emergencies.

As a host for the annual Pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah, and the religious "Umra" visits to the two holy centres of Makkah and Medina, the Kingdom receives annually over one and half million visitors from around the world, a factor that greatly increases the risks of disease breakout. Consequently, all visitors to the Kingdom are required to have appropriate vaccination against a number of potential diseases, including meningitis, and yellow fever for certain visitors. Moreover, the Kingdom hosts a large number of guest workers from all around the world. These workers have to undergo medical tests prior to getting their work permits, which include tests for the HIV/AIDS virus.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the Kingdom had a total 414 reported cases of AIDS by August 1999. Furthermore, reported cases have dropped sharply, from 112 cases in 1997 to 26 cases in 1999. This trend has coincided with an extensive public information and educational campaign, aimed at education towards prevention, and at encouraging those potentially at risk of carrying the virus to come out for testing and treatment. Social and cultural norms that mitigate against the contraction and spread of the HIV virus and other sexually transmitted diseases notwithstanding, the high mobility of the population and the high influx of guest workers, among other factors, require the Kingdom to be continuously alert in monitoring and screening for this dangerous virus.

The Kingdom has also been quite successful in its fight against Malaria where comprehensive preventive measures are

employed especially in the low lands of the high risk South-Western Region of the country. These measures include spraying and drying of mosquito breeding wetlands and marches among other measures of prevention. An extensive screening and treatment network, especially in the high-risk areas, complement preventive measures. Consequently, reported cases of Malaria dropped from around 64 thousand cases in 1982 to 6.6 thousand cases in 2000.

The preparedness and capacity of the public health protection system was seriously tested during the latter months of the year 2000, when the Rift Valley Fever (RVF), struck parts of the South-Western Region. The rapid and effective deployment of containment and fighting measures resulted in quickly isolating the disease and effectively controlling and subsequently eradicating the virus within a short time period and with limited losses in human life and property.

On other related fronts, the Kingdom has also successfully eradicated poliomyelitis from the country and thus met the target set in 1988 by the Regional Committee for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, which resolved to eradicate this disease by the year 2000. Furthermore, reported cases of Meningococcal Meningitis, have decreased substantially over recent years due to improved preventive measures undertaken before and during the Hajj Pilgrimage; such as obligatory immunization for those planning to perform the pilgrimage, in addition to substantial improvement in the level and quality of services that are provided to the pilgrims while performing their religious rites and duties

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THE GOALS

The Kingdom is well positioned to meet the set goals on AIDS, Malaria, and other diseases, however, in light of the elevated risks of outbreaks as represented by the annual pilgrimage, as well as the continued flux of guest workers and other visitors, the health monitoring and emergency

Box 9.1

Status at a Glance

Will the target be reached by 2015?

Probably Potentially Unlikely Insufficient Data

State of Supporting Environment

Strong Fair Weak but improving Weak

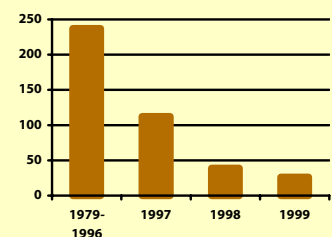
Box 9.2

Summary of Targets from the Seventh Development Plan (2000 – 2004)

- Reduce cases to less than 0.17 per 100,000
- Sustain provision of medications and surveillance
- Undertake preventive measures

Figure 9.1

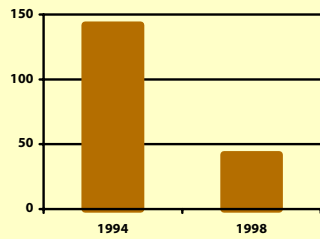
HIV/AIDS (Reported Cases)



Source: Seventh National Development Plan 2000-2004

Figure 9.2

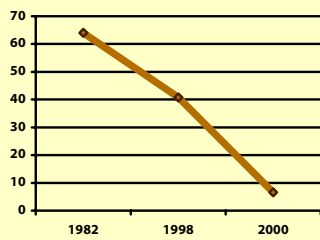
Meningococcal Meningitis
(Reported Cases)



Source: Ministry of Health

Figure 9.3

Malaria
(Reported Cases)



Source: Ministry of Health and WHO

response system will always be under the pressure of being able to effectively screen for epidemiological diseases and respond to possible outbreaks.

Contracting HIV and falling ill to AIDS usually lead to stigma and social isolation, especially in a traditional society. Thus it is of paramount importance for the authorities to expand and enhance the educational and information campaigns which aim at, not only encouraging those who carry the virus to come out to the open and seek professional medical help, but also to work on reducing the social stigma and isolation that usually inflict those with HIV infection.

Present levels of cooperation notwithstanding, regional cooperation and coordination in the monitoring and control of infectious diseases need further enhancement, especially with bordering countries who share high risk zones with the Kingdom.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

There is appropriate capacity to deal with public health risks and emergencies, as a result of long experience drawn from the

annual Hajj pilgrimage and "Umra" visitors. This includes well-developed plans for emergencies and comprehensive network of stationary and mobile health centres.

Strong government commitment and support to the health sector, particularly to public health programs, and appropriate emphasis on prevention utilizing universal immunization, public education, vigilant monitoring, and efficient response to health emergencies.

Increased public awareness and appreciation of HIV risks, and the need to help its stricken victims.

PRIORITIES FOR UN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

1. Assistance in building national capacity in disease surveillance.
2. Assistance in the development of disease related databases and statistical information systems.
3. Cooperation in conducting public awareness and mass education campaigns.
4. Providing catalysts for regional and international cooperation and coordination in disease surveillance, control, and planning for public health emergencies.

Box 10.3

Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of Monitoring Environment

Assessment

Data-gathering capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Quality of recent survey information	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical tracking capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical analysis capabilities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning & resource allocation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak



References

Achievements of the Development Plans (1970-2000), Eighteenth Issue, Ministry of Planning, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ministry of Planning, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Annual Health Statistics 1999, Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response (CSR), WHO/OMS, UN, 2001.

Food Balance Sheet, FAO, UN.

Human Development Report 2001, UNDP.

News & Highlights, FAO, UN.

Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency's Thirty-Seventh Annual Report 2001, SAMA, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Seventh National Development Plan (2000-2004), Ministry of Planning, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Weekly Epidemiological Record, WHO, UN, (Several issues).

WHO Report on Global Surveillance of Epidemic-prone Infectious Diseases, WHO Internet Page.

World Development Report 2000/2001, World Bank.

