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**MEETING THE MDG DRINKING
WATER AND SANITATION TARGET**
A Mid-Term Assessment of Progress



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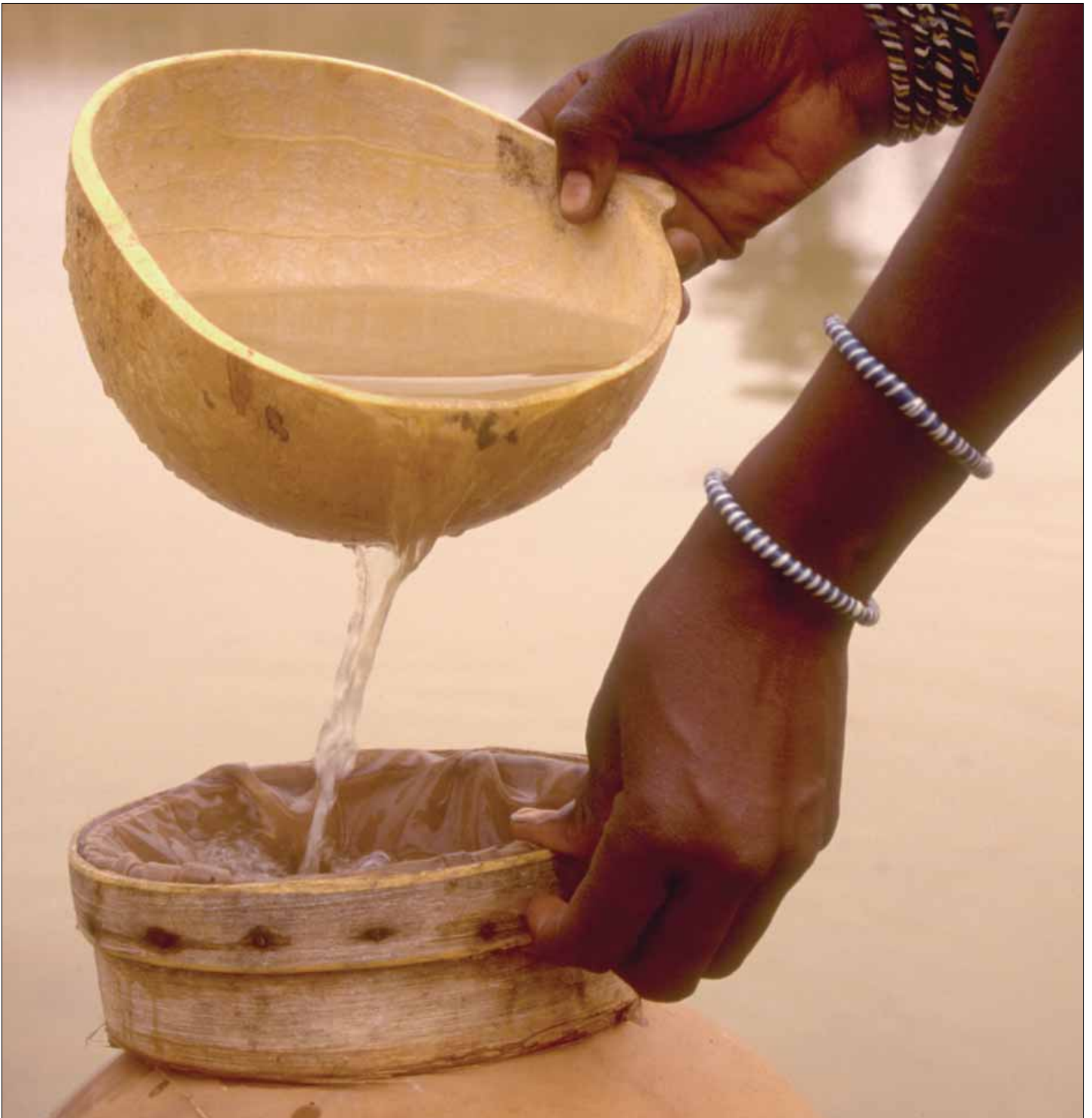
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Foreword

The combination of safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation facilities is a precondition for health and for success in the fight against poverty, hunger, child deaths and gender inequality. It is also central to the human rights and personal dignity of every woman, man and child on earth. Yet 2.6 billion people – half the developing world – lack even a simple ‘improved’ latrine. One person in six – more than 1 billion of our fellow human beings – has little choice but to use potentially harmful sources of water. The consequences of our collective failure to tackle this problem are dimmed prospects for the billions of people locked in a cycle of poverty and disease.

In adopting the Millennium Development Goals, the countries of the world pledged to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The results so far are mixed. With the exception of sub-Saharan Africa, the world is well on its way to meeting the drinking water target by 2015, but progress in sanitation is stalled in many developing regions.

This report, produced by the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP), provides the latest estimates and trends on where we stand today. The JMP’s estimates are critical for calculating rates of progress towards national goals and for highlighting priorities, especially those that target the underserved.

For those countries in which progress has been slow, the report’s finding should provide an incentive to accelerate action in the crucial years ahead. For countries ‘on track’, they should remind us that our work is not finished until every citizen is served.



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