

STRONG URBAN-RURAL INEQUITY IN THE ACCESS TO SAFE WATER AND SANITATION IN ARGENTINA

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In September of 2000, the Chiefs of State of 147 countries and 42 ministers met in the General Assembly of the United Nations in order to reinforce the commitment of cooperation towards the less developed populations. There, the Millennium Development Goals arose, to be achieved in 2015. The seventh of these objectives was oriented to assure a sustainable environment, and the associated goal was to reduce by half in 2015, respect to 1990, the percentage of people without access to safe water and sanitation. Lately, a variety of international reports agree that the rate of fulfillment of this objective will be variable in the cities, but very low in the rural settings, where the situation acquires increasing complexity year after year. This document analyzes the evolution of this goal in Argentina according to different levels of poverty and rurality. On the other hand, this study analyzes the goal fulfillment at national, provincial and municipal level, considering its evolution between 1991 and 2001 with estimations for the year 2015. Results still demonstrate that the condition of rurality, involves a diminished access to safe water, even considering strategies of provision beyond the public networks. Finally, it was observed that most of the provinces would reach the proposed goal. Nevertheless, others would still be very far from the objective, showing a deepening of the differences. Given this situation, more than half a million Argentines, concentrated in a few provinces, would still not have access to a fundamental good as it is safe water, in 2015. The study shows the urban-rural inequity and the failure to address this inequity between provinces respect to the materialization of an established and ratified human right. This is a warning call for the formulation of active policies capable to reduce this gap towards a more equitable society.