
- Southern Asia will have to enrol about 40 million more children – an increase of one-third – requiring at least the same pace of effort as in the previous period, 1990–97. Bhutan needs more than ten times the previous effort.

- The Arab States need twice the previous effort to accommodate some 23 million additional children, representing an increase of 72%.

In summary, these findings show clearly that the task of ensuring UPE by 2015 may be more difficult than it was in the past decade unless a major effort is undertaken to accelerate the current trends, especially in the geographic regions cited above. The concluding chapter of this report discusses some of the forms that such an effort might take.

 Elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015

The objective of UPE also implies the elimination of all forms of disparities, including the gender gaps that are the most visible inequty in access to education in many developing countries.

During the past decade, the progress towards UPE was accompanied by the reduction of gender gaps in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa. While the gender disparity is not a serious concern in most of the Latin America/Caribbean and Eastern Asia/Pacific countries, it remains one in many Arab States, sub-Saharan African and Southern Asian countries. Importantly, gender disparities are most pronounced in regions or countries with relatively low enrolment rates (see Figure 3).