

Forum: Economic and Social Council II

Issue: Reducing the death rate of children under five years of age

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Introduction

Reducing the death rate of children less than five years of age is the fourth Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of the United Nations. It calls for the reduction of child mortality by two thirds spanning from 1990 to 2015. According to the 2004 UNICEF Progress for Children Report the rate of reducing child deaths is alarmingly slow. It has been quantified that eleven million children die every year. A large portion of these deaths are brought on by easily preventable causes such as pneumonia, diarrhea, malnutrition, malaria, measles, HIV/AIDS and neonatal causes. Furthermore, the likelihood of achieving the millennium goal is improbable as the goal implies an average annual rate of progress of approximately 4.4% between 1990 and 2015. However it is revealed that no region has met this standard according to the UNICEF Progress for Children, and that some 78 countries have been unable to average even a two percent progress since 1990. Thus in order to achieve this goal, at least 39 countries must now reduce child mortality by more than 8% per year on average until 2015. Another issue that is brought to light is the lack of food and basic health care that is necessary in war-torn nations. In this case, in the 60's and 70's UNICEF put this issue as their forefront as they tried to combat the rising mortality rates of children below five years old. Around the 80's UNICEF expanded their services into developing nations of where children were at risk. Finally in the 90's UNICEF formed the first goal concerning children health and well being.

Definition of Key Terms

Neonatal Causes

The term neonatal is an adjective of or relating to new born children (or mammals). The phrase neonatal causes refer to certain infant maladies such as jaundice, rubella, sepsis, etc. These causes are most commonly found in regions with deficient health services and rural environments (eg. Slums, shanties, etc).

Millennium Development Goal (MDG)

The Millennium Development Goals are eight international development goals that 192 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. This encompasses reducing extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development.

General Overview

WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that acts as a coordinating authority on international public health. WHO promotes three main strategies which is the integrated management of childhood illness, expanded programmes on immunized infant and young child feeding to improve the current child mortality situation.

Health care

Over the decades UNICEF has managed to prevent the deaths of 250,000 children every year through the supplementation of vitamin A as well as that the use of oral dehydration therapy can prevent one million deaths on set by diarrhea and dehydration. Programs such as immunization, use of common antibiotics and other measures as such could be employed to prevent further deaths of children below the ages of five.

Progress

Unless efforts are increased, there is little hope of eliminating avoidable child deaths. If current trends continue, the MDG will not be achieved until 2045 – 30 years late. Around 400 million children have no access to safe water. Some 1.4 million children every year - and 3,900 children every day - die because they lack access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1989	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child reaffirmed every child's right to the enjoyment of the highest standard of health in addition to other basic rights such as having access to quality education, protection against abuse, exploitation and violence.
1990	UNICEF achieved the first set of goals on child health and well-being, which were set at the first World Summit for Children

September, 1994	International Conference on Population and Development agreed on a Programme of Action on population and development
May, 2002	United Nations Special Session for Children reaffirmed the global commitment to a time-bound set of specific goals, among which is MDG Goal 4, aimed at reducing the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds by the year 2015.
March 26, 1994	Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections was adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).
November 22, 2004	Ukrainian Orange Revolution

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- 2004 UNICEF *Progress for Children* report
- Millennium Development Goal (MDG)
- UNAIDS (2004)
- United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF's)
- In September 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development agreed on a Programme of Action on population and development
- UNICEF Accelerated Child Survival and Development programme

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