

Tracking Progress in Child Survival

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London, 15 December 2005 - It would not be an overstatement to say the progress on child survival that has been made so far is unacceptable. Since 1990, of the 60 countries with either the highest under-five mortality rates or the highest number of child deaths, only 7 countries are on target to reach the Millennium Development Goal related to child mortality. 39 countries have made either insufficient progress or no progress at all and 14 countries have actually sustained increases in their under-five mortality rates, many of which are affected by a conflict situation or HIV/AIDS.

Coverage for many of the proven high impact health and nutrition interventions such as immunization, nutrition, bed nets, adequate water, and sanitation remains low in most of these high mortality countries. The fact is, at current rates of progress, the child survival goal will be reached 30 years late. Put another way, this means that an estimated 8.7 million children under 5 would still die in 2015. However, if the child survival target was met, it is estimated that that number would fall to about 5 million. Child survival is an issue that is too great for anyone to address single-handedly. When we work together, we can maximize resources and draw upon each other's relative strengths. That, of course, is the idea behind the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health.