

The state of the world's children: Child survival ^[1]

UNICEF

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Excerpts from press release: While recent data show a fall in the rate of under-five mortality, the State of the World's Children Report 2008 goes beyond the numbers to suggest actions and initiatives that should lead to further progress. The approach to child survival that the report advocates would see the best disease-specific initiatives combined with investment in strong national health systems to create a continuum of care for mothers, newborns and young children that extends from the household, to the local clinic, to the district hospital and beyond. The report emphasizes the need to involve local communities. These communities generate necessary demand for quality health care and their engagement is vital if marginalized and remote populations are to be reached. Nowhere is the need for life-saving strategies more apparent than in sub-Saharan Africa where, on average, one child in every six dies before their fifth birthday. The report provides information on a strategic framework developed by UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank & at the invitation of the African Union & to help African countries and others reduce the toll of maternal and child deaths. The framework calls for: -Good data to inform policies and programmes; -A shift to combine disease-specific and nutrition interventions in integrated packages to ensure a continuum of care; -The mainstreaming of maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition into national strategic planning processes to scale up and strengthen health systems; -Improved quality and increased, predictable financing for strengthening health systems; -Political commitments to approaches that provide a continuum of care; and -The harmonization of global health programmes and partnerships. "Child survival is not only a human rights imperative, it is also a development imperative," said Joy Phumaphi, Vice President, Human Development Network at the World Bank. "Investing in the health of children and their mothers is a sound economic decision and one of the surest ways for a country to set its course towards a better future."

Region: Africa ^[3]

Tags: health ^[4]

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