



SURVIVE and **THRIVE**

Transforming care for every
small and sick newborn



World Health
Organization

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for every child

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FOREWORD

Just about everyone has experienced the joy that a healthy newborn child brings to parents, families and communities. But the arrival of a newborn who is small or sick often results in immediate worry and sadness. When the infant is at high risk of death or disability, these concerns can be a tremendous additional burden.

We remain firm in our vision of a world freed of that burden, a world in which every mother and newborn will survive and thrive. However, we cannot meet the health-related Sustainable Development Goals – and we cannot achieve universal health coverage or people-centred primary health care – without a strong and growing investment in mothers and newborns. This report focuses on inpatient care for the most vulnerable newborns: the small and sick.

The launch of the Every Newborn Action Plan at the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly in 2014 coincided with a period of great progress. The global neonatal mortality rate declined from 31 deaths per 1000 live births in 2000 to 18 deaths per 1000 live births in 2017. But three years into the era of the SDGs, we are still far from our goal of reducing newborn deaths to 12 per 1000, or less, by 2030. Bending the curve further will require a laser-sharp focus on reorganizing health systems to provide quality care, and continuity of care, for newborns – especially those who are critically ill.

To that end, every pregnant woman and every newborn, without exception, must have access to high-quality, affordable services before, during and after the time of birth. Accessible services are especially important for populations that are underserved and marginalized, including those living in humanitarian settings or in conflict. We also need more comprehensive “specialized and intensive” newborn care services – because services that are good enough for healthy newborns might not suffice for those who come into the world unwell.

While investments in all of these areas are critical, so is the level of investment. We can avert 747 400 neonatal deaths by 2030 in low- and middle-income countries by investing an additional US\$ 0.20 per capita in small and sick newborn care. By providing quality intrapartum care to

95% of all mothers delivering in health facilities, we would, in addition, save many mothers' lives and prevent stillbirths each year.

With such results in mind, *Survive and thrive: transforming care for every small and sick newborn* highlights the need for accurate and reliable data to facilitate planning, to help measure quality, outcomes and impact, and to promote accountability.

This report is a much-needed wake-up call for investing in quality inpatient neonatal care and designating facilities for specialized and intensive newborn care. Simultaneous investments are required to ensure adequate and appropriate human resources, supplies, laboratories and data systems for well-functioning, family-centred, inpatient neonatal care. The care provided during hospitalization and follow-up in the community also needs to be developmentally supportive and nurturing. Supporting healthy brain development during early childhood is the best investment a country and society can make in the future generation – and in continued economic growth.

We are proud that our respective organizations, along with numerous contributors and partners, are part of the joint effort that has reached these conclusions. Our collaboration has already yielded important results. With this report, we call upon governments, health professionals, parents and other partners to join us in supporting continued investment in health systems that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. In this way, we can – and we will – achieve the vision of a better world for every mother and newborn.

After all, newborns are not just bundles of joy for their families. They are a promise to the future.



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General
World Health Organization



Henrietta H. Fore
Executive Director
United Nations Children's Fund

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Managing editors

Lily Kak, Team Lead for Newborn Health, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington, DC, United States of America (USA); Joy Lawn, Professor and Director, MARCH Centre, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, England; Ornella Lincetto, Medical Officer, Newborn Health, Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland; Georgina Murphy, Fellow, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle, WA, USA; Judith Robb-McCord, Senior Director, Every Premie—SCALE, Project Concern International, Washington, DC, USA; Nabila Zaka, Senior Advisor Health (Maternal and Child Survival Program) UNICEF, New York, USA.

First authors and content leads

Pia Britto, UNICEF, New York, USA; Vivienne Chai, MARCH Centre, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, England; Louise Tina Day, Assistant Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, England; Amialya E. Durairaj, Consultant, Little Octopus, San Diego, CA, USA; Linda S. Franck, Professor and Co-Principal Investigator, California Preterm Birth Initiative, University of California, San Francisco, CA, USA; Lily Kak, Team Lead for Newborn Health, USAID, Washington, DC, USA; Mary Kinney, Senior Specialist, Newborn Health, Save the Children, Cape Town, South Africa; Joy Lawn, Professor

Washington, DC, USA; Fahad Siddiqui, Research Analyst, Assistant Professor, Centre for Global Child Health, Sick Kids, Toronto, Canada, and Health Services and Systems Research, Duke-National University of Singapore Medical School, Singapore; Steve Wall, Senior Director, Save the Children, Washington, DC, USA; Nabila Zaka, Senior Advisor Health, UNICEF, New York, USA.

Expert Advisory Group

Ebunoluwa Aderonke Adejuyigbe, Professor, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; Shabina Ariff, Consultant Neonatologist, Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan; Erica Burton, Senior Analyst, Nursing and Health Policy, International Council of Nurses, Toronto, Canada; Olive Cocoman, Technical Officer, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland; Ashok Deorari, Professor and Head, Department of Paediatrics, and Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for Newborn Training and Research, All India Institute of Medical Science, New Delhi, India; Queen Dube, Clinical Head of Paediatrics and Child Health, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, College of Medicine, University of Malawi, Blantyre, Malawi; Pablo Duran, Regional Advisor, Perinatal Health, WHO Regional Office for the Americas/Pan America Health Organization Country Office, Montevideo, Uruguay; Debra Jackson, UNICEF, New York, USA; William J. Keenan, International Pediatric Association and American Academy of Pediatrics, St Louis, MO, USA; Carole Kenner, President, Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Yardley, PA, USA; Taona Kuo, Every Woman Every Child, United Nations, New York, USA; Silke Mader,

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