

A HEALTHY START IN LIFE



**Report on the
Global Consultation on
Child and Adolescent
Health and
Development**

12-13 March 2002
Stockholm, Sweden



World Health Organization



United Nations Children's Fund

**Sponsors
of the Global Consultation on
Child and Adolescent Health and Development**

**World Health Organization (WHO)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
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*The Government of Sweden also hosted the forum for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) on 11 March, a day before the Consultation.

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Information on the Global Consultation can be found on the website
<http://www.who.int/consultation-child-adolescent>

Foreword...

An historic opportunity to protect children and adolescents

The Millennium Development Goals have established clear targets for improving the health of children and adolescents: reduce child mortality by two-thirds; halt and then reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, and reduce maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters. Reaching these ambitious targets will not be easy. Concerted efforts are vital as a matter of human rights, development and security.

In this spirit, WHO and UNICEF convened the Global Consultation on Child and Adolescent Health and Development in March 2002, with support from the Government of Sweden. Participants highlighted the plight of millions of children and adolescents, and the global challenge to scale up interventions to reach every child, every adolescent, rich or poor, with particular emphasis on those living in developing countries. As daunting as that challenge may appear, it is attainable. Cost-effective interventions to reach every child are readily available. Unfortunately, today they are reaching too few.

The Millennium Development Goals

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

This tragedy is preventable. The world has the resources and the knowledge to transform the lives and prospects of the world's children and adolescents. Simple preventative and curative interventions can dramatically reduce deaths from the diseases that kill children, in particular pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria. Interventions that can combat malnutrition, which remains a disturbingly major cause of poor child health, are available. We have the evidence for simple measures that can save millions of newborn lives.

And we know that, as children grow and develop, they will benefit from positive support from families, communities and health professionals to ensure they have the information, skills and services to live

healthy lives. In a time of unparalleled wealth, the costs of doing nothing are unconscionably high.

The commitments made in Stockholm and at the upcoming UN General Assembly Special Session on Children must lead to action, and action must yield results. These commitments contribute momentum and build hope for the world's children and adolescents. The time has come for the global community, national governments, communities and families to deliver on those commitments.

This report summarises the presentations and discussions from the Global Consultation on Child and Adolescent Health and Development. We commend it to you as a call to action on behalf of children and adolescents, and hope you enjoy reading it.

Carol Bellamy
Executive Director, UNICEF

Gro Harlem Brundtland
Director-General, WHO

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Meeting in Stockholm...

Millions of neonates, children and adolescents still die of preventable diseases. We have failed to reach the most vulnerable, the most isolated and the poorest. Children and adolescents are dying because their families do not have access to the simple and effective interventions that can save their lives. Small social, financial and health system improvements can be enough to make the difference between life and death, and for greater development of an individual's full potential.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) held the first Global Consultation on Child and Adolescent Health and Development in Stockholm, 12-13 March 2002. Over 300 world leaders and technical experts came to the Consultation, which was hosted by the Government of Sweden.

The objectives were:

- To emphasize the critical place of child and adolescent health in a country's development, recognizing the complex links between health, poverty and economic development.
- To highlight actions to improve child and adolescent health that can be implemented by national governments and by families and communities, and the evidence for the effectiveness, feasibility and impact of these interventions; and to identify areas that have been neglected or need further research.
- To identify innovative mechanisms for scaling up effective interventions, including the involvement of communities and the private sector, as well as the promotion of public policies that stress equity.
- To formulate the actions that different stakeholders, including governments, international agencies and civil society, can take to accelerate implementation and reach those in greatest need.
- To heighten commitment from international leaders in preparation for the UN Special Session on Children, and use the momentum to increase investment for child and adolescent health and development.

At the meeting, world leaders expressed their commitment to “a vision of a world where children and adolescents enjoy the highest possible level of health, a world that meets their needs and enables them to attain their full potential... to intensify efforts to achieve this aim, and to join together in partnership to seek bolder approaches to reach the most vulnerable, the most isolated and the poorest.”

Drawing attention to the critical needs of children and adolescents...

More than 11 million children die annually of preventable and treatable illness, mostly in the developing world...\

Eight million of these are infants; most are newborns in the first month of life...\

The main causes of death are pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, measles, HIV/AIDS and malnutrition—and most are related to poverty...\

Adolescents—almost 1.5 million—die annually from substance abuse, suicide, injuries, violence, disease and other preventable causes...\

One in every six births in

Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden opened the meeting by first noting the achievements in the last 30 years that resulted in a decline in child mortality of 50%. She then called on the Consultation to define a new agenda—one that would address the unacceptable number of children and adolescents who continue to die each year, and those who have difficulty in progressing on the path to adulthood.

More than 11 million children die annually of preventable and treatable illness. “Of the 11 million who die, an estimated 4 million are newborn infants,” said WHO Director-General Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland. “And these deaths are not inevitable.” A total investment of 66 billion dollars annually by 2007 could save 8 million lives a year, most of them children. ¹

Ms Carol Bellamy, the Executive-Director of UNICEF, and others recognized achievements in the past decade that brought better health for children, saved millions of lives and prevented disability. These included: oral rehydration therapy, childhood immunization, effective treatments against pneumonia, malaria and other deadly childhood diseases, iodised salt and vitamin A supplements, and progress in promoting breastfeeding and other improved feeding practices.

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