

FACTS ON CHILDREN

CHILD SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

In 2006, for the first time in recent history, the total number of annual deaths among children under-five fell below 10 million, to 9.7 million. In 2007, the figure dropped to 9.2 million. However, many countries still have high levels of child mortality, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, and in recent years have made little or no progress in reducing the number of child deaths.

Key figures on child survival

- About 25,000 children under the age of five – one every three seconds – die every day, mainly from preventable causes.
- The majority of child deaths are attributable to six causes: diarrhoea, malaria, neonatal infection, pneumonia, preterm delivery, or lack of oxygen at birth. Among these, pneumonia and diarrhoea account for the highest child deaths, 19 per cent and 17 per cent respectively.
- These deaths occur mainly in the developing world. An Ethiopian child is nearly 30 times more likely to die by his or her fifth birthday than a child in a Western European country such as France or Germany.
- In absolute numbers, two-thirds of deaths occur in just 10 countries.
- Region with the highest under five mortality rates (2007): West & Central Africa, 169 per 1,000 live births.
- Country with highest under five child mortality (2007): Sierra Leone, 262 per 1,000 live births.
- Country with highest number of under five deaths: India, 1.95 million under five deaths in 2007.
- Infants (children aged <1 year) in developing countries are over 10 times more likely to die than newborns in industrialized countries.

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