

The Millennium Development Goals Report

2012



UNITED NATIONS

Addendum

Goal 4

Reduce child mortality

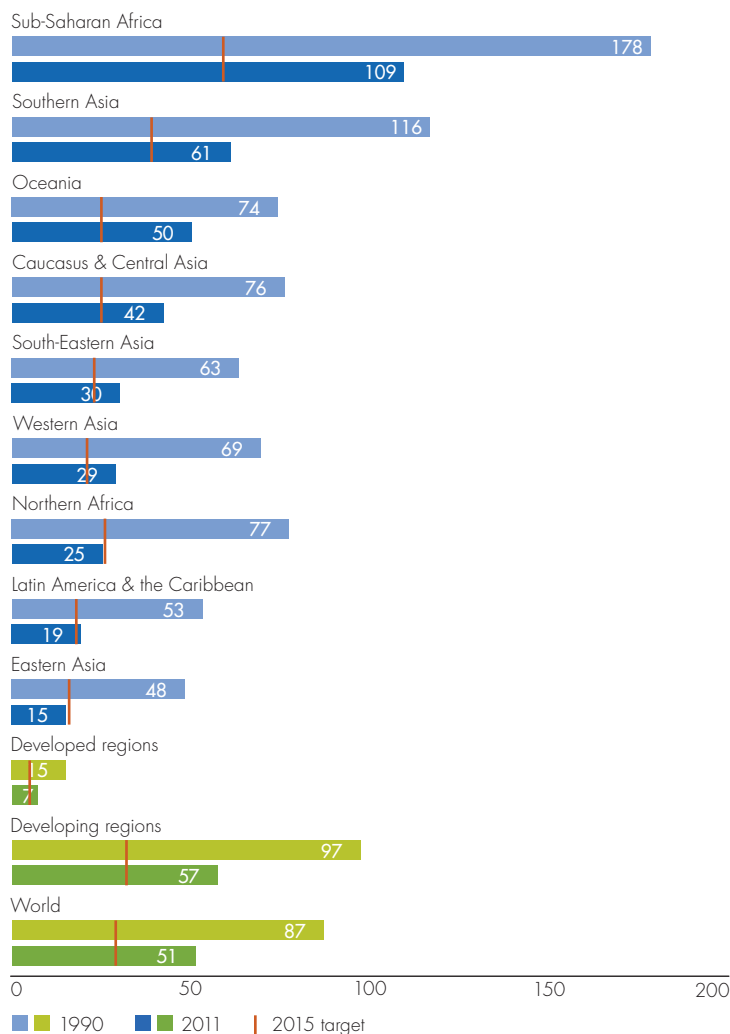


TARGET

Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Substantial progress has been made in reducing child mortality, but it is still insufficient to achieve the target

Under-five mortality rate, 1990 and 2011 (Deaths per 1,000 live births)

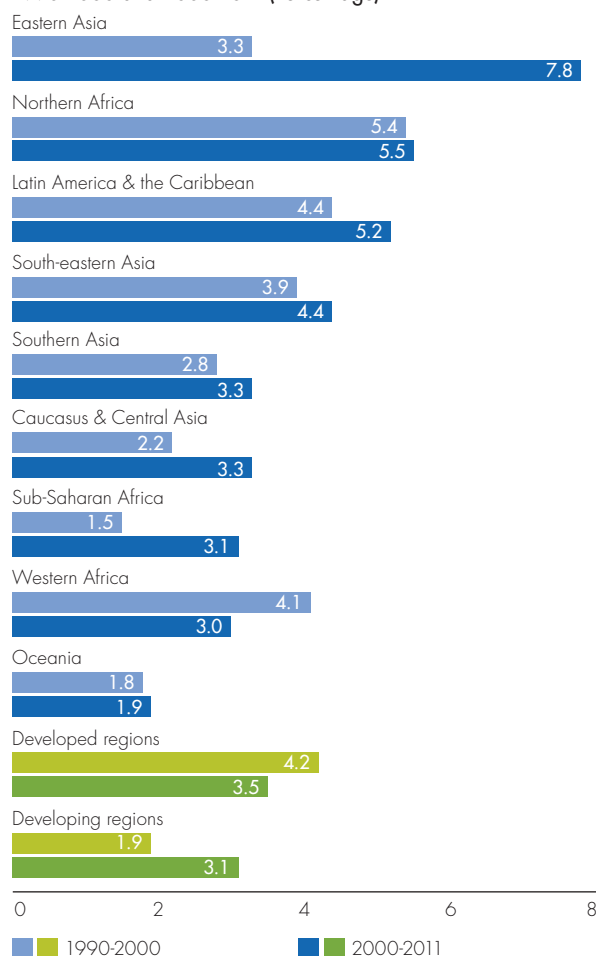


New estimates of under-five mortality¹ show a 41 per cent decline in the global under-five mortality rate, from 87 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 51 in 2011, with the total number of under-five deaths in the world declining from nearly 12 million in 1990 to 6.9 million in 2011. About 14,000 fewer children died every day in 2011 than in 1990.

Improvement in child survival is evident in all regions. Five of nine developing regions show reductions in under-five mortality of more than 50 per cent over 1990–2011. Eastern Asia (with a 70 per cent reduction) and Northern Africa (with a 68 per cent reduction) have achieved the MDG 4, and Latin America and the Caribbean is close to doing so with a 64 per cent reduction.

Reduction in child mortality is accelerating

Annual rates of reduction in under-five mortality, by region, 1990–2000 and 2000–2011 (Percentage)



The annual rate of reduction in the under-five mortality rate has accelerated—from 1.8 per cent a year over 1990–2000 to 3.2 per cent over 2000–2011— but remains

insufficient to reach the MDG 4, particularly in Oceania, Sub-Saharan Africa, Caucasus and Central Asia, and Southern Asia.

Under-five deaths are increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia

As some of the developing regions forge ahead, the under-five deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia are forming a larger share of the world total (83 per cent in 2011). Thus, substantial progress is needed in both regions to achieve the MDG 4. However, Sub-Saharan Africa—also combating the HIV/AIDS scourge that has affected countries in the region more than elsewhere in the world—has doubled its annual rate of reduction from 1.5 per cent over 1990–2000 to 3.1 per cent over 2000–2011.

In the coming years, the number of under-five deaths in the world may stagnate or even increase without greater progress in Sub-Saharan Africa, because its number of live births and population of children under age five are set to grow rapidly. By 2050, 1 in 3 children will be born in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The proportion of under-five deaths in the first month life is increasing as under-five mortality declines

The proportion of under-five deaths that occur within the first month of life (the neonatal period) has increased from 36 per cent to about 43 per cent, because declines in the neonatal mortality rate are slower than those in the mortality rate for older children. The trend is expected to continue. More than half the under-five deaths in Eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Southern Asia are neonatal deaths. Almost 30 per cent of neonatal deaths occur in India. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest risk of death in the first month of life (34 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011) and is among the regions showing the least progress.

With the proportion of under-five deaths during the neonatal period increasing in every region and almost all countries, systematic action is required by governments and partners to reach women and babies with effective care.

¹ The latest estimates on child mortality were released on September 13, 2012 by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (IGME) and are presented in Levels and Trends in Child Mortality – Report 2012, available at http://www.childinfo.org/files/Child_Mortality_Report_2012.pdf. The underlying data are available at www.childmortality.org.

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