



The Minister of Public Health, Dr Suraya Dalil, and United Nations partners launch the national maternal and child health acceleration plan in Kabul to further reduce maternal and child deaths in the country 17 December 2013 | His Excellency the Minister of Public Health, Dr Suraya Dalil, and United Nations partners on 8 December 2013 launched in Kabul the national maternal and child health acceleration plan 2013–2015 and the Every Newborn Action Plan to further reduce maternal, neonatal and child deaths in the country.

The event was attended also by Ms Karin Hulshof, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia, Dr Rik Peepkorn, WHO representative for Afghanistan, Dr Annette Sachs Robertson, UNFPA representative, development partners including USAID (US Agency for International Development), The World Bank, EU (European Union), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), Italian Cooperation, Aga Khan Foundation Network, Save the Children, MSH (Management Sciences for Health), ACTED (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development), Deputy Ministers, directors of the central government and provincial health departments, professional associations, media and civil society.

There has been substantial progress in Afghanistan in reducing child and maternal mortality in recent years. Despite the efforts made, child and maternal mortality remain high, among the highest in the Region. The national maternal and child health acceleration plan aims to contribute to reducing child and maternal mortality rates to the targets set for 2015 in the Afghanistan Health and Nutrition Policy 2012–2020.

The costed, acceleration plan, developed by the Reproductive and Child Health Departments of the Ministry of Public Health and its partners, aims to achieve up to 10% increase in access to life-saving, essential reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health services by people living in the country's most underserved and underprivileged areas, accelerating implementation of a package of cost-effective interventions. It targets the population in 7 provinces, about 3.4 million people.

The focus of the plan is to enhance the capacity of the provinces to plan, implement, follow up and evaluate, relying also on their own technical resources. The plan supports the implementation of the basic package of health services and essential package of hospital services, to improve the delivery of maternal and child health services, also at community level. It includes capacity-building for different categories of health providers, both at facility and community levels, and also comprehensive community mobilization and communication activities.

The national Maternal and Child Health acceleration plan has been developed in line with the commitment to the UN Secretary-General's Global strategy for women's and children's health and the Dubai Declaration. The Declaration ensued from the regional initiative on Saving the lives of mothers and children launched by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA in close partnership with countries and stakeholders at a high-level meeting in Dubai in January 2013. The initiative aims at accelerating the rate of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 on reduction of child and maternal mortality, respectively. Afghanistan is the third country in the Region to formally launch the maternal and child health acceleration plan.

Related links

[Saving the lives of mothers and children: accelerating progress towards achieving MDGs 4 and 5 in the Region](#)

[Dubai declaration](#)

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