

The “Millennium Development Goals” (MDGs) are eight development goals set for 2015. They include child health related goals. All Member States have pledged to meet the Goals. The Goals were adopted on 8 September 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly in its fifty-fifth session with resolution 55/2 “United Nations Millennium Declaration”.

The leaders recognized that they “have a duty ... to all the world’s people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs”.

Targets were set for the eight goals and social and economic development indicators to monitor progress.

[Millennium Development Goals](#)

[United Nations Millennium Declaration](#)

Child health-related MDGs

MDG 4 “Reduce child mortality” is the MDG most directly related to child health. The target set for it is to “reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate”. For this target, three indicators have been selected to help track progress:

1. Under-five mortality rate;
2. Infant mortality rate; and
3. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles.

MDGs are inter-related. Another MDG which is linked to neonatal and child health is **MDG5** to improve maternal health. Among the targets set for MDGs, other targets of key importance to the child health work in the Region are:

Target 1C “Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger” under **MDG1** (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), with indicator 1.8 on “Prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age”;

Target 6C “Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases” under **MDG6** (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases), with indicators 6.6 on “Incidence and death rates associated from malaria”, 6.7 “Proportion of children under-five sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets” and 6.8 “Proportion of children under-five with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malaria drugs”.

The Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly in resolution WHA55.19 of 18 May 2002 recognized that “maternal, child and adolescent health and development have a major impact on socioeconomic development”. It urged Member States to “strengthen and scale up efforts to achieve the development goals of the Millennium Declaration”, in particular those related to reduction of maternal and child mortality and malnutrition, and continue to advocate child health and development as one of the public health priorities.

[World Health Assembly resolution WHA55.19](#)

Progress towards MDG 4

Under-five mortality in the Eastern Mediterranean Region has decreased substantially in the past two decades. Progress has been slower in a number of countries, especially those with a high under-five mortality. These countries, and the Region as a whole, face remarkable challenges to achieve MDG4 by 2015. There is a need for coordinated, intensive efforts to further reduce deaths in children.

The United Nations Inter-agency Group on Child Mortality Estimation (IGME) provides estimates on progress in reduction of under-five mortality yearly using a standard methodology. The Group includes WHO, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Division, the World Bank and independent academics. It was established to carry out collaborative assessments of under-five and infant mortality rates in countries and monitor trends, to ensure among others consistency and comparability of data. The IGME estimates are the basis for the regional and country

analysis:

[Progress towards MDG4](#)

Country profiles for 75 countries, including 10 countries in the Region, where more than 95% of maternal and child deaths occur are available from the “Countdown to 2015” website, focusing on coverage of effective, life-saving interventions and their determinants:

[Countdown country profiles](#)

Country MDG database and reports

Information on MDG indicators—including MDG4—and related database is accessible on-line on the website on “Millennium Development Goals Indicators” of the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

[Millennium Development Goals Indicators](#)

Country progress towards MDGs is also described in official national MDG reports. These reports, by country, can be accessed at the following website:

[United Nations Development Group – National MDG reports](#)

Related link:

[Progress towards MDG4](#)

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