

# Millennium Development Goals

## *Benefits to Children*



**IN 2000, 189 UN MEMBER COUNTRIES**, including the United States, pledged to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, in order to achieve “a more prosperous and just world.” In September of 2005, members will gather at an important UN World Summit to review progress toward the MDGs. • **What do these goals have to do with children?** All of them would save children’s lives and improve their well-being. • Let’s explore Goal #4 which seeks to dramatically reduce deaths among children under age 5, some common myths, and what the United States can do to help.



### Goal #4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

*Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the number of children under 5 who die every year*

- > Almost 30,000 children under 5 die every day, most in the developing world – more than 10 million children per year. <sup>1</sup>
- > About 6 million of those children could be saved with simple health interventions. <sup>2</sup>
- > 4 of every 10 of these lost children are newborns – less than a month old. <sup>3</sup>
- > The biggest killers of children are diarrhea, pneumonia and malaria – all easily preventable or treatable. <sup>4</sup>
- > AIDS accounts for only 3 percent of the deaths of children under 5 worldwide. <sup>5</sup>

**Myth #1:** The problem of child survival worldwide is too big to solve.

**Reality:** We know what works. The problem is big. Almost 30,000 children under 5 die each day – most of them in the developing world. But simple, affordable measures such as vaccines, oral rehydration therapy to treat diarrhea, drugs to treat infections, insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria, and vitamin A supplements could help save the lives of millions of children.

#### MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Goal #1:** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal #2:** Achieve universal primary education
- Goal #3:** Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal #4:** Reduce child mortality
- Goal #5:** Improve maternal health
- Goal #6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal #7:** Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal #8:** Develop a global partnership for development

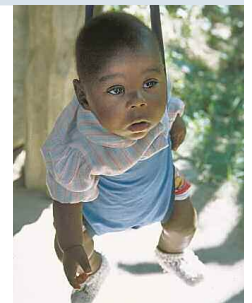
**Myth #2:** We can’t afford to do what’s needed.

**Reality:** Saving children’s lives is not only the right thing to do, it’s affordable. The tools that can save these lives are not expensive. For example, antibiotics to treat pneumonia can cost as little as 15 cents. <sup>6</sup>

A child can be immunized against six major childhood diseases for as little as \$15, <sup>7</sup> and a one-year dose of vitamin A capsules costs just a few cents. <sup>8</sup> While each of these measures can prevent illness or death, they work best when delivered as a basic child health package.

**Myth #3:** The U.S. government is doing all it can.

**Reality:** We are not doing our fair share. In the 1970s and 1980s, U.S. leadership was instrumental in providing funds and expertise that saved millions of children’s lives in the developing world. But current funding for child survival and maternal health programs falls far short of needs, threatening



to undermine the success achieved to date. The Bush administration's July 2005 pledge of more funding to fight malaria, if realized, is a good start: it would help save 850,000 children under 5 every year. But more is needed.

**Myth #4:** Foreign aid for child survival doesn't work.

**Reality:** Millions of children are alive today because of child survival programs. Past progress shows we have the tools and know how to save children's lives.

- In southern Africa, an immunization campaign virtually eliminated measles as a cause of death among children under 5.<sup>9</sup>
- Vitamin A is credited with saving a million young lives between 1998 and 2000 alone.<sup>10</sup>
- Oral rehydration therapy is credited with cutting diarrhea-related deaths in half during the last decade and preventing 1 million deaths each year.<sup>11</sup>

**Myth #5:** Most Americans don't care about problems overseas.

**Reality:** Polling over the past 10 years shows that Americans place child survival among their highest priorities for foreign assistance, and that most believe the United States should spend about 10 percent of the federal budget on foreign assistance. In reality, less than one-half of one percent of the U.S. budget goes for development assistance.<sup>12</sup>

## RX FOR CHILD SURVIVAL™

### Help Children Survive to Age 5

Save the Children has joined with WGBH and Vulcan Productions in an historic effort – called *Rx for Child Survival* – to give millions of children a chance to survive to age 5.

The goal – engage Americans to learn more and do more. Through donations to *Rx for Child Survival*, Save the Children will carry out the work of delivering a pack of life-saving measures to children in the



neediest countries, including Afghanistan, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Mali and Vietnam. *Rx for Child Survival* was launched in conjunction with a NOVA television series *Rx for Survival – A Global Health Challenge*, which will premiere on PBS stations November 1-3, 2005, together with a TIME Global Health Summit and magazine issue devoted to global health. Visit [www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org).

™*Rx for Child Survival* is a project of WGBH Educational Foundation and Vulcan Productions in collaboration with CARE and Save the Children, and in association with The Global Health Council and UNICEF.

<sup>1</sup> Black, Robert E., Saul S. Morris, and Jennifer Bryce. "Where and Why are 10 Million Children Dying Each Year?" *The Lancet*. Vol. 361. June 28, 2003. (Lynhurst Press Ltd.: London) p.2,226

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.2,300

<sup>3</sup> Tinker, Anne and Elizabeth Ramson. *Healthy Mothers and Healthy Newborns: The Vital Link*. (Population Reference Bureau: Washington, D.C., April 2002) p. 5

<sup>4</sup> *Progress Since the World Summit for Children: Statistical Summary* (UNICEF: New York: 2001) p. 2

<sup>5</sup> WHO, *Child and Adolescent Health and Development*. Chart: Major Causes of Death Among Children Under Five Years of Age and Neonates in the World, 2000-2003. (August 23, 2005) [http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/OVERVIEW/CHILD\\_HEALTH/map\\_00-03\\_world.jpg](http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/OVERVIEW/CHILD_HEALTH/map_00-03_world.jpg)

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Coalition for Child Survival. *The State of Child Survival*. Table: Giving Children a Good Start: The Minimal Costs of Child Survival. (September 8, 2003.) [www.child-survival.org/stateof.html](http://www.child-survival.org/stateof.html)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Annan, Kofi A. *We the Children. Meeting the Promises of the World Summit for Children*. (UNICEF: New York: 2001) p. 31

<sup>9</sup> Levine, Ruth. *Millions Saved: Proven Successes in Global Health*. (Center for Global Development: Washington, D.C.: November 2004)

<sup>10</sup> Annan, Kofi A. *The Progress of Nations 2000*. (UNICEF: New York: 2000) p. 19

<sup>11</sup> Annan, Kofi A. *We the Children. Meeting the Promises of the World Summit for Children*. (UNICEF: New York: 2001) p. 24

<sup>12</sup> Program on International Policy Attitudes. *Americans on Foreign Aid and World Hunger*. University of Maryland.

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**SAVE THE CHILDREN** is the leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in need in the United States and around the world. Save the Children USA is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, a global network of 27 independent Save the Children organizations working to ensure the well-being and protection of children in more than 110 countries.



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