

P R E S S M E D D E L A N D E

Save the Children mobilizes:

Six million more children under the age of five will survive

Each year two million infants die on the very same day they are born. Nine million children die before their fifth birthday - all too often of illnesses that can easily be cured. This means that every day 25,000 infants and children – or one child every three seconds – dies unnecessarily.

Today, the International Save the Children Alliance is launching a comprehensive drive for the child's right to life. This drive will continue for five years. The target has been set high: the mortality rate among infants and children under the age of five is to be reduced by two-thirds by 2015 - in accordance with Millennium Development Goal 4. This means that each year six million more infants and children will survive.

“These infant deaths are not just random events which can't be controlled - quite the opposite. To a large extent these deaths are the result of political decisions. Infant and child mortality is affected by economic and environmental factors to which governments and international institutions contribute affecting the poorest with little access to equitable access to services. Consequently something can be done to prevent these infants' and children's premature deaths.” says Sanna Johnson, member of the Steering Committee for the Every One Campaign.

Most of these children die from illnesses that can easily be cured or prevented, for example diarrhoea or pneumonia. More children and mothers need to be reached in time by health and nutrition programmes. Save the Children is going to greatly increase its health and nutrition programmes in the field. Save the Children will do this by strengthening and holding governments more accountable by developing policies that address child mortality and underlying causes such as poverty, inequality and discrimination. By 2015, Save the Children will have reached 50 million women of child-bearing age and children with its tried and tested health and nutrition work.

“No child under the age of five should die from illnesses that can be prevented. We are going to lobby the powers that be to take the political decisions necessary to make Millennium Goal number four a reality.” continues Sanna Johnson.

Save the Children's work will be focused on the 25 countries where infant and child mortality is highest. The prioritised countries are China, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sierra Leone. This work will cost 500 million dollars.

You can download Save the Children's report on infant and child mortality “The Next Revolution” at www.rb.se/press and more information about the Every One Campaign at <http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/media/newsdesk/2009-10-04.html>. If you would like to contact

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Sanna Johnson or others who are working with infant and child mortality in the field or at the Secretariat, please contact the Press Office on +46 (0)8 698 9090.

Background information

Save the Children is a rights-based organisation, which has been working with the child's right to life since 1919. This year the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is celebrating its twentieth anniversary. Article 6 of the UNCRC deals with the child's right to survival and development. With this as the starting point, Save the Children is now mobilizing forces against infant and child mortality. In 2000, the world's leaders agreed on eight Millennium Goals which were to be achieved by 2015. Millennium Development Goal 4 addresses the reduction of infant and child mortality by two-thirds (66%).