

**Integrated Approaches to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals:  
A Strategic and Sustainable Approach for sub-Saharan Africa**

**Background Paper**

**Introduction**

1. Current trends indicate that many of the sub-Saharan African countries are not on track to meet many of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Some countries, for example, have shown a significant decline in under-five mortality rates and the spread of HIV/AIDS to children through innovative integrated community interventions combined with outreach at health centres and hospitals. Other countries, however, still have stagnant under-five mortality rates and increased pediatric deaths resulting from HIV/AIDS.
2. UNICEF, through its presence in 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and its commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, is well placed to contribute towards breaking this impasse. The organization, working with partners, has renewed its focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.
3. This renewed focus is in line with the joint World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and World Bank Child Survival Strategy adopted by the African Ministers of Health during the WHO Regional Committee for Africa in September 2006, and it responds to repeated calls by the African Union Heads of State to accelerate progress towards the Goals in Africa. On the invitation of the African Union, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank have developed a joint Framework for Child Survival and for the other health-related Goals, which includes an Implementation Plan and 'Investment Case' that will be presented to the African Union Heads of State Summit in mid-2007.
4. Under the leadership of the Executive Director, UNICEF, from 7 to 9 November 2006, convened a meeting in Dakar of country representatives in sub-Saharan Africa as well as senior managers from headquarters to discuss strategies and action for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.
5. The meeting had several aims: to review progress, opportunities and obstacles in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and to develop strategies and action plans for developing innovative approaches, attaining measurable results and further building an evidence base for action. The importance of strategic partnerships for results for children was explored.

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\* E/ICEF/2007/1.

6. Presentations by UNICEF and partner organizations covered best practices in areas such as community-based care, integrating services across sectors and strategies for scaling up programmes to reach the Goals. Participants also focused on examining the means to achieving better results for women and children. Those present were divided into country groups, based on criteria such as under-five mortality rates, prevalence of HIV and AIDS, and the existence of conflict or post-conflict situations. The groups identified specific short-term (2007) and medium-term (2010) outcomes that would indicate significant progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

7. After receiving feedback from the guest experts and members of other groups, each country group assessed both the management implications and the support required from the regional offices and headquarters. Alongside this effort, the guest experts were asked to form their own groups and identify ways in which UNICEF could improve its work and its ability to partner with others, allowing non-governmental organizations and donors to collaborate more effectively. Representatives from regional offices and headquarters recommended ways they could better assist the country offices in supporting national efforts.

8. The meeting explored critical pathways to achieving scale at country and regional levels. Achieving scale will demand a joint effort to support Government and partner organizations in learning from experiences and in providing clear leadership in the development and implementation of effective policies and services for children. Taking successful initiatives and integrated approaches to scale involves providing greater support to African countries in (a) developing evidence- and results-based policies, strategies, budgets and institutional reforms; (b) creating conditions for greater harmonization of development partnerships; and (c) resolving systemic bottlenecks in the community-based, outreach health centre- and hospital-based packages of health, nutrition, water and sanitation and HIV/AIDS interventions.

## **Recommendations for future action**

### **1. Secure better results**

9. This requires an urgent review of the country-level opportunities and bottlenecks in scaling up high-impact intervention packages. The review must include an analysis of the policy and fiscal environments, sector plans and roadmaps, poverty reduction strategy papers, sector-wide approaches and budgets. The objectives are to secure country-level agreements covering several areas: national deliverables on the health-related Millennium Development Goals; country time-lines of key events contributing to the Goals; monitoring and evaluation indicators; and requirements for strengthening institutional and technical capacities, including UNICEF contributions.

10. UNICEF headquarters and regional offices will form joint teams to support countries in conducting their strategic analyses and follow-up. WHO, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Population Fund will be asked to participate in these efforts, and a global roster of staff qualified for policy/planning and technical support will drawn up by headquarters and regional offices.

### **2. Strengthen the evidence for supporting integrated community-based approaches and measuring progress against results**

11. To influence national policies and mobilize sufficient resources to take integrated community-based approaches to scale, UNICEF will support approaches that have been successful in reducing child mortality in different country contexts. This effort calls for streamlining, integrating and more sharply focusing data collection and monitoring systems to ensure that all countries have quality baseline data on key aspects of child survival and development and are producing accurate and up-to-date information on progress. High-quality evaluations and research by regionally based and international academic institutions will improve the understanding of the multi-factor causality of child mortality and morbidity. Best practices for integration and scaled community action need to be documented and disseminated. These include experiences such as child health days or other community-based or managed health, nutrition, AIDS prevention and care, and water, sanitation and hygiene programmes. Support to basic education and child protection programmes will also need to be continued, as a way to contribute to the achievement of the health-related Goals and also to overall development efforts within sub-Saharan Africa.

12. Monitoring systems, including data collection, validation and analysis, will be further strengthened. An accountability framework will be established covering internal accountability at all levels for all programmes.

### **3. Reinforce programme communication and advocacy**

13. Successful approaches will be documented and shared with other countries with similar conditions, including through study visits. Experts participating in a meeting planned for early 2007 will draw up a programme communication plan based on integrated, community-based approaches. The plan will also draw on effective communication strategies currently in use in countries in order to develop new communication materials and tools that will promote improved health outcomes for children and women, support community dialogue and encourage changes in behaviours that improve the health and well-being of children.

14. This accelerated effort calls for the development of comprehensive communication and advocacy strategies to encourage networking among countries, and for taking advantage of high-level meetings and conferences as venues for advocating improving performance in reaching the Goals in sub-Saharan Africa. Country-specific advocacy packages will need to be developed to assist the efforts of United Nations country teams and partners and relevant Theme Groups in supporting consistent media engagement strategies and in providing multisectoral technical briefings on the progress of activities.

15. The Special Focus session on 17 January will provide Board members with an opportunity to hear about and discuss several key elements of successful approaches.