Drawing on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Secretary General’s Every Woman, Every Child strategy, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, UNICEF envisions a world where no child dies from a preventable cause and all children reach their full potential in health and well-being. To this end, UNICEF’s Strategy for Health 2016-2030 aims to:

- End preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths
- Promote the health and development of all children

With the first goal, UNICEF commits to maintaining focus on the critical, unmet needs related to maternal, newborn and under-five survival. With the second, UNICEF highlights the importance of looking beyond survival and addressing the health and development needs of older children and adolescents.

The Strategy emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the needs of the most deprived children and promotes multi-sectoral approaches to enhance child development and address underlying causes and determinants of poor health outcomes. It aims to shift UNICEF from vertical disease programmes to strengthening health systems and building resilience, including calling for better integration of humanitarian and development efforts by encouraging risk-informed programming in all contexts.

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Summary
The following three approaches are integral to the strategy and apply to UNICEF’s work in health across all country contexts, including in humanitarian crises and emergency settings.

1. Addressing inequities in health outcomes
   UNICEF will prioritize policies, programmes, services and resources that benefit the most marginalized. This requires promoting the use of disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data (by, e.g., gender, age, education, wealth quintile, region, area, ethnicity, geographic area, disability status, etc.) to identify marginalized groups and adjust programmes to their needs. It also means supporting governments to identify and address bottlenecks limiting the availability, accessibility, affordability and efficiency of quality maternal and child health interventions that prevent equitable outcomes, as well as systematically addressing gender-related barriers to care.

2. Strengthening health systems, including emergency preparedness, response and resilience
   Strengthening health systems is essential in order to meet the most marginalized children and women, to sustain progress and to increase the resilience of both delivery systems and communities in absorbing and recovering from external shocks, including from public health emergencies and outbreaks. Strongly performing health systems provide a critical foundation for resilience. UNICEF’s programming in this area will focus on improvements in the provision, utilization, quality and efficiency of health service delivery, both by healthy, care providers and service users. UNICEF’s approach connects community, sub-national and national levels, acknowledging the importance of sub-national governance systems and community engagement to the overall performance of national health systems.

3. Promoting integrated, multi-sectoral policies and programmes
   Improving health outcomes requires integrated service delivery and interventions between the health sector and other sectors. To this end, and following a multi-sectoral approach means that UNICEF will promote health systems as a platform for the delivery of multi-sectoral interventions and services, and will work jointly among partners and sectors to address the social determinants and underlying causes of health challenges.

The strategy presents a ‘menu’ of suggested actions aligned with the Every Woman, Every Child (EWEC) Global Strategy, based on an assessment of UNICEF’s current and potential comparative advantages. UNICEF country offices are asked to identify the actions that better respond to their context, situation and country programme focus.

Programme areas
UNICEF will work on two interrelated programme areas, shifting away from a focus on individual childhood diseases and towards a more holistic consideration of all the health rights of a child at a given stage in life.

1. Maternal, newborn and child health (focus on equitable access to community-based health care)
   This programme area focuses on strengthening maternal and newborn care and under-five survival, as well as to health and development from age 0-5, where the intent is to solidify on existing strengths and deliver on equity. Under the new strategy, UNICEF is prioritizing a focus on care around the time of birth for mothers and newborns, and shifting from vertical focus on disease- and intervention-specific programmes (immunizations, polo, pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, tuberculosis, etc.) to a health strengthening approach (e.g., strengthening integrated, community-based health care within district health systems).

   For pregnant and lactating women and newborns, UNICEF’s primary focus will be on improving the quality of facility-based and community-based maternal, delivery and newborn care for all communities. For children aged between 20 days and 5 years, UNICEF’s primary focus in low-capacity settings will be on equitable access to community health care services and life-saving vaccines and commodities.

2. Older child and adolescent health (focus on public policies and supportive environments)
   Through the establishment of public policies and supporting environments, UNICEF will work to address the growing needs of older children (ages 5-18) and adolescents (ages 10-18). UNICEF will selectively build new capabilities in this programme area, recognizing that this is an emerging area where significant research and capacity building are required. UNICEF will focus on addressing the health challenges of older children, including from nutrition and obesity through knowledge management, advisory and policy-related efforts. Potential areas for future engagement include engaging in social and behavioural change, supporting data gathering and research, and addressing other key issues (e.g., adolescent pregnancy, tobacco use, mental health, and intentional and unintentional injuries/accidents) for these age groups.

While the antecedents for these issues will be incorporated into regular programming in all settings, these programme areas aim to be directly relevant to medium and high capacity contexts where child survival goals have largely been met and where older child and adolescent health issues are, consequently, becoming more important.

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Attention for every child's right to health
Supporting through data capture, promotion the use and generation of evidence, engaging with partners, and expanding available resources.

Influencing government policy
By supporting evidence-based policy-making and influencing the scale-up of effective interventions and innovations, sharing knowledge, and promoting South-South cooperation.

Strengthening service delivery
By building capacity for management and health providers, supporting programmes in both urban and rural areas, providing services in emergencies and challenging contexts, and strengthening supply chains.

Empowering communities
By building the capacity of local community actors to engage social and behaviour change, generate demand, and to strengthen accountability.

Material, newborn and child health (focus on equitable access to quality primary health care)

Older child and adolescent health (focus on public policies and supportive environments)

Shifting the operating model
UNICEF can only achieve the desired results of the Strategy for Health 2016-2030 by working with and through governments and other development partners. Collaboration with partners and more effective engagement in health sector partnerships is therefore a critical area of focus as UNICEF works to implement the Strategy for Health 2016-2030.