

A CHILD UNDER 15 DIES EVERY 5 SECONDS AROUND THE WORLD: UN

Relevant for: Government Policies & Welfare Schemes | Topic: Welfare of Children - Schemes & their performance; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions & Bodies

Health check: A malnourished child gets measured at a clinic in Tshikapa , central Democratic Republic of Congo. | Photo Credit: [JOHN WESSELS](#)

An estimated 6.3 million children under 15 years of age died in 2017, or 1 every 5 seconds, mostly of preventable causes, according to the new mortality estimates released by UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Division and the World Bank Group on Tuesday.

The report notes that for children everywhere, the most risky period of life is the first month.

In 2017, 2.5 million newborns died in their first month while 5.4 million deaths — occur in the first five years of life, with newborns accounting for around half of the deaths.

Also, a baby born in sub-Saharan Africa or in South Asia was nine times more likely to die in the first month than a baby born in a high-income country. And progress towards saving newborns has been slower than for children under five years of age since 1990.

Most children under 5 die due to preventable or treatable causes such as complications during birth, pneumonia, diarrhea, neonatal sepsis and malaria. By comparison, among children between 5 and 14 years of age, injuries become a more prominent cause of death, especially from drowning and road traffic.

Within this age group, regional differences exist, with the risk of dying for a child from sub-Saharan Africa 15 times higher than in Europe.

The report adds that even within countries, disparities persist. Under-five mortality rates among children in rural areas are, on average, 50% higher than among children in urban areas. In addition, those born to uneducated mothers are more than twice as likely to die before turning five than those born to mothers with a secondary or higher education.

Laurence Chandy, UNICEF director, data, research and policy, said: “Without urgent action, 56 million children under five will die from now until 2030 – half of them newborns.”

He added that though the world has made remarkable progress to save children since 1990, but millions are still dying because of who they are and where they are born.

“With simple solutions like medicines, clean water, electricity and vaccines, we can change that reality for every child,” the report said.

Globally, in 2017, half of all deaths under five years of age took place in sub-Saharan Africa, and another 30% in Southern Asia.

Despite these challenges, fewer children are dying each year worldwide. The number of children dying under five has fallen dramatically from 12.6 million in 1990 to 5.4 million in 2017. The number of deaths in older children aged between 5 to 14 years dropped from 1.7 million to under

a million in the same period.

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