



EVERY WOMAN  
EVERY CHILD



CELEBRATING  
10 YEARS

# Protect the Progress

## *Rise, Refocus, Recover*

At the start of 2020, more children lived to see their first birthday than at any time in history. Child mortality had fallen by 50% since 2000. Maternal mortality and child marriages were on the decline and more girls were going to school and staying in school than ever before.

But the progress did not reach every woman, nor every child. The gains have proven fragile and the future is now uncertain.

The realization of human rights, particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights, remains seriously uneven in many countries, risking the reversal of hard-won advances in preventable maternal and child mortality and undermining the health of adolescents, in particular.

Discrimination, abuse and violence against women, children and adolescents – among the most widespread of human rights violations – continue to erode physical and mental health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated persistent inequities while also creating new ones. The actions taken to control the virus have disproportionately affected women and children, with devastating impact including lower rates of immunizations, reversals in learning outcomes due to school closures, surging reports of violence and abuse directed at girls and women, and increased poverty, hunger and food insecurity.

Meanwhile, conflicts, migration, climate instability and ecological degradation are introducing new dangers and intensifying known impediments to the health of women, children and adolescents, placing each of these hard-won gains at great risk.



## Progress and development



**Since the launch of Every Woman Every Child, the world has achieved significant gains in maternal, newborn and child health and well-being:**

- More than 1 billion children were vaccinated over the past decade.<sup>1</sup>
- Maternal deaths declined by 35% since 2000, with the most significant declines occurring from 2010.
- Under-5 deaths reached an all-time recorded low, and child mortality declined by 50% since 2000.
- Coverage of immunization and skilled birth attendance and access to safe drinking water reached over 80%.
- New HIV infections among children under-5 declined by more than 50% since 2010.<sup>2</sup>
- 122 countries achieved the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for under-5 mortality.<sup>3</sup>
- 85% of pregnant women living with HIV received effective antiretrovirals for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the virus, up from 45% in 2010.<sup>4</sup>
- 25 million child marriages have been prevented since 2010.<sup>5</sup>

**These important advances would not have been as great – or perhaps not attained at all – in the absence of dedicated, focused work through the Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) movement, including its landmark Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health.**

**However, these advances were not evenly distributed across the world, and the great progress did not reach every woman, nor every child. In 2019:**

- Every 13 seconds a newborn baby died.
- Every hour, 33 women did not survive childbirth.
- Every day, 14 000 children aged under 5 years died.<sup>6</sup>
- 1 million adolescents died of preventable causes.<sup>7</sup>
- An estimated 14 million infants were not reached by vaccination services.<sup>8</sup>
- 66% of children were regularly subjected to violent forms of discipline.<sup>9</sup>
- Every day, 33 000 girls were forced into marriages as children, usually to much older men.<sup>10</sup>
- 43% of schools around the world lacked access to basic handwashing with soap and water.<sup>11</sup>

**Where a baby is born remains a significant determinant in whether the child survives, thrives or suffers hardship. In 2019:**

- More than 80% of under-5 deaths were concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.<sup>12</sup>
- 86% of all maternal deaths occurred in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- 9 in 10 paediatric HIV infections occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>13</sup>
- Each day, some 460 adolescent girls became infected with HIV, most of whom live in in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>14</sup>

## Women and children are particularly vulnerable in conflict situations:

- Millions of women and children who are internally displaced, refugees and migrants are facing an acute state of vulnerability.
- Maternal and child mortality rates are substantially higher in countries chronically affected by conflict.
- 1 in 3 children living outside their countries of birth are child refugees.<sup>15</sup>
- 40% of the global under-5 deaths occurred in fragile contexts in 2019.<sup>16</sup>
- The under-5 mortality rate in children aged under 5 years is three times higher in the 36 countries classified as fragile than in so-called non-fragile countries.<sup>17</sup>



## Climate change and its environmental impacts is an additional looming threat to the lives of children today and to future generations:

- Exposure to polluted air prenatally and during the newborn period is associated with an increased risk of acute respiratory diseases in childhood, and considerable morbidity and mortality, including impaired lung growth, reduced lung function, slowing brain maturation, and impaired growth in cognitive function in schoolchildren.<sup>18</sup>



## COVID-19 is impacting the overall health and well-being of women, children and adolescents.

The dramatic effects of the pandemic include:

- 50% of countries report partial or severe disruptions in routine immunization services, malaria prevention campaigns, family planning and antenatal care services;
- 1 157 000 additional child deaths and 56 700 additional maternal deaths due to reduction in coverage of key high-impact maternal and child health interventions, over six months of lockdowns in 118 low- and middle-income countries;<sup>19</sup>
- 31 million additional cases of gender-based violence, due to six months of lockdowns;<sup>20</sup>
- 7 million unintended pregnancies in the coming months, due to ongoing lockdowns and major disruptions to health services;<sup>21</sup>
- 13 million additional child marriages taking place by 2030 that otherwise would not have occurred; and<sup>22</sup>
- 150 million additional children plunged into poverty due to COVID-19.<sup>23</sup>

## Making good on promises

### Every Woman Every Child: a decade of investment and action

EWEC is a catalytic multi-stakeholder movement that places women, children and adolescents at the centre of the SDGs.

Under the leadership of the United Nations Secretary-General, EWEC unites stakeholders across sectors and the continuum of care for collective advocacy and action to improve the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents, everywhere.

EWEC helps foster collaboration to support governments and deliver concrete results. In a shifting development landscape facing an existential climate crisis and historic levels of conflict, the movement is translating global commitment into targeted action for impact at the country level.

#### Achievements in EWEC's first decade include:

- 776 commitments worth nearly US\$ 186 billion mobilized by governments and multi-stakeholders since 2010; and
- more than US\$ 1 billion mobilized by the Global Financing Facility from 13 multi-stakeholder partners, in a successful replenishment in 2018.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, almost half of the nongovernmental commitment makers anticipate a decrease in their financial commitments in the coming years or a degree of uncertainty on their ability to deliver on pledges to advance the EWEC Global Strategy. It is therefore critical that we come together to protect the tremendous progress and investments made over the past decade.

## Conclusion

Every Woman Every Child is heading into its second decade with an even stronger mandate to achieve its goal of “a world in which every woman, child and adolescent in every setting realizes their rights to physical and mental health and well-being, has social and economic opportunities, and is able to participate fully in shaping sustainable and prosperous societies”

COVID-19 and other current crises are compounding each other's impact. But together we can face the challenges. Getting back on track requires continued investment in the many known solutions that address the needs and uphold the rights of women, children and adolescents everywhere.

#### The data indicate the crucial areas for concerted action, as outlined in the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health Call to Action on COVID-19:

- Ensuring access to information, health services and life-saving supplies for women, children and adolescents;
- Promoting sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality;
- Guaranteeing quality, respectful and dignified health care;
- Providing training, equal and fair pay and safe working conditions for health workers, notably midwives and nurses;
- Ensuring social protection, including food and nutrition, for marginalized and vulnerable groups;
- Improving access to safe and clean water, toilets and handwashing facilities; and
- Preventing violence against women, children and adolescents.

# To survive, thrive and transform, every woman, every child and every adolescent needs governments, organizations and donors to work together to come back from this crisis stronger than before.

We must rise in this **Decade of Action** to refocus our efforts towards ensuring the overall and lasting health and well-being of women, children and adolescents, so that we can recover stronger and achieve the **SDG's** for every woman, every child and every adolescent, everywhere.

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- <sup>9</sup> UNICEF Violent discipline. New York: United Nations Children's Fund; 2020 (<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/violence/violent-discipline/>).
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