

UNICEF Executive Director, Anthony Lake speaks at *Every Woman Every Child* event: "Saving Lives, Protecting Futures"

ECOSOC Chamber

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Let me add my thanks to the Secretary General for his personal leadership of "Every Woman, Every Child," which has gathered the world around a common mission: preventing the unnecessary deaths of millions and millions of vulnerable women and children.

I also acknowledge the leadership of our panellists, and Amina Mohammed and Taona Nana Kuo and their team. Indeed, the leadership of everyone in this room, including the UN Foundation, which did so much to support this event and this cause.

The initiative has inspired more than 400 commitments that are transforming words into action — from Liberia's pledge to increase health spending from four per cent to 10 per cent of its national budget...to Canada's Muskoka Initiative...to Zambia's and Zimbabwe's commitment to double spending on family planning services...to generous contributions from groups like the Islamic Development Bank, the Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and others.

As we heard throughout today's presentations, these commitments are producing the best possible result: millions of lives saved in communities around the world.

Three common threads ran through today's presentations — progress, partnerships and promise.

First, progress — Every Woman, Every Child progress — because maternal deaths worldwide have dropped by 45 per cent since 1990, and because more children are surviving to their fifth birthdays than ever before. Because countries like India are showing that eradicating polio in every community is an achievable goal. And because countries like Ethiopia are showing that under-five deaths can be greatly reduced by adding maternal and newborn care to health extension programmes even in the most remote communities.

Second, partnerships, because none of our progress would be possible without them. From the over 300 governments, civil society groups, UN agencies and private sector partners who have joined the initiative...to the GAVI Alliance's work to reduce the costs of live-saving vaccines...to the Catalytic Initiative, which has supported over 60,000 community health workers in seven African countries...to growing movements like Scaling-Up Nutrition and A Promise Renewed.

And third, promise, because implicit in its name, "Every Woman, Every Child" is a promise that no woman, no child, should ever die from a cause we have the power to prevent.

For we cannot lose sight of the unfinished business that remains — the 17,000 children who still die every day for want of a simple vaccination, basic nutrition, or even a bed net... or the 800 women who die each day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Too often because of where they live. Because of their religion, ethnicity or gender. Because they live in a conflict zone.

It is for these lives that we must not only identify a post-2015 target to end preventable newborn and child deaths by 2030 — we must also quantify it. Just as we've done with reducing maternal deaths, by setting a goal of reducing annual global maternal mortality from over 290 per 100,000 live births to a global average of 70.

Goals for under-five mortality must also be ambitious — and achievable. Modelling shows clearly that countries can greatly reduce under-five and newborn mortality. But only if we move beyond the tyranny of statistical global and national averages, and redouble our focus on those communities whose plight is being disguised by these averages — and thus, which are being left behind.

So not only must we reduce the annual global child mortality rate from 46 per 1,000 live births to a global average of less than 20 — we must reduce the rate within every country. Because every country not only should, but can, reduce its under-five mortality rate to 25 per 1,000 live births or below by 2030. Every country — for every woman and every child.

Like the goal for cutting maternal mortality, these are ambitious goals — but achievable.

So let us all here hold ourselves accountable for the lives of all the women and children being lost so needlessly around the world.

Experience shows that yes, we can save them.

The life of every woman and every child that hangs in the balance insists that we must.

And our great progress to date shows that, by working together in common cause for the most vulnerable, we will.