

"We need each country to develop an integrated program for women, children and adolescents"

President Michele Bachelet, of Chile, presented the Commitment to Action for the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, a roadmap to address inequities affecting the health of this population in the region.

Santiago, 3 July 2017- Latin American and Caribbean countries today agreed to work to end the preventable deaths of women, children and adolescents by 2030, and to develop effective actions for that population to prosper and transform the world.

The Santiago Commitment to Action for the Implementation of the *Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health* (2016-2030) recognizes that the goals are "ambitious but achievable" and calls on countries to "take the actions needed to ensure that people realize their right to the highest attainable standard of health."

"We need each country to develop an integrated program for women, children and adolescents, strengthening components of the EWEC *Global Strategy*, such as early childhood development; the health and well-being of adolescents; improvements in quality, equity and dignity in health services; sexual and reproductive health and rights; the empowerment of women, girls and communities; and solutions to humanitarian crises or situations of greater fragility in our region," said the President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, during the *High Level Meeting for Every Woman, Every Child, Every Adolescent*, which takes place in Santiago, Chile, until 4 July. Bachelet is the co-chair of the High-level Steering Group for *Every Woman Every Child*. The movement puts in action the *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health*, launched by the United Nations Secretary-General as a roadmap to improve health and wellbeing for all women, children and adolescents, leaving no one behind.

"Health inequities are not only unjust, they also threaten the advances we have made in the last decades, and endanger economic growth and social development" in Latin America and the Caribbean, said Carissa Etienne, director of the Pan American Health Organization. "We have an obligation to ensure that political actions reach the most disadvantaged people first and then gradually benefit every woman, child and adolescent in our region," said Etienne.

It is estimated that more than 6,200 women died in the region in 2015 from complications during pregnancy and childbirth, most of which can be prevented. In addition, about 196,000 children under the age of 5 die in Latin America and the Caribbean each year, of which 85 per cent before their first birthday. The health of adolescents and their chances to thrive are conditioned by inequalities in access to health, education and employment opportunities. The region has one of the highest adolescent birth rates in the world. And among their main causes of death are homicides (24 per cent), road accidents (20 per cent) and suicides (7 per cent).





In the document, authorities recognize that "inequities between and within LAC countries represent the greatest threat to regional development." The Santiago Commitment to Action, they say, will help mobilize and catalyze action to achieve the EWEC *Global Strategy* targets.

Attending countries also committed to address gender, ethnic and human rights inequalities, so that no one is left behind, taking into account that these dimensions intersect and overlap in situations of discrimination, especially toward the poorest women, children and adolescents.

The Commitment for Action recognizes as key priorities: the reduction of inequities in health according to human rights norms and principles, with special attention to vulnerable populations; the prioritization of quality and universal access to health services; the strengthening of cooperation among countries to address specific contexts; and the promotion of multisectoral actions within and between countries.

"We need to look beyond survival, and aim for children to realize their full potential. Social determinants of health require a multisectoral agenda. We must work on health, not only to improve health indicators, but also as the basis for achieving all of the Sustainable Development Goals", said Nana Taona Kuo, Senior Manager of *Every Woman Every Child*.

"The Sustainable Development Goals are fundamentally about tackling exclusion and inequality. And it is no longer a question of north or south, but even within countries there is exclusion," said Luiz Loures, UN Under-Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS. Loures acknowledged the leadership of the region for the implementation of the EWEC *Global Strategy*: "Latin America and the Caribbean are the first to have a regional coordination [EWEC LAC]. There is a lot to do, but there are already plans to work in one direction and it is fundamental to involve Latin America. "

According to Alicia Bárcenas, executive secretary of ECLAC, Agenda 2030 is "civilizing, indivisible and universal, aspiring to shared prosperity". "The aim of this meeting is equality with respect to the ownership of rights. And the proposal is to create a new political pact to move from the culture of privilege to the culture of equality," she emphasized. Ms. Barcenas added that disaggregating information is a mandate of Agenda 2030: "what is not measured does not matter; we must break the statistical silence."

The *Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health* recommends packages of interventions that countries can use to end preventable deaths among women, children and adolescents, including vaccination, adequate nutrition, exclusive breastfeeding, access to safe water and adequate sanitation, education and employment opportunities for women, access to quality health services, and access to sexual and reproductive health.

The meeting counted on the participation of Ministers of State (Health or Social Development) from Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Uruguay, among other governmental authorities. It also counted on the participation of the wife of Prime Minister and Special Envoy for Women and Children of Belize, Kim Simplis Barrow, and UN agencies regional directors for Latin America and Caribbean: María Cristina Perceval (UNICEF); César Núñez (UNAIDS); Esteban Caballero (UNFPA); and Luiza Carvalho (UN Women); Emma Iriarte, BID





representative; Katie Qutub, USAID representative, and Gastón Blanco, World Bank representative in Chile.

About the Coordinating Mechanism for Latin America and the Caribbean of the EWEC Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health

In order to support the region in the adaptation and implementation of the EWEC *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health*, it was decided to transform the "A Promise Renewed for the Americas (APR LAC)" into the Coordinating Mechanism of the Global Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean region. The agencies that integrate the Coordinating Mechanism are: Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), World Bank, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Pan American / World Health Organization (PAHO / WHO) and United Nations Secretariat for HIV / AIDS (UNAIDS).

See [Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health](#).



**Regional Movement for the EWEC Global Strategy
for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health**