

14th April, 2010, "Dozens of countries are unlikely to meet" the Millennium Development Goal targets related to maternal and child health without a new strategy and an additional \$20 billion each year, according to a report released Tuesday, the Canadian Press reports (Lederer, 4/14).

The analysis – prepared by Countdown to 2015, an international scientific advocacy group – "shows that an estimated 350,000-500,000 women still die in childbirth each year, 3.6 million newborns fail to survive the first month, and an additional 5.2 million children die before the age of five," according to a press release from the The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) – a group hosted by the WHO. "Despite significant advances over the past decades," the report finds that "progress has lagged mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where an estimated 82 percent of maternal, newborn, and child deaths take place" (4/13).

Though "countries have almost doubled their donations for maternal, newborn and child health in recent years," there's a shortfall of about \$20 billion for each year between 2011 and 2015, according to the report, the Canadian Press writes.

"According to UNICEF, 135 countries have child mortality rates of less than 40 per 1,000 live births or have a rate of reduction sufficient to meet the U.N. goal, but 39 show insufficient progress and 18 show no progress or a worsening of child mortality. ... If the funding gap was filled by 2015, the study found the lives of up to 1 million women, 4.5 million newborn babies and 6.5 million children aged 1 month to 5 years would be saved," according to the news service.

The report was "released on the eve of a press conference by [U.N.] Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to kick off a new global initiative on reproductive, maternal and newborn health," the Canadian Press notes (4/14). Public health experts and six world leaders, who are in the U.S. for the Nuclear Security Summit, are set to meet this week in New York "to map a strategy for further reducing maternal and child mortality," the Washington Post reports (Brown, 4/14).

"This is a multi-layered problem that can be addressed with a combination of many, very simple interventions," according to Flavia Bustreo, director of (PMNCH), which is comprised of more than 300 groups. Zulfiqar Bhutta of Pakistan's Aga Khan University, a co-chair of Countdown to 2015, said that "seamless" ongoing care is needed. Bhutta said care should include breast feeding, hand washing, childhood immunizations, skilled attendants at births and family planning, the Canadian Press writes (4/14).

Source: [Keiser Health News](#)