



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

# NOTE FOR THE PRESS

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Note for the Media WHO/13  
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## WHO JOINS UNITED NATIONS CALL FOR CONCERTED ACTION TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**Geneva** - The World Health Organization (WHO) today joins the United Nations in supporting the main message of the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2005*: Despite uneven progress towards achieving the global development goals, they are still achievable with determination, renewed commitment and immediate concerted action from global leaders.

Progress on the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is mixed and if current trends continue, most poor countries will not meet these goals. However, investing in proven solutions can still turn the tide and help to achieve the goals.

"We have the means to achieve those goals. We have the technology. What we need are the resources and the political will," said Dr LEE Jong-wook, WHO Director-General. "We cannot wait any longer to do what we have promised to achieve in the coming decade."

No region of the developing world is currently on track to meet the child mortality target of reducing by two-thirds the mortality rate of children under the age of five. For maternal mortality, evidence indicates that declines have been limited to countries with lower levels of mortality; countries with high maternal mortality are experiencing stagnation or even reversals.

Data on coverage of some health interventions are more hopeful. For example, the proportion of women who have a skilled medical person with them during delivery has increased rapidly in some regions – especially in Asia, albeit from a low baseline; use of insecticide-treated bednets has risen; and coverage of effective tuberculosis treatment has expanded.

Later in June 2005, WHO will launch its own MDG report, *Health in the Millennium Development Goals*, which looks beyond the target-by-target information and identifies trends, successes and failures which are currently affecting the health sector as a whole.

In September 2000, 189 world leaders signed the Millennium Declaration, and made a commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Three of the eight goals relate directly to health: to reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters, child mortality by two-thirds and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Health is an

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essential component of three further targets: to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation and ensure affordable, safe access to essential drugs.

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