

UK will step up efforts to end preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children in the developing world by 2030

A commitment has been made to prioritise ending preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children in the developing world by 2030.

To achieve this, UK aid will invest in more vaccines for deadly diseases, prioritise access to healthcare for women and girls around the world, and invest in research to diagnose and treat diseases more quickly and effectively.

Every day, over 800 women lose their lives from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth and around 7,000 new-born babies die. The majority of these deaths are in the developing world and are preventable. Significant progress has been made to reduce these unnecessary deaths over the last 30 years. But we still fall short of a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every child lives a healthy life.

International Development Secretary, Alok Sharma, said:

Every 11 seconds, a pregnant woman or new-born baby dies somewhere in the world. These deaths are mostly preventable, and we should not allow this needless loss of life to continue.

We will boost our support for developing countries to ensure everyone has access to healthcare. We will invest more in vaccines and research so developing countries benefit from the very best of British and international expertise. And we will put sexual and reproductive health and rights for all women and girls at the heart of this commitment.

Everyone in the world deserves to be able to access the healthcare they need to live a healthy life.

This follows the announcement of a £600 million aid package to give millions more women and girls living in the world's poorest countries access to family planning.

Notes to Editors

- In 2017, nearly 295,000 women died from complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth, and in 2018, 5.3 million children under 5 died (mostly from preventable causes) including 2.5 million newborns. The main causes include severe bleeding, infections, delivery complications

and unsafe abortion.

- The vast majority of these deaths occurred in low and middle income countries, and amongst the poorest and most vulnerable.
- Maternal mortality worldwide dropped by 38 per cent and the number of new-born deaths halved between 2000 and 2017, but we are off target to end preventable death.
- An estimated 19.9 million children did not receive the vaccines during the first year of life, putting them at serious risk of these potentially fatal diseases. Some of the world's most vulnerable people are still dying from vaccine-preventable diseases.
- UK aid is committed to delivering Gavi's new ambition to vaccinate 300 million more people by 2025. In June 2020 the UK will host Gavi's replenishment conference.
- At the UN General Assembly, we announced £600 million in support to family planning for women and girls.

To achieve this target, UK aid will:

- continue to prioritise access to family planning for women and girls around the world.
- increase funding for research and development into new health technologies designed to meet the specific needs of developing countries, like vaccines for deadly diseases such as meningitis and other severe epidemic diseases. Diseases that cross borders can also cross continents.
- ensure children in the poorest countries have access to the life-saving vaccines that children in the richest countries routinely receive.
- invest in research to develop cheaper and accessible diagnostic tests to make them more affordable for developing countries, so we can diagnose and treat diseases like malaria more quickly and effectively.
- use the best of British and international expertise to provide technical assistance to developing countries to better prioritise their own domestic resources on highly cost-effective health interventions, such as the prevention and treatment of malnutrition.
- will work with the private sector to increase access to affordable, effective, critical health technologies.