

Child Health

Leading up to this year's G8 and G20 summits, there have been many requests for global leaders to take a strong stand on fulfilling former global promises to reduce child mortality and eliminate health disparities. Below is an in-depth look at how child health has been integrated into past summits and where Canada stands on our commitments to the children of the world. Use these points as an outline of what to look for during this year's summit and ensure that our country's leaders and government are following through on their commitments.

- At the 1996 summit in Lyon, France, G8 leaders discussed the usefulness of setting indicators to measure progress in eradicating extreme poverty and infant, child and maternal mortality.
- At the 2005 summit in Gleneagles, the G8 promised \$50 billion in aid to developing countries by 2010, of which \$25 billion would go to Africa. G8 also promised to provide universal access to anti-HIV drugs in Africa by 2010. At the 2007 G8 summit in Heiligendamm, leaders committed to working to provide universal coverage of the PMTCT (Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission) program by 2010 and to meet needed resources for pediatric treatments at a cost of \$1.8 billion, also by 2010.
- The G8, in 2007, also committed to increasing efforts in maternal and child health care and voluntary family planning, at an estimated \$1.5 billion, which includes providing 100 million mosquito nets to combat malaria.
- At the 2009 G8 summit in L'Aquila, Italy, leaders agreed to accelerate the progress on combating child mortality by intensifying support of immunization and micronutrient supplementation. The G8 also agreed to provide the following:
 - o \$60 billion for global health over five years
 - o 100 million malaria bed nets by 2010
 - o Universal access to HIV treatment by 2010
- Also at this summit, a global consensus on maternal and child health was adopted, which includes support for free services for women and children where countries choose to provide it.

Child health has also been addressed by the United Nations on several occasions:

- In 2000, 189 countries, including Canada, committed to ending extreme poverty worldwide through the achievement of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- The fourth Millennium Development Goal focuses on reducing the number of children who die before the age of five.
- 2010 marks the time when we should be 2/3 of the way closer to meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

- According to a recent study which assessed the progress toward achieving the MDGs, mortality in children younger than five years old has dropped from 11.9 million deaths in 1990 to 7.7 million deaths in 2010 worldwide.

Canada has not always lived up to the commitments we've made, including those that have come out of discussions about international aid and child health.

- Canada ranks 14th among 23 developed countries when it comes to foreign aid as a percentage of national income.
- Canada has not come even close to meeting its pledge to allocate 0.7% of Gross National Income to international development.
- Canada's pledge not to fund abortions has been heavily criticized by those who argue that there could be no maternal and child health plan without access to safe abortions. Setting conditions for their aid shows disregard for recipient countries' concerns.

This year's summit should be a turning point on global child health. Let's tell our leaders that young people care about child health and will hold them accountable for the promises that they make at the G8 and G20 summits.

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