

# **New evidence documents improvements in child health and survival**

## **Data in *The Lancet* show significant decreases in child mortality; persistent threat of diarrhea and pneumonia**

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PATH welcomes the encouraging news today that global child deaths continue to decrease. Over the last decade, deaths among children under five dropped from 9.6 to 7.6 million per year, according to data gathered by the Child Health Epidemiology Reference Group of the World Health Organization and UNICEF. Thanks to commitments to children's health from global donors and policymakers in low-resource countries where the burden is greatest, a child's chance of surviving and thriving is now greater than ever.

But the fight is far from over. Childhood diarrhea and pneumonia claim a combined 2 million lives annually and remain significant causes of child mortality. While demonstrating how simple and affordable solutions can have a major impact, today's good news also calls for continued scale-up of lifesaving interventions in the environments where children's lives are most threatened.

"Though an inconvenience in wealthy countries, diarrhea is still a death sentence in far too many places," said Ayo Ajayi, PATH's Vice President for Field Programs. "We have seen how simple solutions can save lives. Now is the time to maintain the momentum by continuing to invest in practical and cost-effective tools to realize even greater achievement in child survival."

The urgency remains to defeat diarrheal disease, as thousands of children still lose their lives every day due to the severe dehydration it causes. A coordinated approach can be highly effective, combining proven, cost-effective prevention and treatment solutions such as safe water and sanitation, exclusive breastfeeding, rotavirus vaccines, oral rehydration therapy, zinc, and proper nutrition. Prioritizing diarrheal disease control through re-energized national programs can make an immediate difference, and countries making this commitment—like Cambodia, Kenya, and Vietnam—are demonstrating a practical and profound impact. Their experiences, and the alarms sounded by today's news that millions of children remain vulnerable despite proven and available interventions, should spur increased commitments to protect all children worldwide.

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### **About PATH**

PATH is an international nonprofit organization that creates sustainable, culturally relevant solutions, enabling communities worldwide to break longstanding cycles of poor health. By collaborating with diverse public- and private-sector partners, PATH helps provide appropriate health technologies and vital strategies that change the way people think and act. PATH's work improves global health and well-being. For more information, please visit [www.path.org](http://www.path.org).