At least 1 in 3 children under-five in Africa were stunted in 2011

Stunting hampers cognitive development of young children which undermines learning ability later in life. The effects of stunting are irreversible.

**Approaches to prevent stunting**

Interventions should focus on the critical 1,000 days window including pregnancy and before a child turns two and include:

- Improving women’s nutrition, especially before, during and after pregnancy.
- Early and exclusive breastfeeding.
- Timely, safe, appropriate and high-quality complementary food.
- Appropriate micronutrients interventions.
- Infectious diseases, such as diarrhoea, pneumonia, malaria, etc. are important determinants of stunting.
- Access to safe drinking water, basic sanitation and practicing appropriate hygiene behavior greatly reduces the risk of some of these infectious diseases.

**Stunting prevalence (%)**

Proportion of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from median height-for-age of the WHO Child Growth Standard.

Data range: 2007-2011

**Five countries in Africa have more than 5 percent severe wasting**

Children aged 0-59 months who are below minus three standard deviations from median weight–for–height of the WHO standard reference population, African countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% severely wasted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In Africa, boys are more likely to be stunted than girls**

Ratio of stunting (girls to boys) among children under-five years, countries in Africa, data range 2007-2011

**Significant progress in exclusive breastfeeding in many African countries**

Trends in % of infants (<6 months) who are exclusively breastfed, around 1995 and 2011

Source for all charts: UNICEF global databases 2013, based on DHS, MICS, and other national surveys 2007-2011
An estimated 3.1 million children under 15 years were living with HIV in Africa as of 2011; about 10 per cent of which were newly infected, mainly through mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Key facts:

- Although progress has been made in Africa to increase the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS and increasing pediatric anti-retroviral therapy (ART) coverage, much more progress is needed.
- In 2011, around 300,000 children were newly infected with HIV in Africa.
- Across Africa, about 3% of all under-five deaths are caused by HIV/AIDS, and in Southern Africa, an estimated 11% of under-five deaths are attributed to HIV/AIDS.
- Although some progress has been made, ARV coverage for PMTCT varied from 8% in North Africa to 80% in Southern Africa in 2011.

Major progress during the last decade in the use of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) among children

- During the last decade, the proportion of children sleeping under ITNs in sub-Saharan Africa increased from less than 5 per cent to over a third (37%).
- Countries in Africa are focused on increasing coverage for ITN use among children in the most equitable manner: mass campaigns which strive for universal coverage to ensure that everyone is reached.

Malaria case management in endemic countries

- The use of Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDT) to confirm malaria infection before starting treatment is still low.
- In most endemic countries, less than 50% of febrile children under-five who receive antimalarials are treated with artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT).

Birth registration, child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

The birth of less than half of children in Eastern and West Africa has been registered

Percentage of children under five who are registered

- Eastern Africa: 31%
- West Africa: 44%
- Central Africa: 53%
- Southern Africa: 54%
- North Africa: 87%

More than 125 million girls and women alive today have undergone some form of FGM/C in 29 countries across Africa and the Middle East.

Another 30 million girls are at risk of being cut in the next decade.

In Central Africa, 1 in 2 young women were married or in union before age 18; nearly 1 in 5 of whom were married or in union before age 15

Number of women 20-24 years old who were first married or in union before age 18, by sub-region

- West Africa: 2.3 mn
- Eastern Africa: 2.2 mn
- Central Africa: 456,000
- Southern Africa: 442,000
- North Africa: 258,000

In almost all countries, prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting is greater than support for continuing the practice

Percentage of women 20-24 years old who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18, by region

- Central Africa: 18% married or in union before age 15, 31% married or in union between ages 15 and 18
- West Africa: 15% married or in union before age 15, 26% married or in union between ages 15 and 18
- Eastern Africa: 10% married or in union before age 15, 27% married or in union between ages 15 and 18
- Southern Africa: 7% married or in union before age 15, 20% married or in union between ages 15 and 18
- North Africa: 3% married or in union before age 15, 14% married or in union between ages 15 and 18

Source for all charts: UNICEF global databases 2013, based on DHS, MICS, and other national surveys 2002-2011

% girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C

% girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have heard about FGM/C and think the practice should continue
In Africa, boys are more likely to be enrolled in primary school than girls

Key facts:
- Over half of the world’s out-of-school children (30 million) live in Africa.
- Girls are more likely to be out of school than boys.
- Children with disabilities are over-represented in the out-of-school population.
- Progress in reducing the out-of-school children population has slowed down since 2005.
- Many children fail to complete the full primary circle and fail to master basic literacy and numeracy skills.

30 million of the world’s out-of-school children live in Africa

Primary school enrolment in West Africa lags behind the other African regions

Only 5 out of 53 African countries have reached Universal Primary Education

Even if they progress through the grades, many primary school children do not acquire basic knowledge and skills

All regions in Africa have experienced marked declines in under-five mortality since 1990

In Africa, mortality rates among children under-five years of age (U5MR) have decreased by 45 per cent from 162 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990, to 90 in 2012, but still half of the world’s 6.6 million under-five deaths occur in Africa.

Close to 600,000 measles deaths averted by vaccination in sub-Saharan Africa, since 2000

Pneumonia, malaria and diarrhoea account for 40% of all under-five deaths in Africa

Globally, almost half of the under-five deaths are attributable to malnutrition

Source: UNICEF analysis based on IGME and WHO & CHERG 2013

Source: Adapted from Simons et al. (Assessment of the 2010 global measles mortality reduction goal: results from a model of surveillance data. Lancet 2012;379:2173-78) with updated measles mortality data through 2011 obtained from Dr Robert Perry, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

Child Mortality in Africa
Africa still has the highest under-five mortality rates in the world and half of the world's 6.6 million under-five deaths are in Africa.

- Pneumonia, malaria and diarrhoea account for 40% of all under-five deaths in Africa.
- At least 1 in 3 children under-five in Africa were stunted in 2011.
- Africa accounts for about 60 per cent of all maternal deaths in the world.
- In 2011, there were an estimated 3.1 million children under 15 years living with HIV in Africa.
- In 2010, there were 219 million malaria cases in Africa leading to approximately 660,000 malaria deaths.
- Less than half of children under-five in Eastern and Western Africa have been registered at birth.
- 236 million people in Africa practiced open defecation in 2011.

Every Child Counts

The child population in Africa is burgeoning; by 2050, 1 in every 3 children under 18 will be African

By 2050, 1 in every 3 births and almost 1 in every 3 children under 18 will be African

Between 2010 and 2025, the child population of sub-Saharan Africa will rise by 130 million.

From around 2030, sub-Saharan Africa will be the single region with the greatest number of children under 18.
Drinking Water and Sanitation in Africa

Since 1990, 351 million people gained access to an improved drinking water source in Africa.

In Africa only 40% of the population uses an improved sanitation facility; the population without access grew by 212 million despite 200 million people gaining access.

Key facts:
- Drinking water coverage in Africa increased from 56% in 1990, to 67% in 2011.
- This rate of progress is not sufficient to meet the continent’s MDG drinking water target of 78% by 2015.
- Just over a quarter (26%) of the African population enjoys the convenience and associated health benefits of a piped drinking water supply on premises.
- Over the period 1990-2011 Africa’s population grew from 411 million people to just over 1 billion. While 351 million gained access to an improved drinking water source, the population without access increased from 280 million in 1990, to 340 million in 2011.

In Africa only 40% of the population uses an improved sanitation facility; the population without access grew by 212 million despite 200 million people gaining access.

- Open defecation rates in Eastern Africa declined most from 40% in 1990, to 25% in 2011.
- West and Central Africa made the least progress on sanitation.
- In Southern Africa one-fifth (19%) of the population still practices open defecation.
- Malawi, Angola, Ethiopia and Benin registered declines in open defecation rates of 25 percentage points or more since 1990.

Open defecation rates 1990 & 2011, selected countries

Source for all charts: UNICEF global databases 2013, based on DHS, MICS, and other national surveys 2007-2011
Africa has the highest number of maternal deaths

- Globally, the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) declined from 400 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 210 in 2010.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the maternal mortality ratio is 500 per 100,000 live births.
- Africa accounts for about 60 percent of all maternal deaths in the world, largely due to limited access to emergency obstetric care and insufficient maternal care during pregnancy and delivery.

Antenatal care during pregnancy with skilled health personnel is essential to ensure both mother and baby’s well-being

Antenatal care: % of women (aged 15-49) attended at least once during pregnancy by skilled health personnel (doctor, nurse or midwife)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>~1990</th>
<th>~2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data coverage was insufficient to calculate regional estimates for Eastern Africa in 1990.

The improvement of maternal health outcomes requires key interventions:

- Assistance from skilled health personnel at delivery.
- Improved access to emergency obstetric care.
- A minimum of four visits for antenatal care in order to ensure the well-being of mother and babies.
- Expanding access to information, counseling and supplies for a wide range of contraceptive methods.
- Lowering birth rates among adolescents.
- Antiretroviral therapy to all pregnant women who need it.

Skilled delivery care higher in urban than in rural areas

Skilled attendance at birth: % of births attended by skilled health personnel (doctor, nurse or midwife), African regions by area of residence, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data coverage was insufficient to calculate urban and rural estimates for Eastern and Southern Africa.

Source for all charts: UNICEF global databases 2013, based on DHS, MICS, and other national surveys as of May 2013.

Two out of five babies in Africa are born without support from skilled health attendant

Skilled attendance at birth: % of births attended by skilled health personnel (doctor, nurse or midwife), African regions by area of residence, 2011