

Acceleration towards the Sustainable Development Goal targets for maternal health and child mortality

Esteemed Chair, honourable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

In five years, we will be facing the world to deliver our statements on the achievements in maternal and child health among other SDGs. Despite commendable advances in reducing maternal, neonatal, and child mortality the past years, lagging behind is obvious. And, as we navigate the unfolding complex global health scene, it is only wise to acknowledge the pressing urgency to accelerate the progress in order to achieve the envisioned reduction in maternal and child mortality.

To recall, Lebanon was among the few countries that achieved the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 4 and 5, thus stands as a testament to resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment to pursuing maternal and child well-being, particularly in reducing maternal, neonatal, and child mortality. However, monitoring SDG indicators in general and the maternal and child health indicators in specific, needs reliable data. For example, in absence of accurate data of the displaced Syrian population, rates for this population group cannot be accurately measured. We recently noticed that there is a decrease in hospital reported live births especially among the displaced Syrian population, though the fertility rate signals a considerably higher number. This might be reflecting the decrease in health subsidies leading to an estimated high number of uncounted livebirths occurring outside health facilities. So, we should be mindful that missing to properly count live births leads to a false increase in Maternal and child mortality rates which affects proper health policy formulation.

But, despite the multitude of crises we are facing, Lebanon has demonstrated proactive notable efforts towards achieving SDG 3.1 and 3.2. These efforts have been realized through a combination of strategic directions outlined in the National Health Strategy Vision 2030 that Lebanon launched in January 2023. This national strategy includes the appointment of a National Neonatal and Newborn Health Committee to further the knowledge about neonatal causes of death and devise proper prevention. In addition, the national health strategy aims at expansion of the PHC network to provide equitable access to antenatal and postnatal care across Lebanon. Also, the aim is to provide midwife-led maternal care dedicated to preventive, promotive, and curative services for women and children.

Moving forward, we would like to endorse the proposed resolution as we remain steadfast in our dedication to advancing the SDGs, particularly targets related to maternal and child health. By building on existing achievements, fostering innovation, and strengthening partnerships, Lebanon emphasizes its commitment to leaving no one behind and ensuring that the most vulnerable members of society receive the care and support they need.

Thank you.