

New UN study reveals significant decline in maternal mortality – but much remains to be done

New estimates, contained in the report [Maternal Mortality: Levels and Trends 2000 to 2017](#), released on 19 September 2019 by the United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group (UN-MMEIG), indicate that maternal mortality has fallen by one third since 2000. Maternal mortality is defined as the death of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth or within 6 weeks after birth.

Maternal deaths around the world dropped from about 451,000 in 2000 to an estimated 295,000 in 2017, according to the report, the first in a series that has looked at progress in reducing maternal mortality since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. This equates to an estimated global maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of 211 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, down from 342 in 2000, a 38 per cent reduction.

The SDGs include a direct reference to reducing maternal mortality (“By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.”), while also highlighting the importance of moving beyond survival. Despite the ambition to end preventable maternal deaths by 2030, the world will fall short of this target by more than 1 million lives with the current pace of progress. There is a continued urgent need for maternal health and survival to remain high on the global health and development agendas.

- [UN-MMEIG-IGME press release](#)
- [Download the report](#)

This new release provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive information on maternal mortality worldwide, including a public database containing 3,634 country-years of data for 183 countries, taking into account all available nationally-representative data from vital registration systems, population censuses, household surveys and sample registration systems.

About UN-MMEIG

The United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group (MMEIG) was formed to share data on maternal mortality, harmonise estimates within the UN system, improve methods for maternal mortality estimation and generate internationally comparable MMR estimates. MMEIG, which is led by the World Health Organization (WHO), comprises the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Bank Group and the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

For more information, including on estimates, empirical data and methodology, visit:

<https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/maternal-mortality-2000-2017/en/>