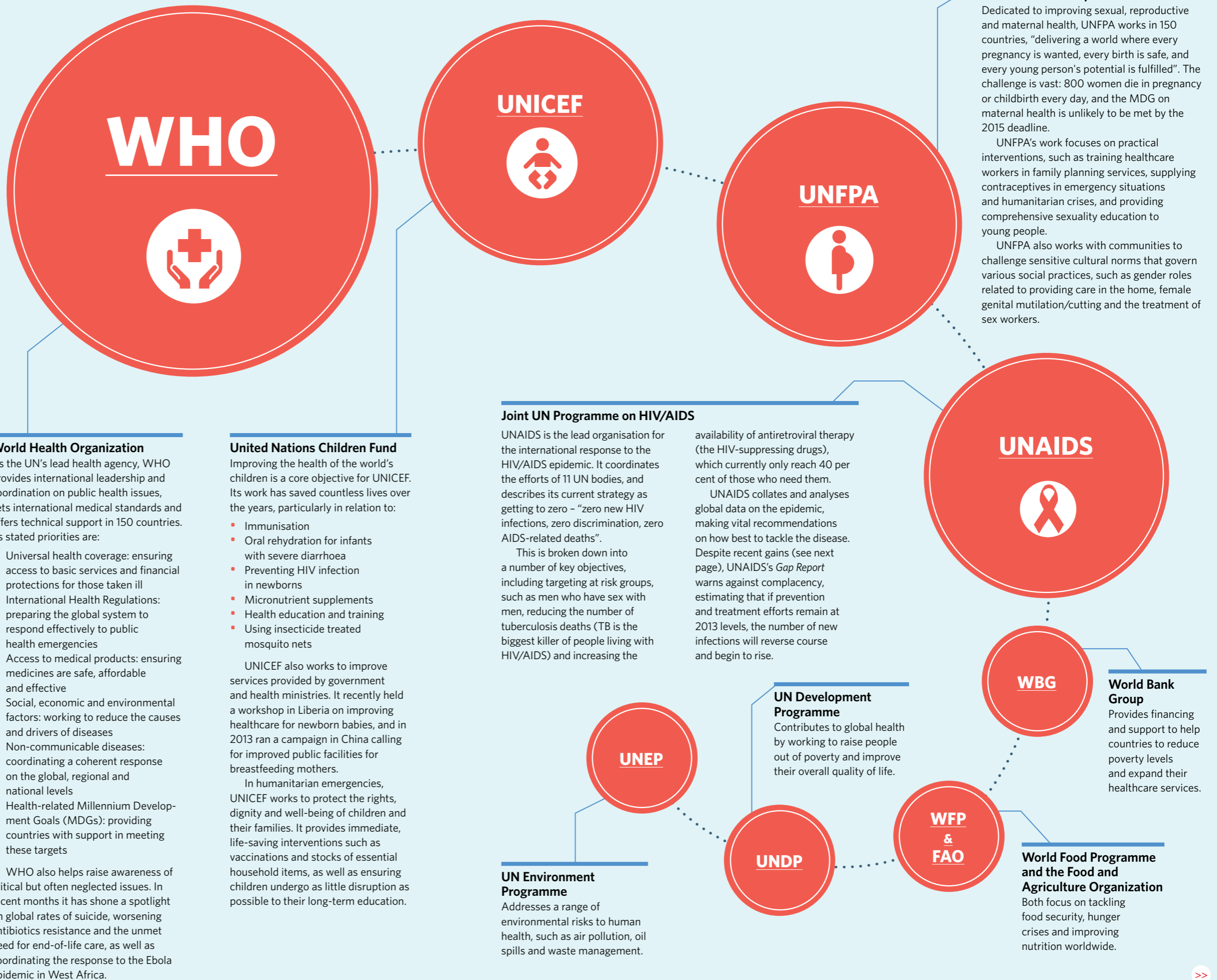


Vital signs: the UN and global health

The UN has long promoted the principles of good health. It is not only the first responder, providing life-saving assistance in humanitarian emergencies, but also works to find solutions to the assorted health challenges people around the world face every day – from breastfeeding and access to medicines to HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Here New World sets out the UN's major global health initiatives





HIV/AIDS

Progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS has been dramatic in recent years: AIDS-related deaths have fallen by 35 per cent since 2005 and new infections have fallen 38 per cent since 2001.

There are, of course, regional variations. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for nearly 25 million of the total of 35 million people living with HIV, but infections there have declined by 33 per cent since 2005. While new infections are on the decline globally, they have risen by four per cent and seven per cent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa respectively.

In addition to this, more than half of people living with HIV do not know their status. Three out of five people with HIV are not receiving treatment. Prevalence is particularly high among key at-risk populations: for example, prisoners are 50 times as likely to have HIV than the rest of the population. Clearly much more remains to be done if the world is to meet UNAIDS's goal of ending the epidemic.

To meet this challenge, resources worth \$19bn were available for combatting HIV/AIDS in 2013, significantly higher than the \$3.8bn spent in 2002.

FACTS

Since 1995, providing HIV-suppressing drugs (ART), has averted



7.6 million deaths globally, including



4.8 million deaths in sub-Saharan Africa alone



Providing ART to pregnant women with HIV has prevented **900,000** new infections amongst children since 2009



Sexual, reproductive and maternal health

Sexual, reproductive and maternal health has featured prominently on the international agenda since the landmark 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. Efforts made since then to link health with women's rights are still considered controversial. For many, however, the focus of MDG 5 - to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters and achieve universal access to reproductive health - was disappointingly narrow.

Yet despite these seemingly uncontentious targets, progress has been lacking. The reasons are simple: women do

not have access to crucial healthcare services during childbirth. In 2011, over a third of live births took place without a healthcare professional present.

This situation is inextricably linked to women's low status in many societies. The UN estimates that improved access to family planning alone would avoid unintended pregnancies and cut maternal deaths by up to a third. It also recognises the importance here of "social barriers including women's limited autonomy ... early marriage; and women's constrained reproductive and sexual choices".

FACTS

Maternal deaths are down

45%

from 1990 levels - far from the

75%

MDG target

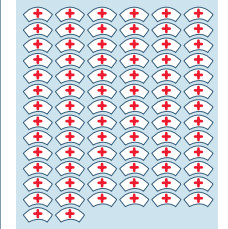


Nurses and midwives per **10,000** people

AFRICA **x12**



EUROPE **x80**



Child survival

Child mortality, like maternal mortality, received a standalone goal in the MDGs. In this case, there has been only marginally more progress toward the target of reducing under-five deaths by two thirds (MDG 4).

The vast majority of child deaths are due to largely treatable and preventable conditions, including pneumonia, diarrhoea and measles. Many of these could be prevented with low-cost, targeted interventions and improved health facilities, such as vaccinations and

the provision of specialised care in the first 24 hours after birth. And when children survive these illnesses, they can still suffer malnutrition, stunted growth and other long-term development problems.

Child and maternal mortality are, understandably, often tackled in unison. The UN's "Every Woman, Every Child" campaign seeks to mobilise and coordinate the various funds, agencies, governments, business and civil society working to achieve MDGs 4 and 5.

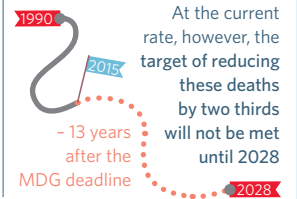
FACTS



The child mortality rate has been **halved** since 1990

6 million fewer

children died in 2012 than in 1990



Universal health coverage

WHO's priority goal of universal health coverage (UHC) is a modest one - everyone should be able to obtain the health services they require without suffering financial hardship. WHO Director-General Margaret Chan has called UHC "the single most powerful concept that public health has to offer". Unfortunately for many, this remains a lofty aspiration, with healthcare either out of reach or prohibitively expensive.

UHC is expected to be included in the successor to the MDGs - the Sustainable Development Goals - to be adopted at the UN next year. Achieving this relies on strengthening the capacity of governments, but it also requires increased healthcare investment, reducing the current global shortfall of over 10 million health workers and ensuring that health services are both integrated and available throughout the different stages in people's lives.

FACTS

40% of the world's population has no healthcare coverage, and in low-income countries this can rise to **90%**



When people do have access to health services, they may still have to pay. It is estimated that

40% of global health expenditure is borne by the sick themselves