

## Millennium Development Goal 4 – To reduce child mortality

**Target – Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.**

Worldwide, more than ten million children die each year before they reach the age of five, almost all of them in developing countries.\* Most of these deaths could be prevented by clean water, sanitation, good food and health care. In developing countries, as many as one child in ten dies before the age of five. Although infant mortality rates have improved overall, in some countries they have stagnated or even increased.

Infant mortality is related to poverty. In low-income countries, many children die from diseases, or from a combination of disease and undernourishment, that could be prevented if more resources were available. Common diseases include respiratory illnesses, measles, diarrhoea and malaria.

If we are to prevent this waste of human life, we need to distribute the world's resources more equitably, and to ensure that people have clean water, affordable health care and education. Vaccination programmes would also help prevent illnesses such as measles. The world has the knowledge and resources to achieve these targets. We just need to persuade politicians to keep their promises.

\*90 per cent of worldwide under-five deaths occur in just 42 countries. (*State of the World's Children*, UNICEF 2005)

### Monica's story – Kenya

The picture shows baby Cherotich Nguranyang, with his mother Pauline, having a measles vaccination at a mobile clinic in northern Kenya. There are very few hospitals or doctors in this area. Most people live in small villages and have no transport, so the clinics come to them to provide them with health care.



Sister Monica is a nurse at one of the mobile clinics. Her clinic deals mostly with pregnant women and new babies. She says, 'The first vaccination for the under-fives is tuberculosis, the next is poliomyelitis, then whooping cough, diphtheria and measles ... We also weigh the baby when they come to the clinic. We take the upper arm circumference, and we can monitor any malnutrition ... The work is important because we are trying to eradicate the poor health of this community.'

People are also looked after by specially trained health volunteers. When they have serious illness or need intensive care, they are taken to the hospital.

### Looking after babies

Injections to protect against illnesses	Warmth
Clean water	Mothers who have been to school
Doctors and hospitals nearby	More midwives and birth attendants
Breast milk	
Toys to play with	