

The Global Leaders Network for Women, Children and Adolescents



Status of Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health (WCAH)

Progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals on maternal, neonatal and under-five mortality is stagnating. From health system failures to economic instability, conflicts, decreasing donor financing and climate change, global challenges are deepening inequalities, particularly for women, children, and adolescents.

The time for urgent, high-level political action is now

- Every **7 seconds**, a pregnant woman or newborn dies from preventable causes.
- Over **1 billion** women and girls lack access to basic good health diets, with most of them living in the Global South.
- Preterm birth is now the leading cause of under-five deaths, with **57%** occurring in sub-Saharan Africa—where children face a **14 times higher risk** of dying than those in Europe or North America.
- Globally the adolescent birth rate for girls 10–14 years is estimated at **1.5 per 1000 women** with higher rates in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean (2023).

The Global Leaders Network (GLN): A Southern-Led Global Health Initiative

Established in 2023, the Global Leaders Network (GLN) pioneers a Southern-led approach to global health diplomacy, acknowledging that technical solutions must be coupled with strategic leadership to achieve meaningful progress.

Unlike traditional health partnerships, GLN operates at the highest levels of political leadership, mobilizing Heads of State and Government to drive action, secure investments, and ensure accountability in achieving global health goals.

To reignite progress in global health, the GLN aims to accelerate efforts to reduce maternal, newborn, and child mortality while addressing stagnation in health advancements.

By mobilizing sustainable investments, the GLN ensures that health financing places these groups at the forefront. Additionally, the network emphasizes the importance of strengthening domestic health systems and fostering regional collaboration for lasting, self-reliant progress.

GLOBAL SDG PROGRESS IS STAGNATING

SDG 3.1: 80% of countries will not achieve their national maternal mortality target.

SDG 3.2.2: 64 countries are off track to meet the target on neonatal mortality.

SDG 3.2.1: 59 countries are off-track to reach the under-five child mortality target.

GLN OPERATES AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP This means:

- Direct engagement with Heads of State, ensuring WCAH is a top government priority.
- Stronger accountability mechanisms, translating commitments into measurable impact.
- Policy and financing shifts at scale, securing long-term funding and system-wide reforms.



The Heads of State Driving Change

Under the leadership of H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa, the GLN unites nine influential global leaders, strategically leveraging their political influence to drive real change and deliver tangible and significant global health advancements for women, children, and adolescents.

Members

- H.E. President Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa (Chair)
- H.E. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, Denmark
- H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopia
- H.E. President William Samoei Ruto, Kenya
- H.E. President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., Liberia
- H.E. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Nigeria
- H.E. President Julius Maada Wonie Bio, Sierra Leone
- H.E. President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, Senegal
- H.E. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia
- H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan, United Republic of Tanzania
- Government of Malawi

This high-level coalition ensures that WCAH is not just a technical issue—it is a political priority integrated into national budgets, policies, and diplomatic agendas.

Strategic Focus Areas

To maximise impact and accelerate progress, the GLN strategically focuses on four key areas of women, children, and adolescents' health.

1 Prioritize women, children, and adolescents in the rollout of Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

Prioritizing women, children, and adolescents in the rollout of national UHC policies presents a critical opportunity to end preventable maternal, newborn, and child mortality and adolescent pregnancy while strengthening overall health and well-being within societies.

2 Increase investments into women's, children's and adolescents' health

Investing in WCAH is an investment in humanity's future. It is a moral, economic and social imperative, essential to national development and integral to the prosperity of societies.

3 Promote progressive lawmaking to uphold sexual and reproductive health

Access to reproductive health services saves lives, reduces maternal mortality, gender-based violence, and unintended pregnancy. Upholding reproductive health policies enhances health and well-being, promotes gender equality, boosts productivity, and creates lasting benefits across generations.

4 Sustain political will and commitment

The world is far off-track to achieve the SDG targets on maternal, newborn and child mortality. With five years left to the 2030 Agenda, it is time to act decisively, with sustained commitment to end preventable maternal, newborn, child and adolescent deaths.

Together, we can secure the health and future of every woman, child, and adolescent.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

THE GLOBAL LEADERS NETWORK (GLN) CALLS ON:

- Governments to integrate WCAH into national policies and budgets.
- Donors and investors to increase funding for sustainable, country-led solutions.
- Businesses and the private sector to support innovative health financing models.
- Civil society and multilateral agencies to amplify WCAH priorities globally.



Website

globalleadersnetwork.org

For more information:

Social media

X (Twitter): @GLN_Community
LinkedIn: Global Leaders Network