

# Neonatal and Perinatal Mortality

## Country, Regional and Global estimates

“4.5 million stillbirths occur each year worldwide. In the developed countries, one in **100-200 pregnancies ends in stillbirth. Many of these deaths “mostly invisible” are avoidable.**

Unexplained stillbirth in late pregnancy is the single largest cause of death in perinatal life in the Western world.

Many institutions report up to two-thirds of stillbirths as unexplained.

Many countries have set under-five and maternal mortality reduction as their key development goal, as suggested by international conferences such as the *World Summit for Children*, the *United Nations Millennium Declaration* and the *United Nations Special Session on Children*. In preparing child-mortality-reduction strategies it is important for countries to know the magnitude of perinatal and neonatal mortality in order to assess needs and develop programmes that will reduce avoidable child deaths more quickly. However, national indicators of the health of mothers and newborn infants are often not readily available.

In many societies, neonatal deaths and stillbirths are not perceived as a problem, largely because they are very common.

Vital registration systems usually do not record and report stillbirths.

**One of the objectives of this report is to stimulate interest in improving the quality of the reporting and clinical diagnosis of causes of perinatal death.”**