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AMERICA/PANAMA - The deaths of poor children are 5 times higher in Latin America than in the rest of the world

Panama (Agenzia Fides) - In spite of the decline in the maternal mortality rate, there continues to be serious inequalities regarding access to health services for women and children because of poverty in Latin America. According to reports from the World Bank, delegations from 30 countries, international agencies and civil society organizations have recently met in Panama to renew their commitment to maternal and child health care, and among the main topics faced was how to prevent Latin American children from dying for no reason. The proposed agreement by UNICEF was signed by 165 Countries, 32 of which are in Latin America. 'A renewed promise', this initiative promoted last June, has as its objective the elimination of avoidable infant deaths as well as guarantee babies to be born in good health, reduce mortality worldwide by 57 per 1000 live births in 2010 to 20 per 1,000 by 2035. In Latin America and the Caribbeans, the socio-economic level of parents continues to have a major impact on the future of their children. Despite the decline of almost half of all deaths recorded in recent years, the young children who live in families with limited financial income are 5 times more likely to die before they have reached the age of five. Most of these deaths can be avoided. In Argentina, since 2004, more than two million mothers and children are benefiting from the Plan Nacer, a health program that provides basic medical services to pregnant mothers and children without health coverage. In Peru, the program is focused on nutrition and together with the World Bank and the World Food Program of the United Nations, provide nutritious meals to primary school children starting from 3 years of age. Qali Warma seeks to improve the educational environment where children grow and develop. Among other objectives of the meeting in Panama is the improvement of maternal health care. The first 1000 days of life of a human being are among the most important and good maternal health conditions are critical to eradicate preventable infant deaths. Over the past 20 years, the mortality rate in Latin America decreased by 40%. However, despite this, it varies greatly depending on the ethnic group one belongs to and the social or economic conditions of women. The deaths related to pregnancy among indigenous women of the region are 3 times higher. In Nicaragua, for example, this phenomenon has been addressed by putting maternal clinics for pregnant women in remote areas of the country. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 17/09/2013)

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