

Nigerian Government urged to support new Action Plan that could save nearly quarter of a million children's lives every year.

WaterAid Press Release – Embargoed 12:01am GMT 12 April 2013

- New action plan to eliminate two of the main killer diseases of children in Nigeria - pneumonia and diarrhoea – launched by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF.
- UN states that universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene in Nigeria alongside availability of vaccines and treatments, is critical in ending preventable child deaths.
- Ending preventable pneumonia and diarrhoea deaths would save the lives of over 241,000 children in the country every year.

Today, UNICEF and the WHO have launched a new action plan tackling for the first time two of the biggest killer diseases of children under five in Nigeria – pneumonia and diarrhoea. The plan aims to end preventable deaths of children in the country from these diseases by 2025, which would save over 241,000 lives a year.

WaterAid Nigeria spokesperson and Country Representative, Dr Michael Ojo, said:

“This Action Plan is all about doing more of what we already know works: Increasing access to drinking water and adequate sanitation, promoting breast feeding, improving availability of vaccines and making sure that treatment is on hand when children need them.

“It is the responsibility of the Nigerian Government to embrace and implement the plan and the cost of inaction and failure is very high and will be measured in the lives of our children. But with the support and assistance of organisations like WaterAid and donors, we can succeed in ending these preventable deaths.”

Every year in Nigeria over 143,000 children under the age of five die of pneumonia, while over 97,000 die of diarrhoea. Between them, they account for over a quarter (28%) of all the child deaths in the country.

The Action Plan calls for a substantial shift in how poverty reduction efforts are coordinated in the country. Aid programmes need to bring together different areas of work, such as access to drinking water, health and education, to make them more effective.

Alongside dozens of development charities, WaterAid has signed a joint statement in support of the new Action Plan that declares:

'We can save countless lives by using an integrated approach to fighting disease, improving access to proven interventions and by prioritising efforts to reach the poorest and most marginalised children. As the latest data demonstrate, the Global Action Plan on Pneumonia and Diarrhoea provides the most cost-effective approach and will help achieve the greatest impact in reducing child deaths.'

The statement offers recommendations for developing country governments, businesses and donors.

END

NOTES TO EDITOR:

Interviews:

Spokespeople are available on request, please get in touch with one of the contacts below.

Oluseyi Abdulmalik: Communications & Campaigns Manager, WaterAid Nigeria

Direct line: +234 808 566 1602

Email: OluseyiAbdulmalik@wateraid.org

Hratche Koundarjian: Senior Media Officer, WaterAid

Direct line: +44 (0)207 793 4909 / +44 (0)7905 911 039

Email: hratchekoundarjian@wateraid.org

The Global Action Plan on Pneumonia and Diarrhoea can be downloaded from here:

http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/gappd/en/index.html

User: WHO_GAPPD

Password: GAPPD_501076

The joint NGO/CSO statement, organisations who have signed it and the press release can be found here: www.defeatdd.org/global-action-plan