

Fighting for Breath- A Call to Action for Childhood Pneumonia

National launch- Puntland, Somalia



Figure 1 Participants shows copies of the Fighting for Breath Report during the launch of the report in Garowe Somalia 02 Nov. 2017

Brief about the Report launch:

Fighting for Breath- a call to action on childhood pneumonia report was launched in Garowe, Puntland on November 2nd 2017. The launch event was held at the Ministry of Health compound in Garowe and it was presided by the Minister of Health, Abdinasir Osman Isse, and Save the Children Area Representative in Puntland, Abdiqafar Elmi Hange.

Over 50 participants from different parts of the community participated the including representatives from UNICEF Somalia, WHO Somalia and World Vision as well as other health workers, government officials, medical students and non-governmental actors working the health sector in Somalia.

Dr. Stephen Ayella presented some key highlights from the global report and facts and figures from the Somalia specific reports. This was followed by a panel discussion that involved the Director General of Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WHO representatives, World Vision and Save the children. The panelists discussed what needs to be done to reduce pneumonia related deaths for under five children in Somalia.

The DG highlighted some of the efforts already made by the government including putting in place plans and strategies for primary health care as well as a commitment to increase

overall funding for health. However he also highlighted the fact more resources are required to support access to quality health and the need to prioritize prevention, diagnosis and treatment of pneumonia in the country. The health experts including WHO and UNICEF emphasized the need to focus on integrated health programming that includes WASH and nutrition services at all levels. The health experts highlighted the need strengthen to invest in the capacity of community health works to enable them manage pneumonia, community awareness as well as increasing the reach of vaccines.

The panel discussion was followed by remarks from Save the Children as well as the Minister of Health (see annexes).



During the discussion government committed to end deaths related to childhood pneumonia by strengthening and introducing new measures.

Key recommendations include:

- Managing childhood pneumonia requires joints efforts of all the key partners including the government, communities and development partners.
- There an urgent to increase community awareness on symptoms of pneumonia through popular mobilization and public campaigning
- Introducing Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine (PCU) and ensuring it is available at all levels
- Increase health financing and prioritizing of pneumonia management and treatment
- Child survival requires integrated programming that will take into account all health issues affecting under five children.



Figure 2 Panel discussion joined by Representatives from Ministry of Health, Save the Children, WHO, UNICEF, World Vision to discuss Pneumonia and ways to unify stakeholders to end pneumonia deaths during the launch of Global Pneumonia Report 02 Nov. 2017

Figure 3 Minister of Health, Abdinisir Osman Isse, addressing to participants of Global Pneumonia Report launch in Garowe, Puntland, 02 Nov. 2017

Minister of Health in Puntland concluded the event with an appeal to end Pneumonia and his government's commitment to end child deaths because of the Pneumonia.

"The Government has prioritized prevention and treatment of pneumonia. However we cannot do it alone. We need all the key stakeholders to join efforts and ensure children have access to quality health services at all levels of service delivery," says Hon. Dr Abdinasir Osman Isse.



Figure 4 Representatives from Save the Children, WHO, UNICEF and the Minister of Health in Puntland launching the Pneumonia Report in Garowe. 02 Nov. 2017

Media links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaOazsa1Wlw>

<https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/press-releases/somalia-pneumonia-the-forgotten-killer-disease-in-somalia>

<https://www.garoweonline.com/so/news/puntland/waa-kuma-dilaaga-la-ilaawey-ee-soomaaliya>

<http://puntlandi.com/wasaaradda-caafimaadka-puntland-iyo-hayadda-save-children-oo-soo-bandhigay-warbixin-ku-saabsan-cudurka-oofwareenku-oo-ah-dilaaga-la-illaaway-ee-soomaaliya/>

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-11/02/c_136723751.htm

Annexes

SPEECH BY THE AREA REPRESENTATIVE SAVE THE CHILDREN PUNTLAND ON 2ND NOVEMBER 2017

The Guest of Honour, Hon Dr Abdinasir Osman Isse, Minister of Health Puntland
The Director General, Dr Abdirizak Hassan and senior staff of MOH Puntland
Representatives from the UN (Unicef, WHO and UNFPA)
Representatives from various development partners
Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure this morning to have you join Save the Children and Ministry of Health in launching the Global Pneumonia Report 2017. I'm grateful to the Hon Minister and the Director General on behalf of the Ministry for accepting to host this high profile event. Globally, Save the Children is launching the pneumonia report today, in over 90 countries in partnership with the host government ministries and development partners as part of the global pneumonia week that is commemorated in November every year. The theme this year is "**Fighting for Breath**" so is the name of the report. As we have already heard from the technical presentation, pneumonia continues to claim lives of children under five despite our efforts to combat the disease.

Save the children as a leading child rights organization, employs an integrated approach in fighting pneumonia. Firstly through cross-thematic program integration of Health with other sectors including Education, Protection, Nutrition and Livelihoods and secondly we operate in a dual mandated context of delivering development and humanitarian program interventions reaching out to all targeted children and their families. Thirdly Save the children fosters partnership development in ensuring that innovations are scaled up in saving lives of children as reflected in our theory of change.

In Somalia, Save the Children has a significantly big presence in terms of delivering both development and humanitarian programmes and health is our biggest portfolio in terms of funding as well as total reach. For instance between February 2017 and October 30th, we reached three million people including two million children with different life -saving initiatives across Somalia as part of the drought response plan. We have also reached many more children with other long-term development programmes. But this would not be possible without effective collaborations and support from the Government and all stakeholders.

Save the Children is providing a range of services geared towards fighting Pneumonia as well as other complications of children. These include:

- Supporting immunization programs against childhood illness through the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), with a good coverage of Pentavalent vaccine 3 that protects children against pneumonia.
- Supporting health facilities through the Health systems strengthening model and EPHS framework to improve primary care and referral services for sick children. This year, we donated oxygen cylinders to Garowe Hospital to help in managing sick children who require oxygen; many of them are suffering from Pneumonia.

- At community level, Save the Children is championing the Integrated Community Case Management (ICCM) Program that targets treating sick children for Pneumonia, Malaria and Diarrhea as well as screening for Malnutrition. Using trained Female Health Workers, the program is expected to improve linkages between the community and health services delivery.

A number of challenges still hinder our operations and these are worth mentioning here;

- Somalia has not yet rolled out the Pneumococcal vaccine that has great impact in preventing Pneumonia So many children are dying but could be saved with introduction of this vaccine.
- The on-going drought has created numerous challenges, among which is the increasing food shortage leading to children becoming severely malnourished; malnutrition thereby increases child mortality especially as an underlying factor for children with pneumonia and other diseases.
- Funding gaps; the needs versus available resources are not matched and huge financial investments as well as human resources are needed to adequately combat pneumonia.

Lastly I would like to thank the Government in particular the Ministry of Health for the very good support given to Save the Children and partners, the UN agencies in particular WHO and UNICEF for technical support and partnership as well as our other partners who are contributing towards the improvement of health in Somalia. We pledge to continue to work closely with you and achieve our Mission as Save the Children “ To inspire breakthrough in the way the world treats children and to create immediate and lasting change in their lives”. Through your support and collaboration across Somalia, we have had very outstanding achievements towards realizing our vision of “ Every Somali child attaining the right to survival, protection, development and participation”.

I now would like to take this opportunity to welcome Hon Dr. Abdinasir Osman Isse. - The Minister of Health in Puntland.

Thank you very much

Annex 2

Speech by Hon Dr Abdinasir Osman Isse, The Minister of Health at the launch of Fighting for Breadth report

November 2nd 2017

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Ministry of Health in Puntland and to this event as we launch the Global report on Pneumonia titled ***Fighting for breath.***

This is one among many events that are taking place in different parts of the world today. From Geneva to Bangladesh; From London to Mexico—we are all joined together to talk

about pneumonia. Therefore it is an indeed an honour for the Ministry of Health in Puntland to host this launch event for Somalia.

I am informed that Somalia has been selected as one of the 13 priority countries where Save the Children and their partners will strengthen their effort to end pneumonia—the biggest killer disease for children under five. This is great news not only to the Ministry of Health to thousands of parents who are struggling to save their children every year.

This is because Pneumonia claims the lives of more children around the world than any other infectious disease. The vast majority of those killed by pneumonia are poor and living in low and middle-income countries particularly Sub-Saharan Africa and South east Asia. Sadly Somalia is among those countries with the greatest burden.

For instance, in 2015 the world lost **920,000** children to pneumonia—this equals **to 2 children** under the age of **5 dying every minute**. In Somalia we lost more than **14,000** children the same year. This means **two children** died every hour.

Thus the report and the commitment from Save the Children and their partners come at the right time. It confirms that inequity and weak health systems among the core causes of pneumonia deaths. It calls to action on childhood pneumonia, urging all of us to take it seriously.

But let me not dwell on the facts and figures of the report as you already got an opportunity to hear more in the presentation as well as the discussions that engaged all the stakeholders here present...

I would like to focus on a more pertinent issue. Why do we allow so many young lives to be destroyed by a disease we have the knowledge, tools and resources to defeat?

Pneumonia has been around for more than 100 years, we thank God now that we know how to manage it effectively and yet we are failing our children. Why are we losing the fights against pneumonia? Why do we allow our children to undergo untold suffering?

Our health facilities often struggle to provide the care needed to manage pneumonia cases. Inadequate health facilities; lack of information among community members and more importantly accessibility of vaccinations are among the key challenges we face.

Making vaccinations easily accessible to every child, improving quality of care and raising awareness to ensure timely access to health care is therefore critical if we want to accelerate reductions in deaths associated with pneumonia. This calls for joint actions and collaborations among all the key stakeholders in Somalia.

If we focus on making pneumonia a priority to ensure strong, accessible primary health care systems for everyone then we will win this fight. We must ensure effective prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of pneumonia. . We must have trained community health workers and Female Health Workers; adequately staffed and supplied health facilities; cold chain and transport for vaccines so everyone can have access to immunization; and referral systems must be swift for children with severe cases.

The report clearly testifies that accessible health care is everyone's responsibility; is not a choice but a responsibility. We must commit as leaders and stakeholder of health in Somalia to improve the quality of care and we will not stop in making decisions and choices aimed at improving the health outcomes for our people but in implementing and ensuring effective service delivery.

Let me remind partners of the importance of investments that are Effective, Scalable and Sustainable and hence the need to move from implementing projects to programmes, from disparate efforts to coordinated investments that are in line with the national vision, strategy and operational plan for improving quality of care in the country.

It is also my plea to our partners to assist the governments of Somalia in building capabilities for quality improvement in coordinated ways. Let country ownership and leadership be seen in all our efforts, as this is a driver to sustainability. It is a well-known fact that what is sustainable is normally what is owned and driven by the country.

We are grateful for the support we get from development partners and other stakeholders to improve the health of our people in particular women and children. It is my sincere hope that together we will all continue to support and to sustain the quality of care.

As the government of Puntland we recognize that improving services requires health systems that have a competent and motivated health workforce, a well-functioning supply system, a strong referral system and real-time health information. A lot of efforts are already in place and we are working with partners to make this a reality.

We already have a Community Health Strategy, which sets out the plan for prevention and treatment of pneumonia within the Essential Package for Health Services. However, knowing that having a plan is as good as having no plan if it's not well resourced. Therefore my plea to all partners is that we join hand to resource this plan and within in priorities pneumonia prevention, treatment and care.

In this regard, I welcome the decision by Save the Children to strengthen its effort against pneumonia, which aims to save million lives every year for the next five years. I take this opportunity to reiterate the government commitment to working with you and all the other key stakeholders in making this a reality.

It is my hope and strong expectations and commitment brings new rays of hope. Millions of children endure untold and unnecessary pain of something can and prevented—with just some effort. The cost of the treatment per child is about 50 cents of dollar. It does not make sense that we spend more on other health issues including malaria and diarrhea and forgetting the biggest killer of all.

As the Health Minister, I want to assure you that we will do everything possible to support this initiative. I make commitment to establishing strong leadership and governance structures to allow this to happen. We will work with key partners on Agenda 2030 and maintain international momentum of saving a million lives every year and around the Sustainable Development Goals.

Now it is my honour to declare the Report—Fighting for Breath—officially launched! Get yourself a copy and let us use the information to change the future of our children.