

## Global drop in measles cases

There has been a 74% decrease in cases of measles around the world in the past seven years

In 2007 the World Health Organization (WHO) registered 197,000 measles deaths, compared to 750,000 in 2000. The WHO said two-thirds of the reduction took place in Africa, where the number of deaths dropped by 89%.

Deaths in the eastern Mediterranean region, including Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia, dropped by 90% in the same period.

However, the WHO warned that measles outbreaks occurred in a number of African countries in 2007 due to gaps in immunisation coverage, reinforcing the need for a comprehensive approach.

And progress was more limited in the South-East Asia region, where two-thirds of global measles deaths occur, with death rates down by 42%. Lack of progress here has been blamed on delays to a large-scale vaccination campaign in India.

The United Nations is committed to reducing measles deaths by 90% by 2010.