

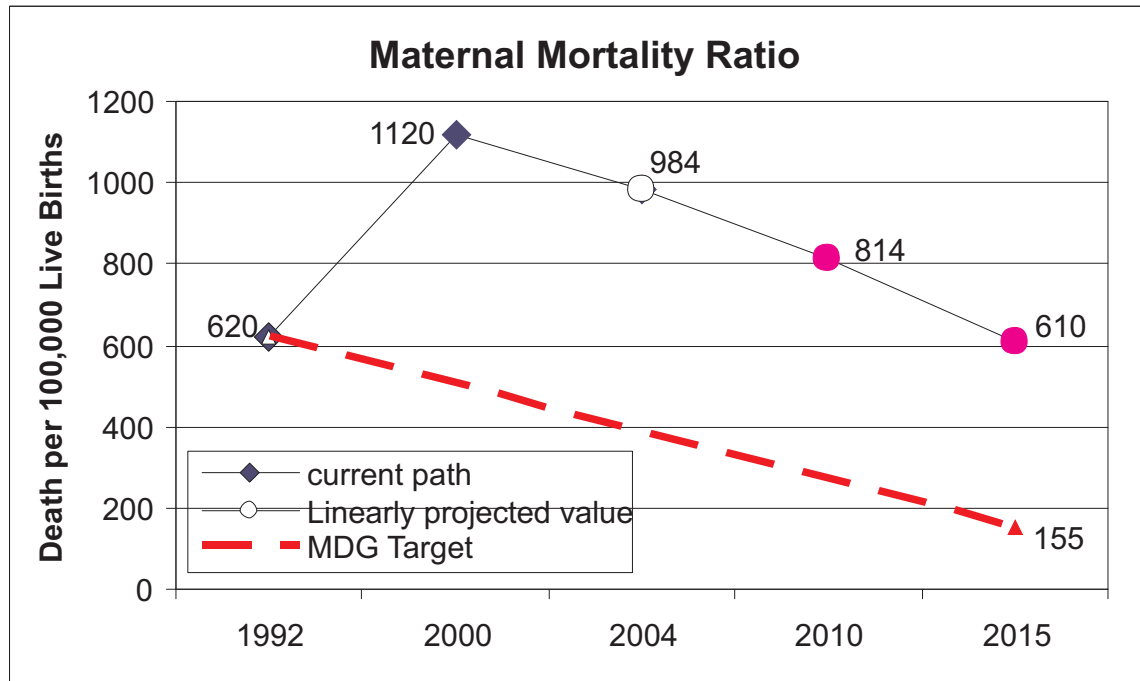
# Goal 5. Improve Maternal Health

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**Target 6: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.**

*Indicator: Maternal Mortality Ratio*

**Chart 17: Maternal Mortality Ratio**



*Source: 1992, 2000 and 2004 MDHS.*

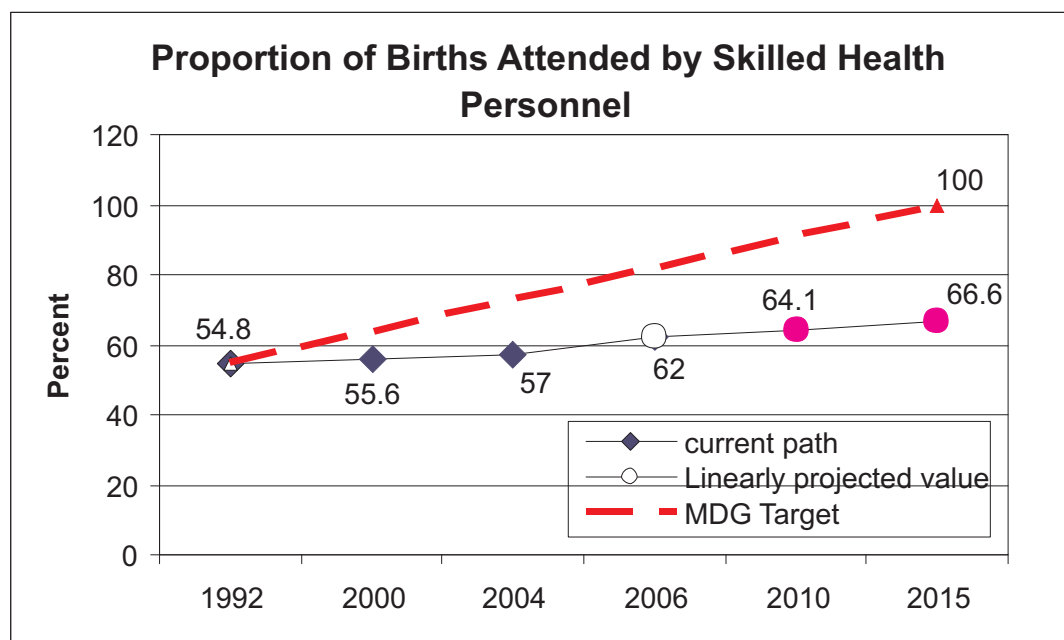
According to the year 2000 estimates by the World Health Organization, UNICEF and UNFPA, Malawi is among the countries with the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. Chart 17 shows that maternal mortality ratio in Malawi has increased sharply from 620 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1992 to 1,120 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000. The 2004 MDHS indicated that maternal mortality ratio had declined to 984 deaths per 100,000 live births. If the recent rate of improvement is maintained, Malawi would have a maternal mortality ratio of about 610 deaths per 100,000 live births by the year 2015. Under the MDG target 6, Malawi is expected to have a maternal mortality ratio of about 155 per 100,000 live births by the year 2015. Hence, unless additional measures are put in place, it is unlikely that the MDG target will be met.

*Indicator: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel*



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Chart 18: Proportion of Births attended by Skilled Health Personnel



Source: 1992, 2000, 2004 MDHS and 2006 WMS

The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel is a measure of the health system's ability to provide adequate care for pregnant women. It combines information on the presence of skilled health personnel and the accessibility of facilities with skilled health personnel. According to the Demographic and Health Surveys and the Welfare Monitoring Survey, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel was about 55 percent in 1992, about 56 percent in 2000, and 62 percent in 2006 as shown in the Chart 18 above. At this rate of change, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel in 2015 will have increased to about 67 percent. Hence Malawi is not on track to reach the target of having about 99 percent of births attended by skilled health personnel by that date.

### Challenges:

The challenges that the country is facing in relation to maternal mortality and the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel include critical shortages of human resources, which result in deliveries being attended to by untrained health providers and attendants. Access to emergency obstetric care is also poor due to inadequate and poorly equipped health infrastructure. Cultural practices, which encourage early marriages and discourage the use of modern contraceptive methods, exacerbate the problem.

### Policy Framework and Strategies

In view of this situation, Malawi has developed a strategy dubbed 'The Road Map', whose goal is to accelerate the reduction of maternal mortality. The nine point strategy aims at increasing the availability and accessibility of antenatal services as well as utilization of skilled health personnel during pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal period at all levels of the health system. It also aims at strengthening the capacity of individuals, families, communities, civil society organisations and Government to improve maternal and neonatal health