Reviewer's report

**Title:** Progress towards the achievement of MDG4 in the Commonwealth of Independent States: uncertain data, clear priorities.

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 26 January 2010

**Reviewer:** Mary Ethna Black

**Reviewer's report:**

I have read the revised version and overall it is easier to read and the various small details noted by both reviewers are now dealt with.

I have three comments to make:

1. There is a statement about "high" maternal mortality in the abstract section. This should probably be qualified as although even one maternal death is a tragedy, there are in fact much higher figures in other countries and so it should be put in context. 58 is high compared to Germany but not compared to Afghanistan (for example)

2. There is an ongoing discussion on the use of direct and indirect methods of mortality estimation, and UNICEF and DHS surveys do not use the same method, so this should be noted, without going into an entire discussion on this complicated issue.

3. I have just reread the external Evaluation of the MICS survey series round 3 which can be found on www.childinfo.org. The evaluators look at the issue of mortality estimation and there was also a discussion at the steering committee meeting. Basically there is a question over middle income countries using the MICS methodology for mortality estimations - even though the figures are reported, the rates may have been too low to actually use. I think it would be an idea before publication that the authors contact Attila Hancioglu, the UNICEF staff member in charge of MICS in UNICEF HQ (and known to more than one of the authors) to better understand this issue as I believe it may apply to some of the country data they are using. This might better proof the paper against comments that might come later after publication.

This paper, apart from these points, is ready for publication I think and is a worthwhile and useful contribution to the literature.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests.