

15 million babies "Born too soon"

Parents, professionals and politicians come together to amplify the evidence through media and public events



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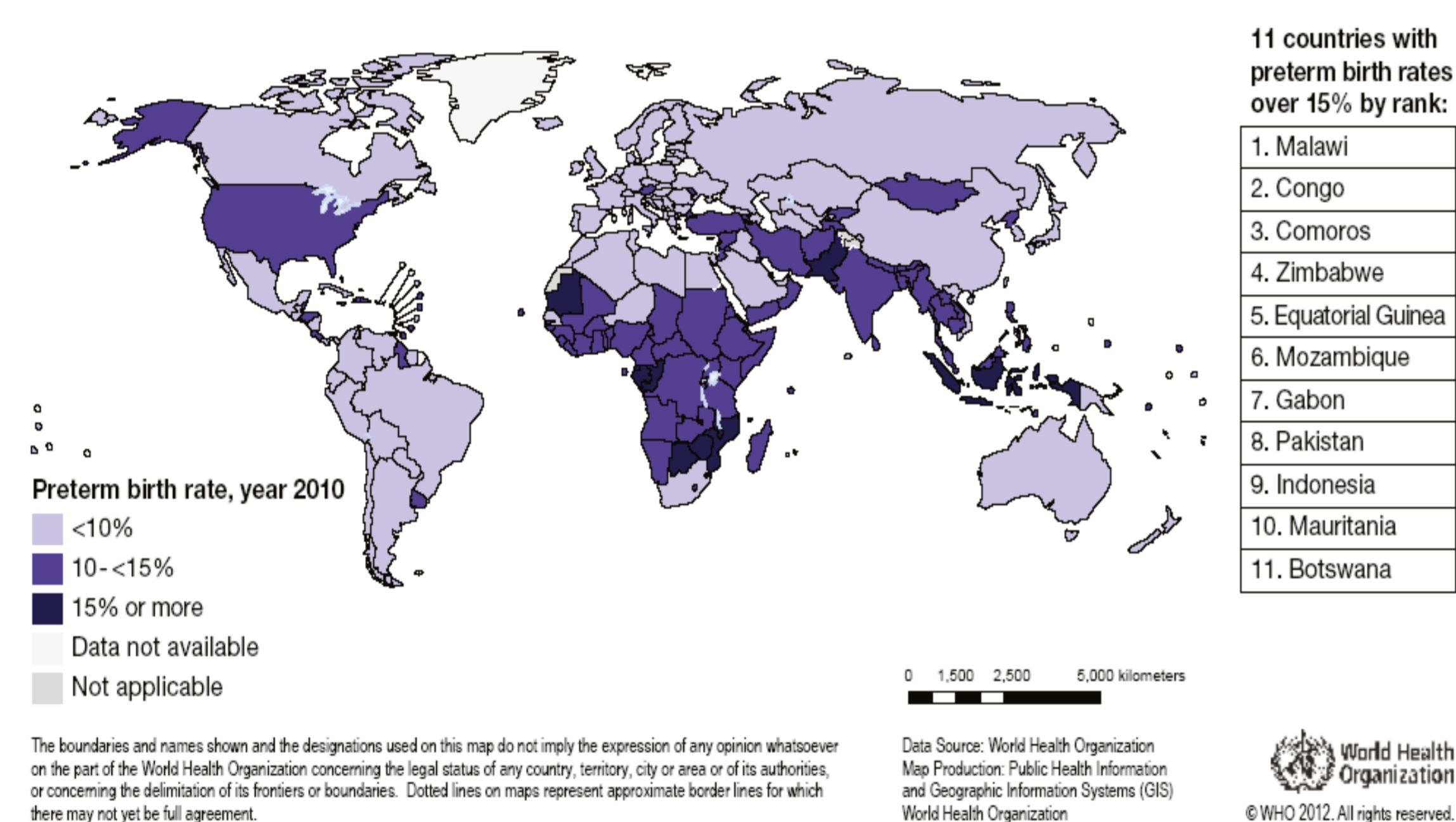


Introduction

Despite being the second leading cause of death globally for children under five (1.1 million deaths),¹ preterm birth has been a relatively neglected issue at a global level. High burden conditions do not automatically receive political attention. Media advocacy is an important strategy to boost awareness, especially when linked with community action. Media attention alone, however, does not always lead to policy impact, as seen in the lack of policy action following the *The Lancet's* highly publicized Stillbirth series (2011).²

Born Too Soon: The global action report on preterm birth (2012)³ and linked *Lancet* paper provided the first WHO national, regional and global estimates of preterm birth.^{3,4} The new data demonstrated the scale of the problem (Fig 1), and the report provided evidence that rapid change is possible. More than 50 international, regional and national organizations were part of the process of developing and launching the report. Momentum continued with collective action for World Prematurity Day on November 17, 2012.

Figure 1: Estimated national preterm birth rates for 2010



Results

The *Born Too Soon* report, launched in May 2012, achieved major media coverage, reaching an estimated 1.0 billion media consumers through traditional and social media (Table 1). The launch was accompanied by high-level events attended by senior government, UN and development partners. Momentum was further sustained by pegging additional media and events to World Prematurity Day in November 2012. This included events led by parliamentarians, professionals and parents in 60+ countries, a global media release of new preterm data, a CNN TV spot with Celine Dion, and coordinated Facebook and Twitter campaigns.

The following strategies promoted this result: leveraging of global and regional partner networks, repeated and refreshed messaging, dissemination of planning tools, linking accountability with action, and promoting cooperation between partners not competition.

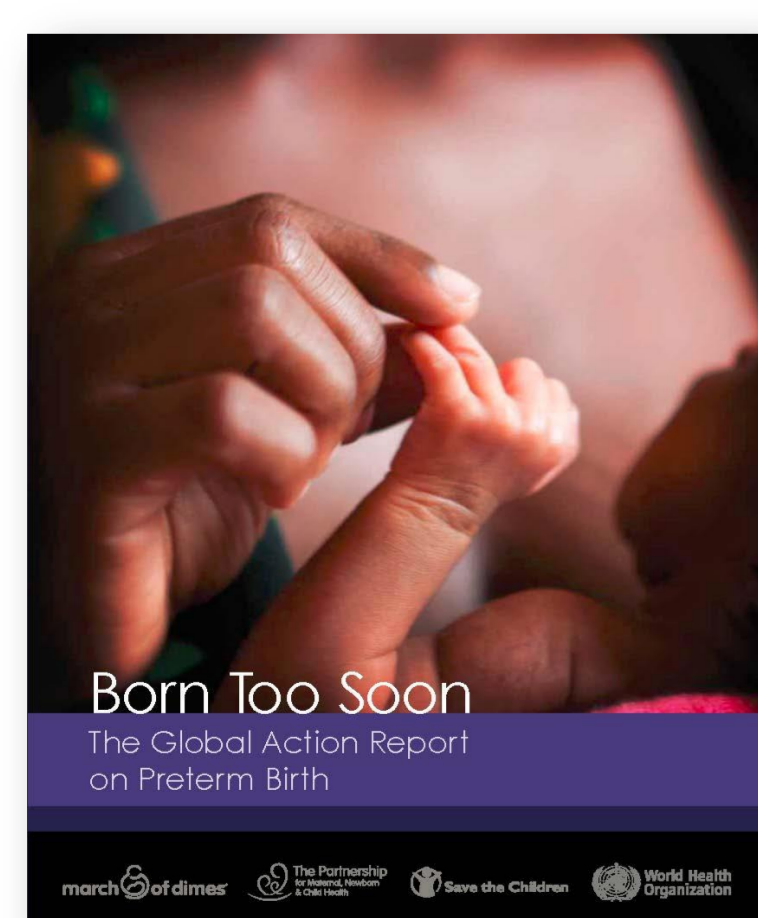
Table 1: Media and Policy reach of *Born Too Soon*

	<i>Born Too Soon</i> report launch May 2012	World Prematurity Day November 2012
Media	Est. reach 1.0 billion	Est. reach 1.4 billion
Traditional media	Coverage by 1,000+ news organisations, including major global newswires, newspapers and 300 TV networks	CNN TV spot featuring Celine Dion
Social Media	Twitter: 72m "impressions"	Facebook: 52,000 "likes"
Policy		
National governments and partner organisations	30+ financial, policy and/or service delivery commitments to preterm birth by governments, donors, academia, the UN, civil society, health professional and parent groups. These pledges are on public record in the <i>Born Too Soon</i> report and on the Every Woman Every Child website, and are subject to annual reporting.	National events with Ministry of Health officials and/or other stakeholders in 60+ countries. Governments of Uganda and Malawi agreed to be preterm birth "champion countries"
Professional and parent group commitments	Release of a joint statement on preterm birth by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics and International Pediatric Association (Oct 2012)	Parent group action in 60+ countries, coordinated with traditional and social media advocacy

Methods

To document the reach of the *Born Too Soon* movement, we examined data from various dissemination channels including traditional media, social media, partner outreach, public events and commitment statements. Using the data collected from the launch of the report and World Prematurity Day, we identified how many people received knowledge on the report and related key messages.

We assessed policy influence, including commitments made to the UN's *Every Woman Every Child*,⁵ as well as analyses of the strategies used to create the global momentum for *Born Too Soon*, considering what may have influenced uptake by individuals, countries and global partners.



Born Too Soon cover



Celine Dion on CNN



Minister of Health, Uganda

Conclusions

Born Too Soon drew global attention to one of the world's most overlooked major public health problems. The report provided a platform for joint action and media advocacy, demonstrating the power of parents, professionals and politicians working together. The campaign built on lessons learned from *The Lancet* Stillbirth series about the need to link media advocacy with political and social mobilization strategies. The MDGs were specifically used as a policy hook for action. Importantly, this attention was linked with policy commitments both at international and national level. This momentum has now led to the creation of the Every Newborn movement, which is expected to launch a global action plan in May 2014, at the time of the World Health Assembly.

¹ Liu L et al. Global, regional and national causes of child mortality: an updated systematic analysis for 2010 with time trends since 2000. *The Lancet* 2012; **379**: 2151-61.

² *Born Too Soon: The Global Action Report on Preterm Birth* (2012) March of Dimes, PMNCH, Save the Children, WHO. http://www.who.int/pmnch/media/news/2012/preterm_birth_report/en/index1.html

³ Stillbirths. *The Lancet Series* 2011 <http://www.thelancet.com/series/stillbirth>

⁴ Blencowe H et al. National, regional, and worldwide estimates of preterm birth rates in the year 2010 with time trends since 1990 for selected countries. *Lancet* 2012; **379**(9832): 2162-72.

⁵ Every Woman Every Child: from commitments to action. WHO http://www.who.int/woman_child_accountability/ierg/reports/2012/en/