

Best country to be a mom? Not U.S.

Heidi Schlumpf | May. 5, 2010 NCR Today

As Mother's Day approaches (don't forget to buy or make a card, buy or pick some flowers, and cook or book reservations for brunch), Save the Children has released its annual "[Mothers Report](#) [1]" listing of the best--and worst--countries to be a mom.

Bad news for U.S. moms: The world's only remaining superpower is now 28th out of 160 countries, not even making the first half of the "More Developed Countries" tier. The rankings are based on maternal mortality, infant mortality, maternity leave policies, preschool attendance and other factors.

Some startling stats from a [Yahoo news report](#) [1] (which has garnered over 2,000 comments):

* The U.S. maternal mortality rate of 1 in 4,800 is one of the highest in the developed world--nearly 10 times that of Ireland's.

* A child in the U.S. is more than twice as likely as a child in Finland, Iceland, Sweden or Singapore to die before his or her 5th birthday.

* The United States has the least generous maternity leave policy--both in terms of duration and percent of wages paid--of any wealthy nation.

Of course, the really sad news is the even lower rankings of those countries in the "Least Developed" tier. The 10 lowest-ranking countries are Afghanistan (last), Niger, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Sudan, Eritrea and Equatorial Guinea. The top 10 are Norway (first), Australia, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

My children, who are adopted, come from countries in the "Less Developed Countries" tier, with rankings in the 70s. And I am currently enjoying a very generous parenting leave, though I had to switch jobs to get it. So we are very lucky.

I wish all those "family values" folks would jump on this story and work to improve conditions for all mothers--especially lower-income ones here in this country and, even more importantly, in those countries at the bottom of this list. Our churches should be all over this, too. Let's make Mother's Day happy for all the world's mothers.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.savethechildren.org/newsroom/2010/the-best-and-worst-places.html>