



Call to Action to Global Leaders at the United Nations Secretary General's Meeting: 22 September 2010

In 2000, global leaders made a promise to reduce poverty throughout the developing world by committing to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Of all the MDGs, goals 4 and 5, to improve the health of women and children, are most off track. As the final push to the MDG deadline begins, **donor and developing country governments must take decisive action**. The *Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health*, launched by the United Nations Secretary General in August 2010, calls on governments to demonstrate the critical leadership needed on maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) over the next five years. Not only will additional investment in health interventions save lives, supporting healthy families will provide for healthy economies and future global prosperity.

We call on governments across the world to show leadership by undertaking the bold commitments and new approaches needed to accelerate progress on maternal and child health. Each year, millions of women and children continue to die from preventable causes. But it is up to donor and developing country governments alike to support the necessary interventions to make global promises a reality in a mutually accountable and transparent fashion.

At the meeting convened by the United Nations Secretary General in New York on 22 September 2010, WE CALL ON DONOR AND DEVELOPING COUNTRY GOVERNMENTS to:

- 1 Pledge new financial commitments for the implementation of national maternal, newborn and child health plans:** both donor and developing countries must commit additional money to MNCH programs and health systems to accelerate progress and meet MDGs 4 and 5 by 2015. Financial commitments must be additional to current spending or pledges. Each country should contribute its fair-share according to its means. This means that governments must back up announcements by demonstrating action to get on track to meet aid targets, and in addition, urgently provide innovative, robust and sustained new investments to bridge the financial gap.
- 2 Focus on mothers, newborns and children along the continuum of care including increased access to comprehensive reproductive health services and voluntary family planning.** Essential elements include comprehensive reproductive health services, quality antenatal care, skilled attendance at birth (including emergency care for complications), essential newborn and postnatal care, treatment of child illnesses (including pneumonia, malaria, and diarrhea) and immunization.
- 3 Target inequity and finance the removal of barriers to healthcare for women, newborns and children, including the removal of user fees.** All governments should refocus efforts to remove the barriers that prevent women and children from using evidence-based, life-saving services and practices. Governments must enable the poorest and most marginalized women and children to access healthcare by tackling the underlying causes of inequity through community engagement with national health systems.
- 4 Fill the health worker gap:** increase access to skilled healthcare professionals, including midwives, skilled birth attendants and nurses along the continuum of care. Governments should commit financial targets to recruit, educate, train and retain additional health workers in order to fill the global 3.5 million health worker shortfall.
- 5 Finance and implement national nutrition roadmaps** to respond to malnutrition through proven packages combining direct and indirect interventions, including social cash transfers, support for breastfeeding and complementary feeding programs, fortified foods, and micronutrients.

Action from governments in these five areas is essential if we are to accelerate progress towards MDGs 4 and 5 by the 2015 deadline. Both donor and developing country governments must put in place sustainable plans to meet these targets with critical staging posts over the next five years.

Donor governments should recognize that aid should be channeled through mechanisms which strengthen nationally led health plans. All governments must uphold the principle of accountability and deliver on commitments.

Governments across the world must play their part to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children. Time is running out.