

Special Advisor on Post 2015 Development Planning

Opening Remarks, *Every Woman Every Child* Consultation on Updating the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health

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New Delhi, India

Ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to be here today. I would like to thank the Government of India for hosting this important consultation, as well as colleagues in WHO and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health for helping with the preparations.

The Millennium Development goals have done much to advance progress on the health of women and girls. They have been the most successful anti-poverty push in history.

And through *Every Woman Every Child* and thanks to the work of many partners around the world working to advance the health MDGs, we have made some impressive progress, reducing the deaths of women and children faster than at any time in history.

This accelerated progress has happened because the *Every Woman Every Child* community has strong commitment from global leaders at the highest levels, partner determination to support implementation efforts at the country

level, accountability for resources and results, predictable financing for health and is championing innovation.

A further look at progress made will be highlighted in a Progress Report on the Global Strategy 2010-2015, to be launched by the Secretary-General in March during the Commission on the Status of Women/Beijing+20 review. This Progress Report will also present key lessons learned from the *Every Woman Every Child* multi-stakeholder approach, particularly in areas related to accountability, innovation and public-private partnerships; and showcase the high-level of leadership and political commitment.

The Open Working Group outcome document for the Sustainable Development Goals has recognized the importance of eliminating maternal, newborn and child mortality. Under the current SDG on health, three sub-targets specifically focus on this issue.

The health and well-being of women, children and adolescents also continues to be one of the Secretary-General's top priorities. In his Synthesis Report, released in December, the Secretary-General highlights the priority we need to place on ensuring women, children and adolescents not only survive, but thrive in the SDG era.

Women's, along with children's and adolescents', health remains one of the core unfinished businesses of the MDGs and needs to be prioritized in the post-2015 development agenda.

The gains we have made are fragile and need to be protected and accelerated as we transition into the SDG framework. Now is the time to step up our efforts, strengthen partnerships and collectively tackle the challenges that lay before us.

Investing in women's and children's health is the smartest global contribution we can make if we want to reach our development goals. Health is broadly recognized as an enabler for wider development progress in such areas as poverty eradication, nutrition, employment, education and economic growth, amongst others. Success in this area will underpin the sustainable development agenda.

And as the Sustainable Development Agenda is a universal one - it must be our priority to leave no one behind.

We also need to prioritize new ways of working through global multi-stakeholder partnerships, and in particular, south-south collaboration.

And emerging economies in particular have a unique role in this space, including on sustainable and innovative financing. The launch of the Global Financing Facility (GFF) in Addis Ababa at the Third Financing for Development conference in July, will be one of the important mechanisms for supporting countries to transition to long-term sustainable domestic financing for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.

But if we are truly going to ensure that women's and children's health is prioritized in an ambitious post-2015 era, it is imperative that countries are in the lead, driving this agenda forward and making it a priority. I thank the Government of India for showcasing your leadership and support and hope that other governments will follow with strong commitments and action.

But we need all stakeholders, including governments, the UN, civil society and the private sector to reaffirm their commitments to achieving the MDGs and ensure women's and children's health has a strong foothold in the next development agenda. Global action is needed in this next phase to take our work to scale and we need all partners to come to the table with ambition.

That is why consultations such as the one here in Delhi are so important. The updated Global Strategy for the SDG period is of utmost importance – it will represent the overarching framework and common vision for women's, children's and adolescents' health through to 2030 and we need to ensure we give its development our deserved and serious attention.

For the first time, we have the historic opportunity to end all preventable maternal, child and adolescent deaths within a generation, but it will take all of us working in concert to be successful.

As we are approaching the end of 2015, immense challenges remain. Business as usual is not feasible. Now is the time to step up our efforts to build a more secure, just, dignified and sustainable future for all women, children and adolescents.

Thank you for being here for this important meeting. I look forward to hearing about the outcomes of the next two days.