

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO NEW AFRICAN CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE  
CO-HOSTED BY CARE-NORWAY, DNB NOR, NORFUND AND THE  
GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY  
Oslo, June 21, 2011**

As demonstrated again with the organizing of this conference, Norway has been a strong leader in support of women's and children's health. The country's creativity and commitment in using technology and finance to address some of the world's most pressing health challenges, for some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, has set a high standard for other countries to follow. I welcome your steadfast dedication to this agenda.

In September 2010, the United Nations launched *Every Woman Every Child*, a multi-stakeholder effort to advance the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. The world has recognized that saving the lives of millions of women and children requires action by all sectors. While governments remain central actors, the private sector and civil society are indispensable for delivering services and results. Partnerships that capitalize on our respective strengths must be the cornerstone of our efforts.

Over the past year, we have witnessed significant momentum on three crucial fronts:

- Increased training and deployment of midwives is allowing more women to give birth safely to healthy children, as I saw firsthand during a visit to Ethiopia and Nigeria.
- An accountability framework was launched recently aimed at ensuring that money is spent wisely and that commitments translate into tangible improvements.
- Sixteen new countries made commitments in support of the Global Strategy in May, and many more are expected in the coming months.

As we continue to build support for *Every Woman, Every Child*, innovation will be among the keys to success. I welcome this conference's focus on improving health outcomes through new ideas, technologies and partnerships. The United Nations will continue to do its part, and I look forward to continuing this work together. Please accept my best wishes for a productive gathering.