



THE HON JULIE BISHOP MP

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary General
United Nations
New York, NY
United States of America

Dear Secretary General

The Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to express its support for the launch of the *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health*. The Every Woman, Every Child initiative and its first strategy '*Saving Lives, Protecting Futures*', have played a key role in achieving great progress globally over the last five years to improving women's and children's health.

This new Strategy will continue to provide the momentum needed to achieve the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and position the global community to reach Sustainable Development Goals over the next 15 years.

Australia's development policy '*Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability*' (June 2014) underscores the continued priority we place on improving health as a critical component of our aid program.

The Australian Government has also released in June 2015 our *Health for Development Strategy 2015-2020*. This document sets out our commitment to invest in strengthening health systems, to ensure improved health service delivery and better health outcomes in developing countries.

Support for improved maternal and child health and family planning are key elements of the *Health for Development Strategy*. Strengthened maternal and child health outcomes are vital in building the foundations for more stable, prosperous and equitable societies.

We will maintain support for quality interventions in the health sector that contribute directly to the achievement of the goals set out in the *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health*.

Australia will focus on the Asia Pacific region, an area of pressing need in terms of women's and children's health. For example, in Timor Leste, the maternal, infant and under 5 mortality rates remain high and stunting continues to be a critical challenge. There also remains a large gap in meeting family planning needs across the Pacific island nations.

I commend the new strategy and look forward to supporting its work.

Yours sincerely



Julie Bishop