Excellency,

Subject: Pledge of Support to the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s, and Adolescents’ Health from Rwanda

We acknowledge receipt with thanks of your letter dated 28 August 2015 seeking Heads of States and Government to support the updated Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health.

Since its inception in 2010, the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health has indeed been a pivotal moment to commit to accelerating the improvement of the health and well-being of women and children around the world.

We note with satisfaction that the updated Global Health Strategy outlines opportunities for means of implementation, including innovative financing such as the Global Financing Facility in support of EWEC, to ensure that all countries can attain their health goals.

Building on the successes and lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals, the Government of Rwanda is committed to pursue its efforts to improve women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health through the Sustainable Development Goals’ Post 2015 Development Agenda.

The Country will continue its efforts of reducing maternal and under-five mortality by scaling up high-impact interventions to improve Reproductive Maternal Newborns and Child Health outcomes in public and private health facilities. Furthermore, we intend to increase investments in building the capacity to use data to inform decision-making and action and ensure clinical competence and readiness at all levels of the health system through Human Resources for Health and mentorship.

The Secretary-General
The United Nations
UN-SG EWEC Initiative
A combination of successful strategies such as the implementation of Prevention of Mother to Child HIV Transmission interventions are being employed to reduce HIV among adolescents which resulted in reducing the transmission to lower than 2%. Along with these interventions, adolescents and youths are accessed through school based sexual health and HIV and AIDS education while out of school youth benefit from programs offered by anti-AIDS clubs as well as through youth friendly centres and associations.

More efforts geared towards HIV primary prevention among young women and at addressing underlying factors for increased vulnerability of HIV infections are being deployed through increased availability and accessibility of HIV prevention services to women.

Breast and cervical cancers being the most common among women in Rwanda, trainings of health care providers on cervical cancer, screening for women aged 35 to 40 years as well as HPV vaccines for young girls have been initiated and services provided in health facilities throughout the country.

We hereby pledge to enforce the commitments outlined above and call on sustained support of our Global Partners to this endeavour.

Please refer to the attachment for an additional set of commitments that the Government of Rwanda is already implementing.

Dr. Agness Binagwaho
Minister of Health of Rwanda
PLEDGE OF SUPPORT TO THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR WOMEN’S, CHILDREN’S, AND ADOLESCENTS’ HEALTH FROM RWANDA

1. Promoting gender equality, which is part of the national commitment;
2. Advance women’s employment opportunities; Eradicate Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all its forms;
3. Social protection to enabling some of the poorest households especially women to graduate out of extreme poverty in a sustainable way especially by providing essential support to those living in poverty, puts in place a safety net that can be activated to prevent people falling into poverty, seeks to support poor people’s investment so that they can pull themselves out of poverty, improve the social status and rights of the marginalized, particularly women;

4. Connecting Rural Communities to Economic Opportunity through Improved Infrastructure;
5. Improve Water supply and sanitation in preventive healthcare and socio-economic development in rural areas. Ready access to water reduces the time spent searching for water and may improve educational outcomes. Evidence suggests women/girls bear more of the cost of distant water sources in Rwanda. And hygiene and sanitation is a strong complement to effective access to clean water;

6. Strengthening responsible family planning programmes, promoting contraceptive use and ensuring a healthy population will be important in ensuring a productive population that can contribute to the goals of development set by the country;

7. Food Security and fighting Malnutrition;
8. Promoting education levels, especially of the mother;
9. Continue to improve accessibility in remote areas with the development of community health programs;
10. Continue to support geographical accessibility by investing in the expansion of health infrastructure including equipping health centres and hospitals, construction of new health centres and developing the feeder road networks to facilitate transportation and electrification of remaining health centres;

11. Improve financial accessibility and continuing to improve allocation and targeting of financial subsidies to the poorest, as well as ensuring that charges reflect ability to pay;

12. Invest in strategies that address the needs of all groups particularly women to realize rapid economic growth. Focus on interventions that reduce poverty levels among men and women, and reduce gender based violence, malnutrition and other related conflicts at both family and community level;

13. The Government commit to consolidating promoting political participation of women by increasing effective participation of women in leadership and decision making in both public and private sector.