



# EVERY WOMAN EVERY CHILD

**Press Release**

**EMBARGOED**

*Until 00.01 (Eastern US)*

*On September 20, 2011*

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## **Private sector involvement in women's and children's health is crucial to saving 16 million lives, says UN Secretary-General**

*Ban Ki-moon praises 'historic effort' of private sector in Every Woman Every Child but warns that pace of implementation must be accelerated*

*New York, 20 September 2011* – The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today praised the involvement of leading businesses in the global effort to tackle women's and children's health. During the *Every Woman Every Child* meeting attended by Heads of State, CEOs of the private sector and NGOs, and other UN and government officials, the Secretary-General announced progress in the effort to save women's and children's lives, and highlighted new and game-changing commitments made during the past year.

More than 100 new partners, including governments, civil society and multilateral organizations, joined *Every Woman Every Child* in just the last year, bringing the total to more than 200 since the effort was launched. Private sector partners include Merck, which will launch a ten-year effort to prevent, treat, and diagnose the top three causes of death in pregnant women; Sesame Workshop, which will produce multimedia early child initiatives aimed at promoting general health, HIV/AIDS education and early prevention of malaria; and Safaricom, which will focus on creating a Kenya-based mobile health partnership in collaboration with World Vision.

*Every Woman Every Child* is a global effort spearheaded by the UN Secretary-General that puts into action the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, a roadmap on how to enhance financing, strengthen policy and improve service on the ground for the most vulnerable women and children. The effort was launched during the September 2010 Millennium Development Goals summit. Key outcomes of *Every Woman Every Child* will include preventing the deaths of more than 15 million children under five, including more than 3 million newborns, preventing 33 million unwanted pregnancies, and about 570,000 women from dying from complications relating from pregnancy and childbirth. A further 88 million children would be protected from stunting, and 120 million children protected from pneumonia.

A one-year progress update launched today, "*Saving the Lives of 16 Million*", shows that in the first year of the effort, commitments have been implemented and enhanced, new partners have come on board, funding has been increased, policies improved and services strengthened on the ground. In launching the progress update, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said:

"Companies are often treated with suspicion when they enter the realm of global development, but they are playing a central role in improving the lives of women and children. *Every Woman Every*

*Child* has shown what can be achieved through close co-operation between the UN, governments, and the private sector. A great deal has been achieved in the last year, but progress must be accelerated if we are to achieve our goals of saving 16 million lives by 2015. I am delighted that despite difficult economic times, many governments, companies and civil society leaders are making significant commitments to advance women's and children's health. These are smart decisions - visionary leaders recognize the value of investing in the health of women and children."

Highlights this year include:

- In Nigeria, the local business and philanthropic communities are collaborating in support of *Every Woman Every Child*. The Wellbeing Foundation of Nigeria will focus on strategic grant-making and the Tony Elumelu Foundation will manage the first-ever impact investment fund for women's and children's health.
- Johnson & Johnson is embarking on a 4-year partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS and the World Bank through the first-ever corporate grant made to a joint UN program. The program aims to strengthen training for health workers in Tanzania and Ethiopia.
- A new private-public initiative, the GAVI Matching Fund for Immunization, is a program in which the UK Department for International Development and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will match contributions from the private sector to deliver critical vaccines to the lowest income countries.
- The establishment of the Commission on Information and Accountability, which launched a report with a unique framework to monitor resources and results for women's and children's health, and strengthen global and national accountability processes.
- Mobile health initiatives such as Cell-Life and the D-Tree are using SMS and mobile technology to help patients and health workers.

In addition to initiatives from the private sector and from donor countries, many developing countries, in partnership with WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS and the World Bank, have been focusing on proven measures for preventing deaths. These include contraceptive use, attended childbirth, improved access to emergency obstetric care, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and childhood immunizations. Progress includes:

- In Bangladesh, the Government committed to training 3,000 new midwives by 2015. The first class of midwives graduated in May 2011.
- In Nepal, all commitments form part of the national health strategy of 2010 to 2015.
- Kenya has recruited 20,000 additional health workers, set up systems to pay community health workers and increased the national health budget by 25%

Although much progress has been made, still every year 7.6 million young children die from preventable causes, and over 350,000 women lose their lives unnecessarily from complications with pregnancy and childbirth. Particularly in Central Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, the rate of decline is still not enough to save 16 million lives by 2015. The Secretary-General urged commitment makers to follow through on their pledges and said that momentum for *Every Woman Every Child* must be translated into lasting gains in women's and children's health.

Also launched today, *Analyzing Commitments to Advance the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health*, from the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health, provides more detail into the unprecedented financial, policy and service delivery commitments.

To ensure that best practices are shared, and resources tracked under a system of transparency and accountability, an independent, seven-member Expert Review Group was announced during the event. They will report regularly to the Secretary-General on the results and resources related to the

Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health and on progress in implementing the recommendations of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **About Every Woman Every Child:**

Launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit in September 2010, *Every Woman Every Child* aims to save the lives of 16 million women and children by 2015. It is an unprecedented global effort that mobilizes and intensifies international and national action by governments, multilaterals, the private sector, research and academia, and civil society to address the major health challenges facing women and children around the world. The effort puts into action the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, which presents a roadmap on how to enhance financing, strengthen policy and improve service on the ground for the most vulnerable women and children.

Today, September 20, the UN Secretary-General will host a high-level event with Heads of State, NGO and private sector CEOs, and other global leaders to check progress of the *Every Woman Every Child* effort and announce bold new commitments by national governments and the private sector in support of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's health.

For more information about the effort and the new commitments, please visit [www.everywomaneverychild.org](http://www.everywomaneverychild.org) or join the conversation online with *#EWECP* progress. The event will be streamed live from the United Nations on the website between 4-6pm.