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Significant New Financing, Policy and Service Delivery Commitments Made Towards Preventing Newborn Deaths and Stillbirths

40 commitments demonstrate widespread interest in newborn health and represent one of the most significant contributions for newborns to the Every Woman Every Child movement to date

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA— Significant new financing, policy and service delivery commitments that could save the lives of newborns and women were announced today at the Partners’ Forum in Johannesburg, hosted by The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) together with the Government of South Africa and other partners. The 40 commitments are in support of the UN Secretary-General’s *Every Woman Every Child* movement and come from a diverse group of stakeholders, including governments, civil society and the private sector. The commitments are in response to the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP), a roadmap and joint action platform for the reduction of preventable newborn mortality, which launched today.

“I would highlight, as a particularly exciting commitment, the one that the Ministers of Health from 194 countries expressed at the World Health Assembly in May, when they adopted the plan, committing themselves to support it and implement it to save 3 million lives of women and newborns from preventable causes, as the commitment from the governments is crucial to the success of the plan,” said Dr. Flavia Bustreo, Assistant Director-General for Family, Women’s and Community Health at the World Health Organization. “The WHO remains committed to support countries and work with partners as the plan gets implemented, and to the accountability agenda, which includes the reporting on progress achieved every year until 2030.”

Most newborn deaths result from three preventable and treatable conditions, including prematurity, complications around birth and severe infections. While the number of maternal and child deaths have decreased significantly over the last two decades, the number of newborn deaths and stillbirths has remained tragically high. Globally, each year, 2.9 million newborn babies (first 4 weeks) die and 2.6 million are stillborn (last 3 months of pregnancy). Newborn deaths now account for 44 percent of all under-5 deaths worldwide. The day of birth is the time of greatest risk of death and disability for babies and their mothers— contributing to round half of the world’s 289,000 maternal deaths.

Spearheaded by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, *Every Woman Every Child* aligns partners under a common framework and set of goals based on the *Global Strategy for Women and Children’s Health*, a roadmap on how to enhance financing, strengthen policy and improve service delivery for the most vulnerable women and children.

Accountability for both resources and results has been a cornerstone of *Every Woman Every Child* and these new commitments will help to address the call for accelerated action on preventable newborn mortality that was

identified in the PMNCH 2013 report, *Analyzing Progress on Commitments to the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health*.

The diversity and range of these commitments underscore the determination of the global community to be accountable to the health and well being of women and children around the world and make a final push to accelerate progress on the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

“There is no more poignant time than now for all actors to do everything they can to end the preventable deaths of women, newborns and children within a generation. The greatest wealth a nation can have is the health of its people,” said Ms. Nana Taona Kuo, Senior Manager of *Every Woman Every Child* in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. “We have a clear vision forward and these commitments set the tone for the 549 days we have left to meet the MDGs.”

Private sector partners have been instrumental in using their unique strengths, capacities and resources to support the *Every Woman Every Child* movement and represent 17 out of the 40 new commitments launched today. Johnson & Johnson through their US\$30 million commitment will work with partners to implement evidence-based interventions and innovative technologies designed to improve the health-knowledge of pregnant women and mothers.

"Laerdal is pleased to announce an increase of its financial commitment from US\$35 million to US\$55 million through to 2017 enabling us to develop and provide on a not-for-profit basis, innovative products and programs for high priority interventions for saving lives at birth," said Tore Laerdal, Chairman and Managing Director of Laerdal Global Health.

Additional private sector commitments have been made by The Well Being Foundation, Novartis, Pfizer, McCann Health, Merck & Co., among others.

“Through the BORN Project, Masimo is eager to help clinicians especially those working in low-resource areas to gain access to iSpO2Rx as an affordable, highly accurate pulse oximeter that can help save the lives of newborns,” said Joe Kiani, Founder & CEO of Masimo. Pulse oximetry screening is undertaken for early detection of heart defects, pneumonia and other conditions.

Multilateral institutions are also playing their part with a US\$90 million commitment coming from the Islamic Development Bank focusing on, among other activities, building midwifery schools, training health workers in maternal and neonatal care, and establishing well-functioning health information systems, including for birth registration. “The Islamic Development Bank has launched the "Save the Mothers" initiative, which will provide financing in the tune of US\$90 Million to improve maternal and newborn health in 56 member countries in Sub-Saharan Africa,” said Shamas-ur-Rehman Toor, Senior Portfolio Management Specialist at the Islamic Development Bank.

In addition to the private sector, the governments of Bolivia, Cameroon, Malawi, the United States and Oman made commitments to *Every Woman Every Child* in support of the Every Newborn Action Plan. Oman has adopted and translated the ENAP into its 2050 health vision and strategic plan and will seek to strengthen the health system to improve the quality of care for mothers and newborns. Under the Family Health at the Community and Intercultural Levels (SAFI), Bolivia has committed to strengthen primary health care and reduce morbidity and mortality for women and children.

"Cameroon commits to reinforce implementation of high impact MNCH interventions through the recently created national multisectoral program for combating maternal, newborn and child mortality, in a bid to significantly reduce maternal and newborn mortality over the next five years," said Dr. Martina L. Baye, Coordinator of the national multisectoral program for combating maternal, newborn and child mortality in Cameroon. Cameroon has played a leadership role in the Every Newborn effort throughout its development, and was a sponsor of the Every Newborn resolution at the World Health Assembly last month.

Preventing newborn deaths and stillbirths is a priority area for many NGOs, as well as academic and research institutions. Save the Children will invest a total of at least US\$100 million in maternal and newborn health annually, and through the launch of the Helping Babies Survive suite of newborn related curricula aimed at strengthening the skills of birth attendants and caregivers, the American Academy of Pediatrics has committed to reaching more than 60 countries and 1.5 million children, their mothers and families.

“The commitments being announced today are the beginning of a new chapter in maternal, newborn and child health,” said Professor Joy Lawn, Co-editor of the *Lancet* Every Newborn series and senior health advisor to Save the Children. “The evidence is clear – and with the financial resources and policy changes to support the Every Newborn Action Plan, we can save lives and build a healthy future for generations to come.”

“I can think of no better way to begin our celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child than the commitments which were just made to start with the basic right of survival for small and ill babies, and the right of survival of their mothers,” said Kim Dickson, Senior Adviser, Maternal and Newborn Health at UNICEF, and Co-chair of Every Newborn. “The Every Newborn Action Plan is a pledge to the future that starting now we are prepared to make the necessary investment in health care and health workers – including midwives and nurses – to ensure that no woman or baby will die needlessly from preventable causes.”

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For a copy of the *Every Newborn* action plan and list of commitments, please visit: EveryNewborn.org

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Every Woman Every Child

Launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2010, *Every Woman Every Child* is an unprecedented global movement that mobilizes and intensifies international and national action by Governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and civil society to address the major health challenges facing women and children around the world. It puts into action the *Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health*, which presents a roadmap for enhancing financing, strengthening policy and improving services on the ground for the most vulnerable women and children. For more information visit: www.everywomaneverychild.org. To make a commitment to *Every Woman Every Child*, please email everywoman.everychild@un.org.

A Promise Renewed

Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed brings together public, private and civil society actors committed to advocacy and action for maternal, newborn and child survival. A Promise Renewed emerged from the Child Survival Call to Action, convened in June 2012 by the Governments of Ethiopia, India and the United States, in collaboration with UNICEF.

PMNCH

The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) is a partnership of 625 organizations from across seven constituencies. Hosted by the World Health Organization and launched in 2005, the vision of the Partnership is the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, with women and children enabled to realize their right to the highest attainable standard of health in the years to 2015 and beyond.

UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work, visit www.unicef.org

WHO

WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.