

Dear Members of the Executive Committee of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition,

Every year, hundreds of thousands of women die in childbirth and from pregnancy-related causes. While excellent progress has been made in reducing maternal mortality rates in some countries, more remains to be done to achieve the targets set out in the Millennium Development Goals. Reproductive health supplies, including for family planning, are essential to achieving these Goals. However, more than 215 million women in the developing world who wish to protect themselves from unintended pregnancy are not using modern contraception. The announcement of the Secretary General's *Global Strategy for Women and Children's Health* has brought unprecedented momentum to the efforts of the global development community to improve women's health.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has given Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights high priority over the past 25 years. In recent years it has supported both the Partnership on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) and the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC), in which BMZ has been an active member through KfW Entwicklungsbank since 2005. According to the annual UNFPA Donor Support Report, Germany - through KfW Entwicklungsbank - has been one of the leading bilateral donors for contraceptives and condoms over the last decade.

As part of the G8 Muskoka Initiative and in support of the **HANDtoHAND** Campaign, the German government has committed a total of 400 million euros in additional funding for MNCH programmes from 2011 until 2015. This will lead to German MNCH commitments (multilateral and bilateral) of an average of 382 million euros per year. For the realisation of this commitment, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has set up its own Initiative on Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health, which pursues three goals:

1. to increase knowledge and acceptance of modern family planning methods;
2. to improve access to effective family planning methods and services;

3. to increase the number of births attended by health professionals.

In order to achieve these aims the BMZ is working with its partners to adopt a human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach.

The BMZ Initiative will focus on scaling up existing and launching additional activities in the following areas:

- Attributing high priority to family planning and maternal health in international policy dialogue with development partners, as well as in bilateral activities and public relations
- Doubling funding for reproductive health and family planning and boosting the effective use of these resources
- Fostering civil-society and private-sector engagement in Germany and in partner countries
- Attaching particular importance to effective education and communication approaches and
- Strengthening the training of midwives and other health personnel in order to improve skilled attendance at deliveries.

For the implementation of the G8 Muskoka-Initiative as well as for the BMZ Initiative on Rights-based Family planning and Maternal Health we have decided to scale up ongoing German programmes, building on the needs and national strategies of our partner countries and using national coordination forums together with other development partners.

We see the successful achievement of our commitment as having a significant impact on the lives and wellbeing of women and families across the developing world. Lives saved, contraceptive supplies delivered, as well as behaviours positively changed as a result of the implementation of effective programmes and approaches are a reflection of Germany's commitment to family planning support as part of efforts to help strengthen health systems in our partner countries.

We applaud the Coalition for the **HANDtoHAND** Campaign and its effort to rally the family planning community in support of the Secretary General's *Global Strategy*, and we look forward to working with our Coalition partners in bringing family planning to 100 million new users by 2015.

Sincerely,



Dr. Reinhard Tittel-Gronefeld

Head of Division, Health; Population policy

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Germany