



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 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. With the announcement of the Secretary General's *Global Strategy for Women and Children's Health*, we see unprecedented momentum in the global development community to improve women's health.

As one of the few leading Health Care Companies in the world in the field of family planning products and a leader in the development of new contraceptive products and delivery systems, MSD has a responsibility and a mission to protect and improve the health of women around the globe. For more than fifty years, the company has been focusing on research, development and commercialization of contraceptives. The latest outcome of our research and development efforts is a new generation single rod implant sterile delivery system that accompanies the insertion.

Working to expand access to our products that improve people's health is an integral part of the way we do business every day. MSD has a long heritage of making a range of products available at deeply discounted prices to least and less resourced countries through a sustainable business model. Over the last 10 years our family planning efforts have expanded from contraceptive supplies, towards supporting the objective of bringing the Millennium Development Goals closer at reach. We focus on preventing maternal and infant mortality by improving access, availability and appropriate use of family planning products, thereby contributing to enhancing the health of women and their families. We partner intensively, both on the country-level and globally, with Ministries of Health as well as the donor and development communities, supporting them with our knowledge, skills and networks to realize the Millennium Development Goals.

MSD has been an active member of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition since its foundation. We fully support the **HANDtoHAND** Campaign to galvanize our community's contribution to the Secretary General's *Global Strategy* and endorse the Coalition's ambitious new goal of achieving 100 million new users of contraception in low-income countries by 2015. Success at meeting this challenge will address the family

planning needs of 80% of women in these countries, and reduce by 110,000 the number of women who die giving birth.

To demonstrate our backing of the **HANDtoHAND** Campaign, we at MSD are proud to commit ourselves to the following:

- *Ensure global access to our family planning products, by obtaining and maintaining up-to-date health registrations that include least and less resourced countries.*
- *Maintain WHO pre-qualification for our family planning products.*
- *Make our products available to family planning programs of governments and non-government organizations in least and less resourced countries at deeply discounted prices that also enable sustainable long-term focus and improved public health.*
- *Increase resources available to enrich our in-country work and partnering as well as to contribute to the effectiveness and outcomes of family planning programs in the context of the Millennium Development Goals.*

We see the successful achievement of our commitment as having a significant impact on the lives and well being of women and families across the developing world. Effective family planning, providing women a choice, prevents unplanned pregnancies and maternal and infant mortality related to these pregnancies. With our comprehensive approach and commitment, we can increasingly make a significant difference in maternal and public health in developing 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*. We look forward to working with our Coalition partners in bringing family planning to 100 million new users by 2015.

Sincerely,



Terrie Curran
Senior Vice President & General Manager
Women's Health Care & Endocrine