



November 2, 2010

Members of the Executive Committee of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition:

Every year, millions 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.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), every day, all over the world, brings peace to those who endure violence, health to those who struggle with sickness, and prosperity to those who live in poverty. USAID's Family Planning program, which advances and supports voluntary family planning and reproductive health programs worldwide, is one of the success stories in U.S. development assistance. Since the launch of the program in 1965, families are better able to feed, clothe, educate, and provide health care for their children. Enabling couples to determine whether, when, and how often to have children is vital to safe motherhood and healthy families and has profound health, economic, and social benefits for families and communities.

USAID has been an active member of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition since its inception. 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 who want to limit or delay childbearing, and reduce by 110,000 the number of women who die giving birth.

To demonstrate our support to the Campaign and through President Obama's Global Health Initiative, we are proud to commit ourselves to the following:

- Prevent 54 million unintended pregnancies across assisted countries by 2015.

- Reach a modern contraceptive prevalence rate of 35 percent across assisted countries, reflecting a 2 percentage point increase annually by 2014.
- Reduce from 24 percent to 20 percent the number of first births by women under 18, across assisted countries.
- Strengthen health systems by:
 - Improving health financing strategies that reduce financial barriers to essential services, including increased government and/or private sector funding for health and reduced out-of-pocket payments for health services, where appropriate;
 - Increasing the number of trained health workers and community workers appropriately deployed in the country; and
 - Improving health management information and pharmaceutical management systems to reduce stock-outs.

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. Specifically our contributions will save lives and improve the health of women – currently more than 530,000 women die annually from largely preventable complications related to pregnancy of childbirth and for every death, 20 more women suffer often debilitating pregnancy-related injury and infections. Under President Obama’s Global Health Initiative, we will help partner countries improve the health of women, newborns and children through strengthening health systems to expand access to essential health services and reduce disparities in health outcomes.

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,



Scott Radloff

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