

## Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition annual meeting in Kampala

### Press Release

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Kampala, May 2010—From May 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry of Health of Uganda and Partners in Population and Development, Africa Regional Office, will host the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition. To be held at the Kampala Sheraton, the two-day meeting will cap a full week's worth of smaller gatherings and working sessions attended by international and national leaders in the reproductive health field.

As the Coalition's first annual meeting to be held outside Europe or North America, the Kampala event will showcase successes and lessons from across the developing world—from Honduras in Central America, to Bangladesh to Rwanda. And closer to home, Minister of Health Dr. Stephen Mallinga will use his keynote address to officially launch Uganda's Five-year Reproductive Health Commodity Security Strategy.

In 2009, Uganda became the first African government to join the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition, taking its place alongside the governments of the United States, seven European nations, the European Union, and subsequently the government of Ghana.

In recent years, the Coalition has increasingly become the focus of worldwide attention—particularly as a result of new, innovative initiatives that could, one day, dramatically change the way RH supplies and other essential medicines are selected, purchased, shipped, and delivered. A new mechanism called AccessRH, for example, will allow governments to benefit from the cost-savings of higher-volume procurement, while at the same time, reducing the long lead-times that normally transpire between the purchase and delivery of goods. Another mechanism, known as the Pledge Guarantee for Health, will allow governments and other institutions to quickly convert promises of international donor support into immediate cash for commodities—so that governments can buy when the need exists, not just when donors choose to disburse funds. And finally, through the WHO Prequalification Programme, the Coalition and its members are working to guarantee the quality of RH supplies through the application of unified international standards of quality, safety, and efficacy.

The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition ([www.rhsupplies.org](http://www.rhsupplies.org)) is a global health partnership dedicated to making essential reproductive health products available in low- and moderate-income countries. It brings together more than 110 international agencies with critical roles in providing contraceptives and other reproductive health supplies, such as multi- and bilateral donors, private foundations, low- and moderate-income country governments, civil society, and private-sector representatives.

## Uganda to Host Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition Annual Meeting

### Press Release #2

Kampala, 20 May 2010—From May 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry of Health of Uganda and Partners in Population and Development, Africa Regional Office, will host the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition. Minister of Health Dr. Stephen Mallinga will use his keynote address to officially launch Uganda's Five-year Reproductive Health Commodity Security Strategy.

This meeting marks the first time the Coalition has held its annual membership meeting outside of Europe or North America. Uganda is the first African government to join the Coalition. The meeting will take place at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel.

“The meeting will underscore the mission of the Coalition, which is to assist those working in reproductive health at the global, national, and local levels to improve and strengthen reproductive health supply and commodity chains,” said Coalition Director John Skibiak. “Uganda is facing shortages of contraceptives and the country's health budget is constrained even as the demand for contraceptives increases.”

Statistics from the United Nations show that:

- Unmet need for family planning in many African countries is 30% or higher.
- Uganda has one of the highest rates of unmet need in the region, with 41% of women not using modern methods of contraception, but who want to space or limit births.
- The average number of children per couple in Uganda is 6.7, although most women prefer to have four or five children.
- The lifetime risk of maternal death is 1 in 25 women, deaths that could be easily prevented through access to family planning in addition to antenatal, delivery, and newborn care.
- The population is growing rapidly. Today, the Ugandan population totals 33 million and is expected to double in less than 25 years.

Worldwide, the availability of reproductive health supplies, including contraceptives, medicines for prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, and medicines to ensure healthy pregnancy and delivery, falls short of current demands. The Coalition works at the global level to build social and political commitment to developing and maintaining a sound commodities system and works to help country partners build on the political will and advocacy that are critical to prioritize reproductive health.

In the next ten years, the number of contraceptive users is projected to increase by more than 21 percent. Without a reliable supply of sexual and reproductive health commodities and quality service provision, the promises made at the International Conference on Population

and Development, the Millennium summit, and reiterated at the 2005 World Summit will not be kept. The Coalition was established to confront and address this reality.

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