

Joint Statement on Accelerating the Reduction of Neonatal Mortality

Amman, Jordan, 24 April 2016

We, the representatives of the World Health Organization, United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund jointly commit our continuing support to the governments across the region towards ending preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths by 2030. We are also committed to helping the countries of the region progress toward meeting the global targets as adopted in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.

We acknowledge that there has been significant progress in reducing maternal and child mortality in the region in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, newborn mortality and stillbirth remain high in many countries and are under-reported in some. In addition, there is significant inequity between and within countries and quality of care remains a concern. We recognize that much of the morbidity and mortality among women, newborns and children is preventable, and that cost-effective evidence-based solutions are available. Likewise, we recognize the importance of empowerment of women, the attainment of gender equality and promotion of adolescent health in ensuring the sustainable future of all countries.

WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF urge Member States to prioritize universal coverage with essential interventions and high-quality care around the time of childbirth and in the first days of life because of the dangers during this period for women, their unborn babies and newborns. Evidence suggests that implementing this strategy will accelerate reduction in newborn mortality and, at the same time, help reduce stillbirths and maternal mortality. We pledge to work with governments to help strengthen their leadership and capacity to undertake time-bound actions to:

- mobilize sufficient, sustainable and equity-focused financing, adequate and skilled human resources, and essential commodities and equipment for maternal and newborn health care;
- improve management capacity to sustain strong health systems for high-quality service delivery;

- promote engagement of parents, community participation and social mobilization in order to reach underserved populations and improve care-seeking;
- improve preparedness to maintain services in humanitarian emergencies and fragile settings;
- commit to expand support to maternal and newborn health in emergency settings;
- invest in capacity-building and strengthen the skills of the midwifery workforce and community health workers to ensure better quality of newborn health care;
- assume national accountability for results and resources through strong health information systems and harmonized monitoring, reporting and use of relevant disaggregated health data;
- uphold the rights of women and children to live with dignity and equity;
- enhance collaboration and coordination with donors and partners;
- strengthen the role of the civil society and the private sector;
- expand health coverage along the continuum of care by including preconception, prenatal, childbirth and postnatal care;
- screen and prevent avoidable birth defects helping children to thrive throughout their lives and ensure better chances of survival and well-being; and
- address over time, the wider determinants of health, including but not limited to socioeconomic status; education, especially for girls; nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene; the empowerment of women; and gender equality, through a multisectoral approach.

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