

FCI's Commitment to the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health

September 2010

In 1986, when Family Care International was established, the world was paying little attention to the hundreds of thousands of women dying in pregnancy and childbirth each year. FCI was founded out of a determination to remedy this neglect, and was the first international organization whose mission was explicitly focused on maternal health. We have worked ever since — in collaboration with valued partners at every level — to make pregnancy and childbirth safer around the world.

The world we live in today, almost a quarter-century on, is a very different place. Technical and policy experts have arrived at a clear consensus, based on solid evidence and on practical experience, around the core health interventions that save the lives of women, newborns, and children. Countries that have mobilized the will, made the investment, and implemented effective policies and programs have seen dramatic reductions in maternal mortality and morbidity. Recent studies have shown a global decline in both maternal and child deaths, demonstrating conclusively that real progress is possible. And the global community has pledged itself to a shared vision that was almost inconceivable in 1986 — FCI's vision, of a world where no woman suffers preventable injury or death from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes and in which all people are able to enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

This week, behind the leadership of the Secretary-General and in partnership with civil society, the nations of the world stand up, and stand together, in a renewed and deepened commitment to this vision. With profound hope and a deep sense of the urgency of our cause, Family Care International expresses our support of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, and our commitment to its success. Specifically, FCI commits to:

- Advocate tirelessly for the political will and investment to significantly expand funding for effective maternal, newborn, and child health services, and for their integration with disease-specific interventions and broader health systems strengthening interventions — because the Global Strategy is the beginning, not the end, of a long-term and urgently important process;
- Push for and facilitate the active engagement of civil society in health and development policy and programs at the global, national, and community levels — because civil society plays a critical role in testing innovative approaches, providing service to the marginalized and underserved, ensuring a focus on human rights, maintaining pressure on policy makers at all levels, and helping communities voice their needs and priorities;
- Demand that all stakeholders are held accountable for fulfilling their commitments, as promised in the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health — because commitments don't save lives until they are actually delivered.

We are grateful for the role that FCI has been privileged to play in bringing this moment to pass — in initiating and nurturing a global Safe Motherhood movement, in achieving recognition of the necessity of universal reproductive health, in supporting the development of this Global Strategy and of the Global Consensus for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health from which it grew — and commit FCI's full efforts to ensuring that this historic opportunity does not go to waste.