

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Presidents of Chile, Finland & Tanzania put mother and child health on the map

Global leaders seek to galvanize life-saving action to reduce huge toll of maternal, newborn and child death

With critical health care still failing to reach most women and children in the hardest hit countries, Heads of State from Chile, Finland and Tanzania are convening a special event to examine the urgent need for accelerated progress to reduce maternal and child mortality. They will use the forum to collect commitments to action and to highlight stories of successful leadership for maternal, newborn and child health from their own and other countries.

The special side event coincides with the UN High level Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) being convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 25 September 2008. At the half way point towards the 2015 target set to reach the Goals, MDG 4 on reducing child mortality and MDG 5 on improving maternal health are among those which have received the least high level political attention.

According to the 2008 report *Tracking Progress in Maternal, Newborn & Child Survival*, few of the 68 developing countries that account for 97% of maternal and child deaths worldwide are making adequate progress to achieve the MDGs. The majority of maternal and child deaths occur in Africa and South Asia, with sub-Saharan Africa increasingly bearing the global burden of mortality.

Worldwide, over 10 million women and children still die each year from causes which are largely preventable and treatable. This means a woman dies needlessly each minute in pregnancy or childbirth, and a child under five dies every three seconds.

Six million of these lives can be saved every year if women, newborns and children in developing nations gain access to basic health services. The side event will examine key strategies which are saving the lives of women and children in low resource settings.

Each of the host Presidents will address the group to renew their commitments to maternal and child health and introduce specific initiatives and will call for political action to achieve MDGs 4 and 5. In addition, Heads of State, UN agencies, senior government officials, civil society organizations, foundations and private sector companies will put forward commitments to lifesaving action for women, newborns, and children.

WHAT: Committing to Progress for Mothers, Newborns and Children

A special event during the United Nations High-level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals

WHEN: Thursday, September 25, 2008 – 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: UN Millennium Plaza Hotel, One United Nations Plaza (44th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues)

WHO: The event is co-hosted by:

- H.E. President Michelle Bachelet of the Republic of Chile,
- H.E. President Tarja Halonen of the Republic of Finland, and
- H.E. President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of United Republic of Tanzania.

Present will be Heads of State, heads of UN agencies, senior government officials, civil society organizations, foundations and private sector companies.

For more information, please contact:

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Note for editors:

The event is organized by a core organizing group including: Family Care International, (www.familycareintl.org, www.womendeliver.org), International Planned Parenthood Federation (www.ippf.org), Partnership for Maternal Newborn and Child Health (www.pmnch.org), Save the Children-UK, (www.savethechildren.org.uk), White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood (www.whiteribbonalliance.org), World Vision International (www.wvi.org), with support from United Kingdom's Department for International Development – DfID (www.dfid.gov.uk), The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation – Norad (www.norad.no), and Australian Government Overseas Aid Program – AusAID (www.ausaid.gov.au).