

STATES NEWS SERVICE : HEALTH SYSTEMS THAT DELIVER FOR WOMEN WHEN THEY DELIVER BENEFIT ALL, SECRETARY-GENERAL TELLS TASK FORCE ON INNOVATIVE HEALTH FINANCING

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The following information was released by the United Nations:

Following are [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#)'s remarks at the launch of the report of the Task Force on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems, in New York, today, 23 September:

Let me start by congratulating the members of the Task Force which brought us together today: Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Stoltenberg of Norway; President of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick; Director-General of the **World Health Organization**, Margaret Chan; and Philippe Douste-Blazy, my Special Envoy.

I commend your efforts.

Study after study shows that investing in women brings broad economic and social benefits. Devoting resources to women's health in particular is one of the smartest investments any society can make.

When women are healthy, they provide for their families. They contribute to their communities. They lift up entire nations.

A health system that delivers for women when women are ready to deliver is a strong health system that will benefit all people.

But this is also more than a question of social progress or financial gain. It is a matter of human rights, human dignity, the kind of world we hope to build -- and the kind of world we hope to leave behind.

There is progress to report, especially on child health. But we still have a long way to go to reach the goal of reducing child mortality rates by two thirds by the year 2015.

And we have a long road to travel to reduce maternal mortality. This is the slowest moving target of the **Millennium Development Goals**.

Yet the truth is that we can achieve our Goals. We know what to do. We know what it takes to save lives. We know how to improve the health of women, babies and children.

We also know what it would cost. According to the Task Force, we need global investment of \$36 billion to \$45 billion to meet the health-related **Millennium Development Goals** by 2015.

Let us remember that the financial impact of maternal and newborn deaths has been estimated at \$15 billion per year in lost productivity.

And let us not be daunted. In a world in which we can map the human genome and send vehicles to far reaches of space, surely we can rally the technology, wealth and expertise needed to meet these life-saving targets. It is inexcusable that we haven't already.

Official development aid is critical. But it is not enough.

That is why we need innovative financing, to complement -- but not replace -- official development assistance (ODA).

The International Finance Facility for Immunization, UNITAID, and other initiatives have proven how much we can do if we get creative.

At a time of economic crisis, we need such mechanisms more than ever.

It is said that a society can be judged by how it treats women and children. Just as no woman should die needlessly in childbirth, no person of conscience should stand by as such senseless deaths continue.

Each of us can make a difference. Together, we can improve the health and well-being of women and children. When they thrive, so will our world.

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For information media not an official record

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