



Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, The World Bank, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, U.S. Agency for International Development, The Population Council and Family Care International

Regional Interagency Task Force for the Reduction of Maternal Mortality

Joint Statement of Support for Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean

Washington, D.C., 20 February 2004

MATERNAL MORTALITY IS A CRITICAL AND UNACCEPTABLE PROBLEM IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. EVERY YEAR IN THE REGION, APPROXIMATELY 23,000 WOMEN DIE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF COMPLICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH. THIS REPRESENTS AN ESTIMATED AVERAGE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO FOR THESE COUNTRIES OF 190 PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS.

WHILE SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, MUCH MORE EFFORT IS NEEDED TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF MATERNAL MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY. MATERNAL MORTALITY IS PREVENTABLE AND WE KNOW THE SOLUTIONS. CHALLENGES INCLUDE POOR ACCESS TO HEALTH FACILITIES AND A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED BIRTH ATTENDANTS (ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS) AND OF FACILITIES CAPABLE OF PROVIDING ESSENTIAL OBSTETRIC CARE. WHILE ALL WOMEN ARE AT RISK OF PREGNANCY-RELATED COMPLICATIONS, THERE IS A CLEAR CONNECTION BETWEEN LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN AND INCREASED RISK OF MATERNAL ILLNESS AND DEATH. SUCH SOCIAL FACTORS AS EDUCATION AND ETHNICITY ARE ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RISK OF MATERNAL DEATH. MATERNAL MORTALITY IS MORE THAN A HEALTH ISSUE – IT IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. MATERNAL MORTALITY ALSO HAS HUGE NEGATIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS AT THE FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL LEVELS, GIVEN THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF WOMEN IN FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION.

THE AGENCIES IN THE REGIONAL INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE REDUCTION OF MATERNAL MORTALITY SUPPORT AND PROMOTE SUCH INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES AS THE SAFE MOTHERHOOD INITIATIVE AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS. SPECIFICALLY, THE FIFTH MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL TARGETS THE IMPROVEMENT OF MATERNAL HEALTH BY REDUCING THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO BY THREE-QUARTERS BETWEEN 1990 AND 2015. AT THE 26TH PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE, HELD IN SEPTEMBER 2002, THE MINISTERS OF HEALTH OF OUR HEMISPHERE APPROVED A STRATEGY CALLING FOR TARGETED INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY IN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES.

WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THESE COMMITMENTS, THE TASK FORCE HAS DEVELOPED A CONSENSUS STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS. FIVE PRIORITY ACTION AREAS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED:

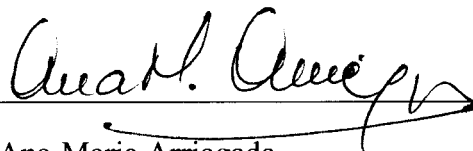
- SUPPORTING THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT ACTIONS AT THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS;
- DEFINING A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF ACTIONS NEEDED TO REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON ESSENTIAL OBSTETRIC CARE, SKILLED ATTENDANCE AT BIRTH AND ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING;
- INCREASING PUBLIC DEMAND FOR HIGH-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE, AND ACCESSIBLE HEALTH SERVICES, AND BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES TO ACCESS THESE SERVICES;
- BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES AMONG AGENCIES AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS; AND
- DEVELOPING SYSTEMS TO MONITOR MATERNAL MORTALITY REDUCTION AS WELL AS FINANCIAL MECHANISMS TO ENSURE COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY.

THE SITUATION IS CLEAR. MATERNAL DEATH IS PREVENTABLE; EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS ARE KNOWN; AND INVESTMENT IN SAFE MOTHERHOOD WILL REDUCE MATERNAL AND INFANT DEATH AND DISABILITY, AND CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVED HEALTH, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND EQUITY FOR WOMEN, THEIR FAMILIES, AND THEIR COMMUNITIES. WE CALL FOR POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS OF GOVERNMENTS, FINANCIAL RESOURCES FROM DONORS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES FROM NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES, AND POSITIVE SUPPORT FROM THE MEDIA TO THIS CRITICAL PROBLEM. OTHERWISE, CONTINUED PROGRESS WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED.

TO REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN , THE TASK FORCE AGENCIES ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING TOGETHER TO PROMOTE ACTION AND FACILITATE PARTNERSHIPS, INCLUDING MOBILIZING ADEQUATE FUNDING AT THE REGIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVELS.



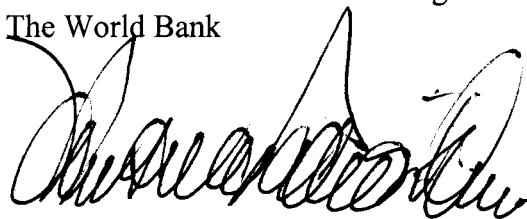
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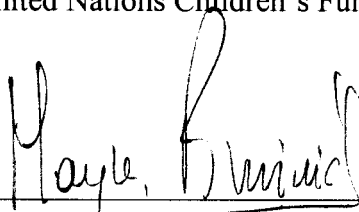
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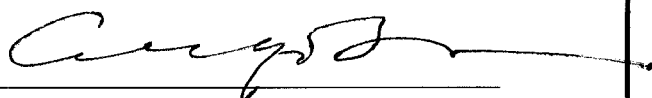
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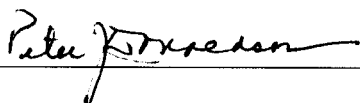
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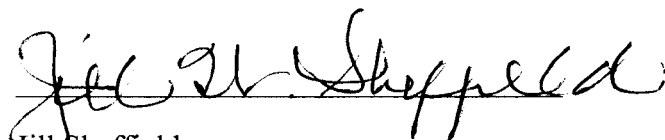
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