



## The Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems

### News Release

13 May 2009

### Global Action to Strengthen Health Systems

### Taskforce meets Southern based Civil Society in Johannesburg on 13 -14 May

**Johannesburg 13 & 14 May 2009:** Over forty senior Southern based delegates from prominent civil society organisations will meet in Johannesburg on 13 and 14 May, as part of the work of the *Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems*. This will be an important opportunity for participants to voice their views on what steps can be taken to increase funding for health systems to prevent the financial crisis from becoming a human crisis.

Chaired by UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and World Bank President Robert Zoellick, the *Taskforce for Innovative International Financing for Health Systems* is a group of political and world leaders who are determined to find new ways of funding healthcare systems throughout the developing world.

Funding for global health has more than doubled since 2000 – saving millions of lives. Many low income countries – particularly in Africa – have also increased health spending on the back of economic growth, but these funds are neither large enough nor sufficiently predictable to maintain standards, let alone reach the UN health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Taskforce will work towards innovative financing solutions – new ways of complementing traditional forms of aid. The two day meeting in Johannesburg will allow delegates to explore the potential for new and predictable income streams, ways of channelling funds that link resources to results, and which support locally defined priorities and plans. The aim is to complement traditional donor aid with new resources in order to meet the health MDGs by 2015.

Mrs Graça Machel, President and Founder of the Foundation for Community Development in Mozambique and Member of the Taskforce, will be participating in the two day meeting. Ahead of the event, Mrs Machel said:

“Despite the financial crisis, innovative financing mechanisms are needed to complement present aid, and the extra money must be channelled rapidly and used



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efficiently to fill those gaps in health systems in the provinces and districts that are needed the most.”

Commenting on the importance of the event Mrs Machel continued:

“It is essential that as global health policies are designed and rolled out we include African civil society organisations as well as international civil society organisations in the process. They are the ones that have the knowledge in the field and understand the real challenges. The event in Johannesburg has been designed to do just that, enabling civil society organisations to articulate their concerns and raise issues of significance that the Taskforce can take into consideration.”

In 2000, the United Nations set out eight Millennium Development Goals, to be achieved by 2015. These included a reduction in child mortality, improvements in maternal health and combating diseases such as HIV/Aids and malaria.

The rate of new HIV infections are falling in several countries and great progress is being made against malaria and TB. Vaccines are reaching more children than ever, and there is more investment in new technologies for preventing and treating disease.

While significant progress has been made – there is still much more to do. Stronger health systems are critical to saving lives and building these systems will require more resources from the international community. Innovative financing has an important role to play in meeting the financing gap for health.

### **The Facts – why funds are needed now:**

- Halfway to 2015, numerous countries are lagging behind in reaching the health MDGs
- Worldwide a child dies every three seconds, a mother dies in pregnancy or childbirth every minute and 7,000 people are infected with HIV every day
- More than half a million women die from preventable complications in pregnancy and childbirth every year. Over 300 million suffer from preventable illness and disability
- Current donor funding is not sufficiently predictable or sufficiently large to support reaching the health MDGs.



## The Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems

The Taskforce recognises that the challenges facing the international community in terms of improving people's health in developing countries is not just one of funding; it is also an organisational and efficiency challenge. It is vital these concerns are met proactively by the members of the Taskforce. The issues and concerns of the Taskforce are not localised to the regions of the globe which are the poorest. If health systems collapse and poverty increases nations will be ill-equipped to build proper infrastructure. Economies are built by the healthy not the weak and dying, the vulnerable must be cared for to allow them to care for their nations. If sound health systems are not implemented fast and funding is not secured, poverty will increase and the demands placed on the wealthy nations of the world will become greater.

**For more information on the Taskforce and interviews with spokespeople:**

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[www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/taskforce.html](http://www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/taskforce.html)

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### **About the Taskforce**

1. The Taskforce will make recommendations on the mix of innovative international financing mechanisms needed to deliver the extra resources required.
2. The Taskforce will promote international support for these recommendations to ensure they are implemented.
3. The Taskforce's first meeting was held in Doha in November 2008. The second meeting was held in Downing Street, London on 13 March 2009 and third meeting is planned for Paris May 2009.
4. Consultation events – Civil Society event in London in March 2009. Civil Society event in Johannesburg May 2009. A number of meetings have been held with the private sector, Government Ministers and MEPs.

Taskforce members:

1. Prime Minister Gordon Brown (United Kingdom) (co-chair)
2. Robert Zoellick (President of the World Bank) (co-chair)
3. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (Liberia)



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4. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg (Norway)
5. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Health Minister, Ethiopia)
6. Bernard Kouchner (Foreign Minister, France)
7. Giulio Tremonti (Finance Minister, Italy)
8. Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul (UNSG Special Envoy for Finance for Development Conference & Development Minister, Germany)
9. Stephen Smith (Foreign Affairs Minister, Australia)
10. Margaret Chan (Director-General of the World Health Organization)
11. Graça Machel (President and Founder, Foundation for Community Development, Mozambique)

Phillippe Douste-Blazy the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy on Innovative Financing serves as Special Envoy to the Taskforce.

For more information on the work of the Taskforce and to see copies of Working Group reports please visit [www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/taskforce.html](http://www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/taskforce.html)