

Global Financing Facility in Support of Every Woman Every Child

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World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim
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As Prepared for Delivery

Mr. Secretary-General. Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I'm very happy to be here today to officially launch the Global Financing Facility in support of Every Woman Every Child.

The Facility, or GFF, unifies resources from international donors, the private sector and developing countries, with a goal to end preventable maternal and child deaths by 2030. It has the flexibility to finance investments in other sectors – such as education, water and sanitation – if they have a significant impact on our goal. And the GFF uses innovative financing techniques to increase funding for national strategies that improve women's and children's health.

And all of this started just 10 months ago, at the UN General Assembly. There, many of you stood with the Secretary-General, Prime Minister Harper of Canada, Prime Minister Solberg of Norway, and me, to make an ambitious and unprecedented commitment to the women and children of the world – to end preventable maternal and child deaths by 2030.

We made this commitment because improving the health of women and children is not only the right thing to do, it's also one of the smartest investments we can make to reduce poverty and improve well-being. In the last 25 years, we've had unprecedented progress in reducing maternal and child mortality, and now we must take the next step to end preventable deaths.

We also announced 10 months ago our intention to create a funding mechanism to provide smarter, scaled and sustainable financing for women's and children's health. We said we'd launch it in Addis, and here we are today fulfilling that promise.

We estimate that the annual funding gap for universal maternal and child healthcare in developing countries amounts to \$33 billion – far more than official development assistance can provide on its own. The GFF can be a catalyst to secure universal access to essential, quality health services for all women and children, no matter where they live.

I'm grateful to the UN Secretary-General, our UN agency partners, and all our GFF partners, which enables me to make several important announcements today.

First, I'm pleased to report that the GFF is working in four countries – the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. A combination of domestic and international, private and public funding sources has already been aligned to mobilize at least US\$12 billion over the next five years for country-led investment plans for women's and children's health in these four GFF front-runner countries.

The GFF is also ready to provide financing for eight additional countries with high rates of maternal and child mortality, including Liberia. President Johnson Sirleaf is here today, and these additional resources will be critical to strengthen Liberia's health system in the wake of the Ebola crisis.

Second, I'm pleased to announce that we have additional contributions today from new and existing GFF partners, including Canada, Japan, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the United States, totaling \$214 million. Thanks to all of you for your generosity.

Third, I would like to announce a new GFF partnership with our International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to raise funds from the capital markets for countries with significant funding gaps for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.

We expect this partnership will mobilize between \$3 to \$5 from the private capital markets for every dollar invested into the GFF. I'm very grateful to the government of Canada for their contribution to jumpstart this ground-breaking initiative.

Last but not least, I'm pleased to announce the establishment of a global Center of Excellence for strengthening civil registration and vital statistics, which will help countries better monitor and track their progress.

The GFF is off to a great start –and yet

We all know there is much more work to do, and many more hurdles ahead. Too many mothers and children in poor countries die needlessly: The child mortality rate in low-income countries is more than 15 times higher than in high-income countries. And maternal mortality is nearly 30 times higher. Together, we can and will do better.

Thirty-seven years ago, in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, the International Conference on Primary Health Care produced a landmark proclamation – the statement called for urgent action by all governments, all health and development workers, and the world community, to protect and promote the health of all people. Though it has taken far too long, new instruments like the GFF are taking us much closer to realizing that vision.

Achieving our goal of ending preventable maternal and child deaths by 2030 will be a critical part of fulfilling the Alma Ata declaration -- health for all. We can do it, we must do it. The evidence shows us the way, and we must commit here today that we will never rest until we have reached our goal. Thank you for all that you have done. I look forward to all that we will do together in the future for the health of women and children.