

# Global Civil Society Statement of Support for Newborn, Child and Maternal Health Interventions

October 21, 2009

We the undersigned, as non-governmental organizations focused on saving and improving the lives of vulnerable children around the world, urge strong global support for newborn, child and maternal health programs. Specifically, we call for donor governments and developing nation governments to do their part to prevent the needless deaths of millions of children and their mothers each year. We urge the immediate scaling up of proven, cost-effective health care interventions such as childhood immunizations. Millions of children are alive today because of such vital efforts. New findings released by UNICEF show that global child mortality rates are dropping, clearly demonstrating that such efforts are having the necessary impact. But millions more children still lack access to even the most basic healthcare.

More than 24,000 newborns and children under 5 die every day worldwide mostly from preventable causes and malnutrition. Every extra dollar invested to help them makes a difference.

Today, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the World Bank released the 3rd edition of the *State of the World's Vaccines and Immunizations*. Immunization programs are among the most cost-effective of child survival interventions and, between 2005 and 2007, reached over 100 million children each year. Vaccines prevent an estimated 2.5 million child deaths each year and are indispensable for reaching the Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality. In addition, vaccines to address pneumonia and diarrhea – the two leading killers of children under five – are now available and being used in several countries, with the potential to dramatically improve child survival rates. Vaccines are one of the critical interventions to protect mothers' health as well – for example, with a series of low-cost shots costing just seven cents each, maternal and neonatal tetanus is completely preventable, and yet up to 30,000 women die needlessly every year from tetanus.

These advances and the opportunity to further our progress must not be lost. ***We urge the global community to do as much as possible to ensure that the necessary funding is made available to significantly expand immunization programs, along with other effective, evidence-based maternal, newborn, and child health interventions.*** Through our support for child and maternal health programs, we demonstrate our values and our strengths.

We call for stepped-up leadership in saving the world's children and strengthening their families and communities.

Sincerely,

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| 1. Bread for the World                    | 10. Partners in Health   |
| 2. The Episcopal Church                   | 11. Plan USA   |
| 3. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | 12. Union for Reform Judaism                                   |
| 4. Food for the Hungry                    | 13. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society |
| 5. FXB USA                                | 14. U.S. Coalition for Child Survival                          |
| 6. Global AIDS Alliance                   | 15. U.S. Fund for UNICEF                                       |
| 7. Global Action for Children             | 16. RESULTS  |
| 8. Global Health Council                  | 17. Save the Children  |
| 9. Mothers Acting Up                      |  |

