Launching the Maternal Health Task Force

Reaching Consensus on the MHTF Terms of Reference

Washington D.C., February 17-18, 2009
Background

July–November 2008:

- **Advancing Maternal Health: Action, Architecture, Engagement**

  Meeting convened by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) seeking input on the development of a new coordinating and convening entity to advance maternal health agendas globally

- BMGF invited EngenderHealth to submit a proposal to host the new entity (approved in Nov. 2008)
November 2008–February 2009:

- Officially announced MHTF and survey sent to broad base of stakeholders
- Conducted interviews with small number of critical partners
- Started more detailed discussions with members of the Board and staff of the PMNCH
- Developed draft Terms of Reference
- Designed February launch meeting
Overarching Goal

Build common, evidence-based agendas in…

- research and evidence
- application and evaluation
- advocacy and policy

…to advance maternal health at the global and country levels
Objectives

Objective 1: To provide an inclusive, collaborative, and vibrant space for dialogue and consensus building on maternal health agendas

Objective 2: To guide identification of critical areas of debate and gaps in the maternal health field, and establish effective mechanisms to address them
Objective 3: To stimulate new thinking, approaches, and action to improve maternal health

Objective 4: To compile and develop instruments to empower constituents to carry out maternal health agendas
Highlights of February 17-18, 2009 Meeting

- Approximately 65 colleagues engaged in lively and productive discussion
- Endorsement of the MHTF
- Willingness to engage in detailed discussions to identify opportunities to complement each other and avoid unnecessary duplication
- Concern about sustainability beyond the life of the project
- Agreement on most procedural components of ToR
- Great debate on the specific areas of focus on the MHTF
The Maternal Health Task Force is a catalyst that:

- Provides the ‘glue’ to navigate across several different dimensions:
  - Country-driven and global
  - Technical and political
  - Ideal and pragmatic

- Leverages existing initiatives, events and organizations to add new value to move the maternal health agenda forward
Next Steps

- Develop the next version (almost final) of the ToR (with emphasis on governance, decision making and participation)
- Develop a meeting summary report
- Define the MHTF year one work plan (and solicit ideas on year two) using the actions brainstormed together
- Build and implement a three-month communications plan
- Engage in an immediate and concrete dialogue to identify mechanisms for collaboration
- Start implementation
Thank you!