

PRESS RELEASE**UN ESTABLISHES HIGH-LEVEL COMMISSION TO TRACK RESULTS
AND RESOURCES FOR WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

NEW YORK, 16 December 2010 -- The United Nations is establishing a high-level commission charged with developing an accountability framework that will link resources committed to women's and children's health with the results they are intended to achieve.

"Strengthening accountability is critical if we are to save the lives of more women and children," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "We must ensure that partners deliver on their promises but, in turn, it is crucial that they know whether investments are leading to sustainable progress."

In September, at the Millennium Development Goals Summit in New York, stakeholders adopted a Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health and committed US\$ 40 billion in resources to a global effort to save the lives of 16 million women and children by 2015. The Strategy called for the World Health Organization (WHO) to establish a process to determine the most effective international institutional arrangements for global reporting, oversight and accountability for women's and children's health.

The Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health will develop an accountability framework that will help countries monitor where resources go and how they are spent, and will provide the evidence needed to show which programmes are the most effective to save the lives of women and children.

The Commission will be co-chaired by Jakaya Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada. The Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Hamadoun I. Touré, and the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Margaret Chan, will act as vice chairs.

The accountability framework proposed by the Commission will:

- Track results and resource flows at global and country levels;
- Identify a core set of indicators and measurement needs for women's and children's health;
- Propose steps to improve health information and registration of vital events -- births and deaths -- in low-income countries;
- Explore opportunities for innovation in information technology to improve access to reliable information on resources and outcomes.

President Kikwete said he looked forward to working with his co-chair, Prime Minister Harper of Canada, and the other commissioners to deliver on the Commission's objectives. "It is with a deep sense of humility and gratitude that I accept the appointment. Improving the health of women and children is a matter that is very close to my heart. I am very passionate about getting the opportunity to do something to help save the lives and improve the living conditions of many innocent children and mothers," he said.

"Canada is proud to co-chair this new Commission," said Prime Minister Harper. "The Commission will help ensure that countries follow through on the commitments they made at the G-8 Summit in Muskoka and the Millennium Development Goals Summit in New York to help women and children, and that resources are spent in an effective and responsible way." (continues)

"Resources come with an expectation of results," said Dr. Chan of WHO. "Accountability is vital. It means keeping promises and measuring results. To measure results, we need much stronger systems for health information. The Commission will guide us in all these areas."

ITU's Dr. Touré will bring his expertise in communication technology to the Commission. "Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are among the most powerful tools we have at our disposal to dramatically improve health outcomes for infants and their mothers," said Dr. Touré "As co-vice chair of this important Commission, I look forward to sharing our knowledge and actively collaborating with partner agencies and ITU's unique mix of government and private sector members. Together, we can harness the power of technology to make a real and lasting difference to child and maternal health worldwide."

Commissioners have been appointed from developed and developing countries, academia, civil society and the private sector. A list of the commissioners can be found on-line.

The Commission will hold its first meeting on 26 January, and will present its final report by May 2011.

For more information about the Commission, as well as statements by President Kikwete, Prime Minister Harper, Dr. Chan and Dr. Toure, please see:

www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/accountability_commission

For more information on the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, please see:

www.everywomaneverychild.org

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