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Investing in women can lead to progress on all development goals, says Migiro



Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro

15 April 2010 – The United Nations Deputy Secretary-General has called for greater investment to ensure the health and wellbeing of women, stressing that healthy women can lead to better families and societies, and help achieve the globally agreed development targets with a 2015 deadline.

“We need to tell people that it pays to invest in women – that investing in the health and rights of women triggers greater progress for all,” Asha-Rose Migiro **said** last night at a working dinner on maternal health held outside of New York City that was attended by UN

officials, senior government officials and policymakers.

Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5 – just one of eight ambitious targets set by world leaders in 2000 to slash a host of social ills by 2015 – aims to reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters.

“We must meet our obligations to the world’s women and children. We must do so not just to achieve MDG 5,” Ms. Migiro stated.

“We must do so because healthy women are the answer to solving many of the world’s most complex and pressing problems: poverty, hunger, disease, and political instability. Healthy women are the foundation upon which all of the Millennium Development Goals stand.”

Earlier yesterday Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the development of a Joint Action Plan for accelerating progress on maternal and newborn health that will bring together governments, foundations, the corporate sector, civil society and UN agencies in a targeted effort to improve the health of women and children.

Ms. Migiro noted last night that protecting pregnant women will lead to progress beyond MDG 5.

“When women have access to family planning, they typically have smaller, healthier families. When women are healthy, and their rights are protected, they are more productive. They generate income, which helps build strong communities and societies.

“And when women have control over resources, they invest more in children’s health, nutrition and education. Such investments can break the cycle of poverty,” she stated.

She called for building “a global movement for maternal and child health,” similar to the movement launched in response to HIV which united countries, civil society, donors and affected people.

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