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## **Lauding progress to date, Ban calls for boosting efforts to save women and children**



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While lauding the progress made over the past year in the global effort to save women’s and children’s lives, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today noted that millions of them are still dying needless deaths and called for advancing the goal of saving 16 million lives by 2015.

“When we deliver for every woman and every child, we will advance a better life for all people around the world,” Mr. Ban said at an [event](#) held at UN Headquarters on the margins of the 66th session of the General Assembly.

“One year ago, we launched the [Every Woman Every Child](#) initiative out of our conviction that in our time, it is wrong to allow women and children to die when we have the tools to save them,” said the Secretary-General.

“On that day, we said we would carry out commitments to improve women’s and children’s health. We said we would develop a framework to ensure accountability. We said we would work together to bring in new partners.

“I am happy to say today, one year later, we are delivering on all three fronts,” said Mr. Ban.

“As of today, over 60 countries have committed to step up efforts to improve women and children’s health,” he reported to the meeting attended by heads of State, business leaders and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

“They are training more health workers... investing in essential – but often neglected – medical supplies... providing access to family planning... and putting more money into health and development budgets.

“But millions of women and children are still dying needless deaths,” he added. “Political roadblocks litter the path ahead. Decisions to invest where resources are most needed can be slow. A woman’s right to access the services she needs is sometimes denied.”

Nevertheless, Mr. Ban said he is optimistic. A one-year progress update launched today, *Saving the Lives of 16 Million*, shows that in the first year of the effort, commitments have been implemented and enhanced, new partners have come on board, funding has been increased, policies improved and services strengthened on the ground.

More than 100 new partners, including governments, civil society and multilateral organizations, joined the initiative, bringing the total to more than 200 since the effort was first launched.

Private sector partners include Merck, which will launch a 10-year effort to prevent, treat, and diagnose the top three causes of death in pregnant women; and Sesame Workshop, which will produce multimedia early child initiatives aimed at promoting general health, HIV/AIDS education and early prevention of malaria.

Although much progress has been made, every year 7.6 million young children die from preventable causes, and over 350,000 women lose their lives unnecessarily from complications with pregnancy and childbirth. Particularly in Central Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the rate of decline is still not enough to save 16 million lives by 2015.

The Secretary-General urged participants to follow through on their pledges and said that momentum for Every Woman Every Child must be translated into lasting gains in women’s and children’s health.

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