## Quality, Equity, Dignity

# The network to improve quality of care for maternal, newborn and child health

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES









Quality, equity, dignity: the network to improve quality of care for maternal, newborn and child health – strategic objectives

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The past two decades have been marked by substantive progress in reducing maternal and child deaths. Yet progress has often been slow to reach those who need it most. Provision of quality care is uneven, and often fails to respect the rights and dignity of those who seek it.

Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda, supported by the World Health Organization, the H6 partnership and partners from all stakeholder groups, have brought together the Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, ('the QoC Network'). Inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals and the Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, countries in the QoC Network have agreed on a vision that every pregnant woman and newborn receives good-quality care throughout pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period. The vision is underpinned by the core values of quality, equity and dignity.

As a step towards ending preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths and achieving universal health coverage, countries in the QoC Network will work together to halve maternal and newborn deaths and stillbirths in participating health facilities in a five-year period.

This document sets out the four strategic objectives of the QoC Network: leadership, action, learning, and accountability. The strategic objectives are underpinned by the importance of community engagement in improving the quality of care. They were reached by consensus among the QoC Network countries and partners present at the Network launch meeting in Lilongwe, Malawi, in February 2017.

The strategic objectives and their related outputs and key deliverables will inform implementation of quality improvement in a way that is scalable and sustainable. They also provide a basis for development of monitoring frameworks which will enable tracking of progress towards the goals and targets of the QoC Network.

Lastly, the document describes the mechanisms for supporting the QoC Network. The leaders of the QoC Network are the countries participating, who will share information on successes and challenges through a national and global learning network. WHO will provide technical and managerial secretariat to the QoC Network while task-oriented working groups will support countries by providing guidance and tools to support the implementation of improvements in quality of care, supporting quality of care monitoring, catalysing stakeholders to take part in country implementation, and promoting the QoC Network as an implementing platform of the wider Quality Equity Dignity campaign for every woman and every child.

Although the QoC Network is initially focusing its efforts on mothers and newborns, it will quickly expand to include child health and aims to gradually cover the full continuum of care. It is also expected that the number of countries that join the QoC Network increases as the learnings from implementation grow.

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have set ambitious health-related targets for mothers, newborns and children, which countries have committed to achieving by 2030.¹ Working towards these will mean progress is made on universal health coverage (UHC) and on achieving the goals of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health ('the Global Strategy')² as well as the goals of the Every Woman Every Child movement.¹ The Global Strategy, with the goals SURVIVE, THRIVE and TRANSFORM, is aligned with the SDGs and was launched by the UN Secretary-General and world leaders in September 2015. Achieving these goals is a key priority for WHO Member States, as reflected in the World Health Assembly resolutions on UHC (WHA64.9) and the implementation of the Global Strategy (WHA69.2).
- 2. Globally, the rate of skilled birth attendance during childbirth has increased from 58% in 1990 to 73% in 2013,<sup>3</sup> mostly due to increases in facility-based births. Evidence shows, however, that giving birth in a health facility with a skilled attendant is not sufficient to reduce maternal and newborn deaths and severe morbidity.<sup>4</sup> Many women and their babies die as a result of poor care, even after reaching a health facility. If we want to accelerate reductions in maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity, improving the quality of care and patient safety is critical.
- 3. WHO envisions a world in which "every pregnant woman and newborn receives quality care throughout pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period". This vision is supported by two complementary global action agendas conceptualized by WHO and partners in 2013–2014: Strategies towards Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality (EPMM) and the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP).
- 4. In this context, nine countries supported by WHO, the H6 partnership (WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, and the World Bank) and partners from all stakeholder groups have launched the Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health ('the QoC Network'). In the nine participating countries, the QoC Network aims to halve the rates of maternal and newborn deaths and stillbirths in targeted health-care facilities within five years.

The Ood Nativers believes that coordinated actions to implement effective scalable

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