



making pregnancy safer



- Global action for
- skilled attendants for
- pregnant women



Department of Reproductive Health and Research
Family and Community Health
World Health Organization, Geneva



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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

A health sector responsibility 2

Increasing access - begins with mobilizing what you have 3

Call for action 4

The 5+5 Strategy 5

The accountability framework 6

What WHO is doing to galvanise this action 15

Appendix 1 16

Appendix 2 20

Appendix 3 25

Appendix 4 30

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACNM	American College of Nurse-Midwives
ANC	Antenatal care
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
EURO	WHO Regional Office for Europe
FIGO	International Federation of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HRP	UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction
ICM	International Confederation of Midwives
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MPR	Making Pregnancy Safer initiative
MTCT	Mother-to-child transmission
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
RHL	WHO's Reproductive Health Library
SEARO	WHO Regional Office for South-east Asia
TBA	Traditional birth attendant
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

In December 2000, 149 Heads of State or Government and 189 Member States jointly endorsed the Millennium Declaration which committed signatories to achieving, by 2015, ambitious goals in poverty reduction, alleviation of hunger, control of disease, achievement of universal education and reversing environmental degradation. These goals are known collectively as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDG process is designed to enhance accountability and to stimulate quantitative and qualitative changes in the way countries and development partners monitor improvements. The MDGs will serve as the framework for reporting on progress in development for the next 15 years, with achievements measured in terms of a 1990 baseline and a 2015 target. This framework aims to bring all development partners together around a common, unified agenda that is focused on poverty alleviation.

The reduction of maternal mortality is one of the key goals of the Millennium Declaration. In addition, the goal on the reduction of under-five mortality will require greater attention to the needs of the newborn if it is to be realized. Thus, attention to both maternal and newborn health is central to the attainment of the MDGs.

In the MDG framework, two indicators are proposed for monitoring progress towards the maternal health goal namely, the maternal mortality ratio and the proportion of deliveries with a skilled health care provider. The need for access to skilled health care for pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period has been central to WHO's Making Pregnancy Safer initiative. However, two years of efforts in the Making Pregnancy Safer initiative, together with the experiences of partners working in safe motherhood, have shown that countries have yet to integrate increasing access to skilled care for pregnant women into their national health and development plans. Concerns have been expressed that the strategies required are complex and too difficult to implement because of human resource constraints.

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