

Intervention by Mrs. K Sujatha Rao, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, On the occasion of launch of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy on Women's and Children's Health, ECOSOC on September 22, 2010

I consider it a great privilege to be given this opportunity to welcome and applaud the initiative taken by the Secretary General in formulating the **Global Strategy on Women and Children's Health**. This is indeed a fulfilling moment for those of us who have been working in this sector for years.

India started this millennium with the daunting task of reducing maternal mortality from an estimated 301 per 100,000 live births. 2005 was a landmark year when India launched the National Rural Health Mission that has helped us strengthen the public health infrastructure and the appointment of over 100,000 healthcare providers and over 700,000 trained community workers.

Last year, nearly 10 million women have been provided a cash incentive under a conditional cash transfer scheme and free diet and treatment as an incentive for promoting institutional deliveries. These efforts have helped reduce mortality to 230.

India is spending over US \$ 3.5 billion each year on rural health with substantial expenditure on services aimed towards women's and children's health.

Currently, we are focusing our efforts in 235 districts that account for nearly 500 million people and 70 % of all infant and maternal deaths. District data is being analyzed to prepare a costed plan to be implemented by all partners. This will be launched in the November inter ministerial meeting on Maternal Health in Delhi which will be the first step in translating the vision of the Secretary General's global strategy to action on ground.

India looks forward to providing technical assistance to other countries and sharing our experience, as well as in supporting the creation of a platform for global knowledge management to oversee the dissemination of best practices.

India reaffirms its commitment once again to the global community that it shall strive to ensure achieving Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 by 2015.

India's commitment: India is spending over US \$ 3.5 billion each year on health services, with substantial expenditure on services aimed towards women's and children's health. Currently, India is focusing on strengthening its efforts in the 235 districts that account for nearly 70% of all infant and maternal deaths. Between now and 2015, India will provide technical assistance to other countries and share its experience, and will support the creation of a platform for global knowledge management to oversee the dissemination of best practices.

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