

5 September 2007

JOINT INTERNATIONAL HEALTH PARTNERS STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF

THE GAVI ALLIANCE, GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA, JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNICEF, UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, WORLD BANK AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

5 September 2007, London – We, as international health partners committed to improving health and development outcomes in the world, welcome and fully support the International Health Partnership's mission to strengthen health systems, and we congratulate those involved for setting it in motion.

Despite advances over recent years – for example, in expanding vaccination coverage and access to antiretroviral therapy – progress towards achieving the key health targets in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is too slow, costs lives and must improve. One woman dies in childbirth each minute. Every day, about 28,000 children under five die from largely preventable causes, including malaria, more than 10,000 people are infected with HIV and 22,000 people become sick with tuberculosis.

This is neither fair nor tolerable. Rates of death and illness must be reduced, health inequalities resolved and access to basic health services vastly increased.

Urgent action is needed if we are to get back on track to reach these goals. This process must be country-led and outcome-driven, based on priorities set out in comprehensive national health plans. It will require increased emphasis on collaboration, team-work and effective coordination.

The renewed political interest in strengthening health systems gives us the important opportunity we need to redouble our efforts to meet the challenge of the MDGs head-on. Strengthening health systems means addressing key constraints related to health worker staffing, infrastructure, health commodities, logistics, tracking progress and effective financing.

We will be coordinated and accountable in this work and take every opportunity to capture knowledge and lessons learned in improving health programmes. Jointly, we will provide technical assistance and financing to countries so they can move towards effective and sustainable health systems that deliver improved health services for all. We will pursue this with the active engagement of developing countries, the global health community, all development partners and civil society partners.

Building on past successes and ongoing efforts, we can and must do better – together.

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