

6th Annual Global Parliamentarians Summit



**REPORT OF THE DISCUSSION ON MDG 5:
IMPROVING MATERNAL HEALTH**

MDG 5: Improving Maternal Health



The new data from the Lancet demonstrated that the global efforts are finally having a great impact on maternal mortality and should therefore enhance more investment. This being said, we need commitment and political will to improve health care for women and newborn.

The group discussion revealed that:

- Funding women's health is not expenditure, it is an investment.
- International pressure on government to make maternal mortality a priority is essential.
- Donor countries should not impose restrictions to practices that they support in their own country.

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- Separate funds for natural disaster relief should be implemented worldwide so that regular recurrent funding for women's health is not impacted.
- Family planning together with maternal and newborn interventions can potentially substantially reduce maternal and newborn mortality.
- Major investment in skilled attendant at birth, from the community to the first referral level, is strongly needed.
- Community efforts to improve maternal health is a key strategy, such as the grand-mother model with home visiting by community workers and emergency preparedness using technology such as cell phones.
- Maternity centers must offer culturally-respected practices in a holistic women-centered approach (such as choosing the birthing position and allowing family participation).

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- Elevating educational level for all girls and women is a key component to strengthen the labour force, increase the household wealth and decrease the maternal mortality.
- Maternal mortality in wars and conflicts zones must be addressed, as women and girls are being targeted for extreme violence and rape.
- Domestic and sexual violence is a major barrier to women and newborn's health.

We must acknowledge that Africa is going through a “gender revolution” as some institutions are achieving the gender parity (such as Rwanda and the African Union). But to achieve our goal, we must engage all citizens, political and religious leaders, men, women's groups and youth in a common effort to scale up interventions to reduce maternal mortality. **This year is a turning point: it is the time to make a difference, and invest in women and newborn's health.**

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