

## **LEAD THE CHANGE for Mothers and Children**

**International Conference and Report Launch  
Countdown to 2015 for Maternal,  
Newborn & Child Survival**

**17-19 April 2008, Cape Town, South Africa**

You are invited to the pioneering international conference and report launch *Countdown to 2015 for Maternal, Newborn & Child Survival* to be held on 17-19 April 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa.

*Countdown* is a collaborative effort of individuals and institutions which tracks progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 to reduce child and maternal mortality.

The first *Countdown* conference, held in 2005, focused on child survival. This year it has been expanded to include maternal and newborn health. *Countdown* partners include the Bellagio Child Survival Group, BASICS, DFID UK, Family Care International, the International Pediatric Association, the Lancet, the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH), Save the Children, UNICEF, UNFPA, USAID, WHO and the World Bank.

*Countdown* 2008 is being hosted in conjunction with the 118th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and aims to mobilize Parliamentarians from both developing and developed countries in support of policies to reduce preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths in developing countries.



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**The 2008 International Conference and Report Launch *Countdown to 2015 for Maternal, Newborn & Child Survival* will take place at the Westin Grand Cape Town Arabella Quays Hotel, within the complex of the Cape Town International Convention Center.**

**The conference will convene 400 delegates, government leaders, ministers, public advocates, representatives from UN agencies, academia and civil society and Members of Parliament (MPs).**





## SPECIAL INVITATION TO PARLIAMENTARIANS

Every minute a mother dies giving birth. And every day nearly 27 000 children in poor communities are dying of conditions which are either preventable or treatable. 97% of these deaths are concentrated in 68 countries, all in the developing world. These countries are the focus of the *Countdown* effort.

Interested Parliamentarians and those from 68 focus countries are cordially invited to the IPU/*Countdown* Special Session exclusively dedicated to facilitate discussion between Parliamentarians and *Countdown* partners.

***IPU/Countdown Special Session***  
***Thursday, 17 April, 16.00-18.00***  
***Westin Grand Hotel, Cape Town***

The IPU/*Countdown* Special Session will showcase presentations by international champions advocating for the cause of maternal, newborn and child health, as well as Parliamentarians leading this cause in their own countries.



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### ***Why focus on MDGs 4 and 5?***

In 2000, world leaders committed to achieving the MDGs by 2015. However, many developing countries are seriously off track to achieve these Goals. Political commitment by Parliamentarians to MDGs 4 & 5 on child and maternal health can make a critical difference to promote investment which is urgently needed.

### ***Missing the world's attention and resources***

As of 2005, key international donors invested only US\$3 billion in maternal, newborn and child health care, when the estimated need in developing countries is an additional US\$10 billion a year. More than 10 million child and maternal deaths occur every year due to a lack of access to basic health services. This vast human loss results in a serious financial burden for struggling economies: USAID estimates the global economic impact of maternal and newborn mortality alone is US\$15 billion in lost potential production every year.

### ***Act now to save the future***

We know that the MDGs on child and maternal health are achievable - if sound policies, financial resources and political commitment exist and are invested in effective programmes.

The 2008 International Conference and Report Launch *Countdown to 2015 for Maternal, Newborn & Child Survival* and its Special Session with Parliamentarians will provide you with the most up-to-date information as well as practical tools to support you to champion the cause of mothers and children.

We invite you to visit the *Countdown* website for more information about the event and focus countries:

[www.countdown2015mnch.org](http://www.countdown2015mnch.org).

