



Monday, July 6, 2009

Global campaign calls on G8 leaders to make their mothers proud

A global campaign backed by international figures including Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schiffer, Emma Thompson, Gwyneth Paltrow, Yoko Ono, Wendi Murdoch, Christiane Amanpour, Annie Lennox and JK Rowling is being launched today calling on G8 leaders to keep their promises on maternal health.

With only 2 days to go to the G8, campaigners are publishing [full page adverts](#) across G8 countries in newspapers with a combined circulation of over seven million.

The adverts show the G8 leaders pictured with their mothers, as in a family photo album. They are simply asked to make their mothers proud, by working together to honour previous pledges of action.

Christiane Amanpour said:

"In Ireland, one woman in 40,000 dies in childbirth. In Afghanistan, it's one woman in 8. We are here to say that it is simply no longer ok."

Yoko Ono said:

"Families, communities, and whole societies, are built on the mother-child relationship. There are simple actions that G8 leaders can take to support this most vital human bond, with massive benefit across the world."

Naomi Campbell said:

"There has been a risk for women in childbirth since the world began. But in 2009, for a woman to die because she doesn't have the medication to stop pre eclampsia – medication which costs 20p – is simply, morally, ethically, and deeply, wrong. Eight world leaders in Italy this week have the ability to stop this outrage. We urge them to take this preventable, tragedy seriously."

JK Rowling said:

"Today we are asking the G8 leaders to ensure that every child across the world grows up with the vital support of their mother, as they did."

Gwyneth Paltrow said:

"It is one of the great scandals facing our generation. While we are worrying about rising taxes, there are women dying in childbirth for the lack of a sutre-stitching kit which costs a couple of pounds. It's simply no longer acceptable that we ignore this disgrace."

Emma Thompson said:

"The statistics surrounding maternal mortality are tragic. How can we begin to resolve any of the problems facing the developing world if we cannot first save the lives of these women?"

Annie Lennox said:

"The fact that 80% of these deaths are preventable means there is no excuse for a delay in reducing them. I hope the G8 leaders prioritise this issue at the summit in Italy this week."

Brigid McConville, Director of the White Ribbon Alliance in the UK, Said

"We know how to prevent women dying in pregnancy and birth; we must invest in many more health workers. Now is the time for world leaders to deliver on their promises"

The advert has been created by Saatchi and Saatchi London, and freud communications, and published under the auspices of the White Ribbon Alliance, as part of its ongoing campaign to continue raising international awareness about the nearly 600,000 women who die needlessly each year in pregnancy and childbirth, worldwide. For more information, go to www.whiteribbonalliance.org. The advert is being published in *Wall Street Journal, The Times* (London), *Evening Standard, Die Welt, Toronto Globe and Mail, La Stampa, Le Monde* and *Novaya Gazeta*.

In Japan in 2008 G8 leaders did pledge to fill the gap in funding for 4 million health workers. However mechanisms and funding to support this promise have not yet been developed, which has meant that since the last G8 536,000 mothers who could have lived, have died (according to WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF/World Bank). And yet, some countries have made progress towards achieving the goal, despite the current worldwide economic downturn. Prime Minister Brown has committed to fulfil his promise of spending £7billion to tackle the issue of maternal mortality, and President Obama has proposed a plan to invest \$8.6 billion in development work to include reducing maternal mortality and children under 5.

Millennium Development Goal 5 is the goal to reduce maternal mortality by 75% by 2015. Yet it is the most neglected of all the MDGs, with no reduction in deaths for 20 years. The White Ribbon Alliance is a rapidly growing global movement with members from all walks of life in 140 countries, now successfully pressing for change at every level. We now have the best chance in many years to save the lives of millions of women – who are central to all development – if health workers are trained and retained across the world.

Notes to editor:

- Africa accounts for nearly 50% of the world's maternal deaths, and there has been a minimal decline in maternal mortality in the region since 1990.
- Between 2004 and 2007, G7 commitments for infectious diseases increased by \$2.5 billion whereas commitments for health systems fell by \$1.7 million.
- G7 financing for basic health – which includes the interventions most likely to target poor health in children - as a share of total G7 assistance for health in Africa has remained nearly flat since 2004.

Mothers of the G8 Leaders:

Jessie Elizabeth Brown, nee Souter (Gordon Brown): After marrying Rev Dr John Ebenezer Brown in 1947, Jessie ministered to his flock, frequently handing out food and cash to the needy.

Stanley Ann Dunham (Barack Obama): An American anthropologist and left-wing social activist who taught in the American embassy in Indonesia teaching English. She traveled around the world, pursuing a career in rural development that took her to Ghana, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Rosa Berlusconi, nee Bossi (Silvio Berlusconi): Following the loss of her mother when she was 16, it fell to her to run the household and raise her brothers. Later when her husband fled to Switzerland during the war, she worked at Pirelli in order to support the family.

Andrée Sarkozy, nee Mallah (Nicolas Sarkozy): After her husband walked out on Andree and their three children, she divorced him bringing up her three sons on her own. She trained as a lawyer, getting up at dawn to study before her boys woke.

Margaret Harper, née Johnston (Stephen Harper): Stephen Harper was the eldest of three sons.

Kazuko Aso (Taro Aso): Kazuko Aso is the daughter of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru who governed Japan through most of the period of U.S. occupation of the Japanese islands, serving as Japan's first lady.

Herlind Merkel, nee Jentzsch (Angela Merkel): A teacher

Yulia Veniaminovna Medvedeva, née Shaposhnikova (Dmitry Medvedev): A former university Professor

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