

Remarks by Kenneth Frazier, Chairman, President, and CEO, Merck

"Merck for Mothers" Public Announcement
Every Woman Every Child High-Level Event
United Nations, New York, NY
September 20, 2011

Mr. Secretary, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen –

During my brief remarks, somewhere a woman will die while trying to give life. Righting this age-old wrong is what inspires me and all of my colleagues at Merck to put our shoulders to the wheel to help address what may be the world's oldest and most shockingly preventable human health tragedy – maternal mortality.

Today, Merck commits itself to a world where no woman has to die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Today, we extend our hand to join the circle of organizations and individuals around the world – including many leaders in this room – to help reduce the global maternal mortality ratio by 75 percent. We are launching with a 10-year, half-billion-dollar initiative to speed life-saving solutions to women and are making the fight against maternal mortality part of our mission.

The name of our new initiative is "Merck for Mothers." It will apply our company's scientific and business expertise, our financial resources and most importantly – the active participation of our talented people – to this most worthy cause. We will focus on making proven solutions more widely available to the women who need them most, and on developing new, game-changing medical technologies that work – and are affordable – for women in the poorest regions of the world.

We applaud the work of the Commission on Information and Accountability, and, as with everything we do at Merck, we will hold ourselves accountable for both the successes and setbacks we experience in this new initiative.

Over the next decade, with our partners, Merck will help improve the quality and supply of diagnostic, prevention, and treatment products for hemorrhaging after childbirth and life-threatening high-blood pressure during pregnancy. We will strengthen medical education for front-line healthcare workers; explore sustainable models for health delivery; and expand access to family planning – which is known to have an important role in reducing maternal mortality.

We appreciate that achieving success in the fight to reduce maternal deaths may be challenging at times. And we will share what we learn with the global health community through our transparency efforts.

We further pledge – again in partnership – to help raise public awareness, improve policies and use Merck's voice to encourage more companies from many industries to join this specific global effort.

We approach this initiative with fervor but with humility and deep respect for those already dedicated to reducing maternal mortality. We will continue to listen respectfully, learn eagerly, and collaborate

transparently with many of you and with the healthcare workers on the front lines of this tragic reality for far too many women.

In fact, we have already begun to listen closely to the voices of people on the front lines and have worked with partners to ensure that their voices are heard throughout this week. With us here today are doctors and midwives from countries where the needs are greatest. I encourage you to continue to seek out those on the front lines and learn the truths they know.

I want to thank you all today. As we launch "Merck for Mothers," we know that we face a long battle ahead, one with seemingly intractable obstacles. The UN has made 2015 the measuring stick for its Millennium Development Goals, and that date is rapidly approaching. Merck pledges that we will continue this fight for the long haul so that – working together with committed partners – we can better ensure that no woman will have to risk her life to give life to others.

Again, thank you Mr. Secretary for your leadership and vision, and thank you all for the privilege of joining this noble effort.