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## **Development Partners' Joint Statement of Commitment**

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### **Adolescent Health Conference, New Delhi, Jan 7-9, 2013**

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The National Adolescent Health Program is a landmark step forward in promising health, opportunities and brighter prospects for millions of adolescents in India. We, UNICEF, WHO, BMGF, DFID and UNFPA and USAID congratulate the Government of India for launching this very detailed programme that addresses the urgent needs of adolescents.

We saw in presentations made by adolescents at the launch event that the strategy could fulfil some very real needs of India's adolescents; and is a much needed investment in helping them achieve their dreams, their potential. At the same time, implementing this massive program that seeks to reach 20% of the world's adolescents is a herculean task. It would require convergent, collective efforts.

**We all agree that for successfully addressing adolescent needs, a multi sectoral, holistic approach is required with multiple stakeholders involved. The participation of adolescents in all stages of implementation is absolutely essential if we are to fulfil the agenda of adolescents and young people.**

In many countries, despite significant progress, adolescents —especially girls — are still denied the investments and opportunities that they need to realize their full potential. Challenges from multiple and overlapping forms of inequality, disempowerment and discrimination need to be addressed. As a result, far too many adolescents cannot access resources for health, education and employment that would allow them to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

There is global recognition that additional investments in young people are indispensable for reducing poverty, and achieving sustainable development.

At the 6<sup>th</sup> Asia and Pacific Population Conference in September 2013, member governments issued a strong reaffirmation that gender equality and young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights must be a key part of the post 2015 agenda.

Governments acknowledged that fulfilling these priorities remains one of the most important parts of the region's unfinished agenda. They agreed on the need to provide young people the freedom and ability to make informed and responsible decisions, to fulfil their potential, and participate fully in economies and societies.

The Government of India's National Adolescent Health program is an important step towards meeting these goals. The program recognises the importance of providing not only sexual and reproductive health but also of addressing nutrition, life skills, violence and mental health. It engages the community and reaches out to adolescents in schools and communities. All these factors are central to achieving good public health.

The programme also enables adolescents to work as partners with the government in providing health information and services. Adolescents' participation in policy making and implementation is crucial and young people's voices are central in post 2015 goals.

We are committed to partnering with the government to implement programs that fulfil rights, achieve gender equality, meet critical adolescent needs and enable them to fulfil their potential.

*First, focus on inequity among adolescents*

- Inequity in access to quality social services is especially exacerbated during adolescence, excluding those most in need, and hampering large-scale and sustainable results for all. Partners need to carefully analyse and address drivers of inequity to ensure that any social service reaches the most vulnerable adolescent.

*Second, support stronger investment in Adolescent girls*

- Development Partners (DPs) could explore more channels to reach out to adolescent girls with health services and information; reaching the unreached. Social marketing and franchising, for example, offers useful lessons and solutions to improve the delivery of health services.
- DPs will further invest in peer education, adolescence education in schools and out of schools.

- Support empowerment programmes for girls that address the social determinants of girls' health and well-being, especially of the most vulnerable groups.

### Third, Develop Strategic Partnerships

- Development agencies will support the development of strategies to engage the private sector and sensitise them to the needs of adolescents. Corporate social responsibility and business priorities on “bottom of the pyramid” could be leveraged to reach more adolescents in innovative ways.

### Fourth, Bring Best Practices to The Table

- We will collect evidence of best practices and help the government adapt global approaches to local contexts.

### Fifth, Support Capacity Building and Research

- We remain committed to capacity-building of program managers and health workers to help implement, monitor and guide this program; and to supporting research and the availability of data to generate evidence for action.
- We could support and initiate independent operational research to know works and what doesn't.

### Sixth, Leverage Technology

- Technology can help us reach out to greater numbers of young people like never before, and in ways we could not have imagined earlier. We would further explore initiatives for the innovative use of technology in providing health and development.
- Finally, all six precedent principles can be much more successful when implemented in innovative ways. Partners need to integrate in any decision the wealth of creativity and innovation that adolescents have, and that will empower adolescents to help programs reach those most at risk.

Adolescents need to be at the top of the national and regional agenda, and their health and economic status has far-reaching consequences for everyone,

everywhere. Investing in them would help us meet development targets and boost economic growth, but we must also strive to ensure that the issues we address have a powerful impact on individual lives.