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PRESS RELEASE

SAVING LIVES AT BIRTH: A GRAND CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES GOAL OF ADDITIONAL \$50M FOR MATERNAL AND NEWBORN INNOVATION

The five-year expansion aims to promote and scale creative solutions to reduce maternal and newborn mortality in low-income communities

SEATTLE – Today, the *Saving Lives at Birth: A Grand Challenge for Development* partners announced they aim to invest an additional \$50 million to save the lives of mothers and newborns in developing countries by investing in innovative ideas and approaches towards maternal and newborn care.

The announcement, made at the annual Grand Challenges Meeting in Seattle, Washington, leverages the collective resources of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Government of Norway, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Grand Challenges Canada is assessing its contribution. Over the next five years, the additional funding will accelerate and expand *Saving Lives at Birth*'s investment into groundbreaking, sustainable projects that can have a transformative effect on the lives of pregnant women and their babies in the hardest to reach corners of the world.

"Saving Lives at Birth has mobilized the world's brightest thinkers, researchers and entrepreneurs around the critical issue of maternal and newborn health," said USAID Administrator Shah. "During the next stage of this Challenge, we aim to put an even greater focus on sourcing and accelerating innovations that significantly expand our reach to families around the world."

"Birth is a dangerous and vulnerable time for mothers and babies in the developing world," said Justine Greening, Secretary of State for International Development of the United Kingdom. "Practical new solutions are vital if we are to see this risk reduced and lives saved. Already we have seen many innovative new ideas treatments and technologies come forward. This success will continue as the Grand Challenge for Development program expands."

The *Saving Lives at Birth: Grand Challenge for Development* is a global call for innovative

prevention and treatment ideas, approaches, and technologies that aim to reduce infant and maternal mortality around the time of birth. To date, the Grand Challenge for Development has funded 81 innovations over the course of four award rounds to address the 289,000 maternal deaths, 2.8 million newborn deaths, and 2.6 million stillbirths that occur each year.

“Without innovations in technology, medicine, financing and modes of cooperation and partnership, we could not have made the progress we have made today on MDGs 4, 5 and 6. However, innovation does not just happen by itself. This thriving partnership has been a great platform for nurturing innovations,” said Børge Brende, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, “in its new phase it should go the extra mile to achieve impact.” Norway is making preparations for continued support beyond 2015.

“The Saving Lives at Birth partnership is crucial to ensuring that all children not only survive, but thrive and reach their full potential,” said Trevor Mundel, President of Global Health at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “Supporting innovations to improve the health of children and mothers is one of the best investments we can make.”

Dr. Peter A. Singer, Chief Executive Officer of Grand Challenges Canada said: “Saving Lives at Birth has given us a fantastic pipeline of innovations to save the lives of women and children during their most vulnerable hours. Maternal, newborn and child health is Canada’s top development priority, and Grand Challenges Canada is proud to work with Saving Lives at Birth partners to support these ground-breaking innovations and help them to scale impact.”

Saving Lives at Birth will issue its next call for innovations in early 2015.

For more information on the Challenge visit www.savinglivesatbirth.net.

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