

20 September, 2016

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,


We are pleased to share our commitment to the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health through the launch of the BabyWASH Coalition. This five-year initiative, focused on bringing together the voices of the nutrition, early childhood development (ECD), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) communities to achieve more effective integrated approaches during the first 1,000 days, is a response to the call of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development for increased partnerships and inter-sectoral collaborations. It will help to ensure improved health and well-being for every woman and child, everywhere.

The success of each Sustainable Development Goal is linked to the progress of all the others, especially for the most vulnerable, such as children in their first 1,000 days of life from conception to age two. A mother's primary concern is a healthy, thriving child able to reach his/her full potential. The differences between nutrition and early childhood development messages do not matter to her, nor do technical distinctions between water, sanitation and hygiene, and maternal, newborn and child health interventions. To a mother, the essential elements which contribute to her child's well-being are interconnected. Therefore, meeting the full spectrum of needs for a mother and her child requires greater collaboration and innovation among stakeholders from different sectors and leads us to a new way of working, free from our traditional development partitions.

One organization alone cannot effectively challenge the barriers to integration which exist in government policies and ministries, in funding, and in the attitudes and structures of our own organizations. But together, we can overcome these barriers by advocating with policy makers, funders and implementers. We can promote practices that lead to greater impact through effectively integrated approaches, and we can develop metrics to measure them. The BabyWASH Coalition will begin its collaborative work in these three areas.

Integration is not a new concept. Excellent examples exist, but it gets more complex as more sectors are integrated. Now is the right time for strategic, purposeful integration to become the normal way of working. We will devote the energy and attention to this Coalition which will ensure it makes a critical contribution to the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.

Sincerely,



Kevin Jenkins



Barbara Frost



Patrick Fine



Andrea Tamburini

