



New Partnership Expands Access to Contraception for 27 Million Women and Girls in Low-Income Countries

Wednesday, September 26th at 12 noon; UN Headquarters, Stake Out Area 1, North Lawn Building

Presenters: President William Clinton; Goodluck Jonathan, President of Nigeria; Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway; Justine Greening, UK Secretary of State for International Development; Raj Shah, Administrator USAID; Scott Sherriff, Senior Vice President, Bayer HealthCare

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For TV producers: *B-roll is available*

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New York, September 26, 2012 -- A new partnership announced today at the United Nations will make a safe, effective, long-acting, reversible method of contraception available to more than 27 million women in the world's poorest nations.

The new partnership is a joint effort of the Clinton Health Access Initiative, the Governments of Norway, the United Kingdom, the US and Sweden, The Children's Investment Fund Foundation, other groups and the German pharmaceutical firm Bayer HealthCare AG, which is the manufacturer of the contraceptive device.

The device, pre-qualified by the World Health Organization (WHO), provides effective contraception for five years.

Under the agreement, Bayer is reducing by more than half the current 18 USD price of its long-acting, reversible method of contraception, Jadelle, in return for a commitment to assure funding for at least 27 million contraceptive devices over the next six years. The agreement will be effective starting January 2013.

At present, more than 200 million women and girls in developing countries who do not want to get pregnant have no access to modern contraceptives and family planning services.

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of Norway and President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria are co-chairs of the UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children. They have worked together with international experts to provide this life-saving contraceptive.

When fully implemented, the partnership will avert more than 280,000 child and 30,000 maternal deaths due to improved birth spacing and by avoiding other problems such as preterm births. According to the WHO, waiting at least 2-3 years between pregnancies reduces infant and child mortality and benefits maternal health.

The partnership is expected to avert almost 30 million unwanted pregnancies from 2013 to 2018 and will save an estimated 250 million USD in global health costs.

The Bayer contraceptive device is inserted into the inner side of the upper arm. It consists of two plastic rods, each about the size of a matchstick, which contain long acting, slow-release progestogen and provides safe and effective protection against pregnancy. It is suitable for almost all women and is also safe for women who are breastfeeding.

This simple procedure can be done by trained health workers - nurses, midwives - and provides effective contraception for five years. The rods can be removed at any time a woman wants her fertility restored.

“These contraceptive devices are a very cost-effective means of contraception and they are ideal for women in rural areas, who must often travel miles by foot to reach health clinics,” says President Jonathan of Nigeria.

"As we have seen time and time again, providing women in developing countries with safe and affordable medical treatment options not only has a substantial impact on individual lives, but on entire societies," said President Bill Clinton. "I am pleased that my Foundation worked successfully alongside our partners to help reduce the cost governments must dedicate to family planning measures, as well as help address the many challenges women face when they have limited access to medical options."

“Innovation is the key to our commercial success and at the same time the basis of our social commitment,” says Dr. Jörg Reinhardt, Chief Executive Officer of Bayer HealthCare AG. “That’s why we invest significantly in research and development of new treatment options. We want as many people as possible to share this progress--regardless of their income or where they live.”

Surveys show that about 600 million women in the developing world use some form of contraception, but only 1-2 percent of them have these types of long-acting, modern devices. Those surveys also show that as many as 20 percent would prefer them, if they were available.

The UK's International Development Secretary Justine Greening says: "It is very welcome news that this agreement has been reached. I congratulate the partners on their work to make it happen. It shows just how the commitments made in July at the London Summit on Family Planning are making a real change to women across the world, providing access to family planning and contraception to 120 million additional women in the world's poorest countries by 2020."

The new partnership should remove some of the barriers to family planning by providing health workers with training and counseling in family planning and ensuring that the now affordable modern contraception will be available.

"This is a catalytic and groundbreaking partnership. The initiative will lower the unit price of these devices substantially, which will have a profound impact on the well-being of women and girls globally," says Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, Director General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

The partnership will focus on the world's poorest countries. These countries have also been targeted by the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. They are the least likely to meet the 2015 Millennium Development Goals set by the UN General Assembly in 1990 to reduce the number of infant and young child deaths by two thirds and to improve maternal health by 2015.

"The US Agency for International Development (USAID) is proud to have funded the development of this life-saving product," says USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah. "Today is a major step forward to making this product more accessible to millions of women, empowering them with the ability to make decisions about their health and family."

"The Children's Investment Fund is proud to be part of this agreement, which will significantly expand access to reliable contraceptives, an important factor in ensuring adolescent reproductive health," says Jamie Cooper-Hohn, CEO and President of Children's Investment Fund Foundation and UN Commissioner on Life-Saving Commodities.

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For Bayer HealthCare, this agreement is part of its "Access to Medicine" strategy, where the company is cooperating with a number of private and state organizations. Through its "Family Planning" and "Neglected Diseases" lighthouse projects, the company is enabling access to health care. The "Family Planning" lighthouse projects also address three of the eight Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations: strengthening equal opportunities, reducing child mortality and improving health care for mothers.