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Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates:

I represent the International Pediatric Association, with membership of 143 National Pediatric Associations, 10 Regional Pediatric Associations, and 11 International Pediatric Specialty Associations. The World Health Day launched on April 7 2005 in New Delhi, India and the adoption of the "Delhi Declaration on the Continuum of Care for Mother, Newborn and Child Health" are our commitment to this good cause and we are devoted to the health of mothers and children around the world. We, the pediatricians of our countries, our regions, and our world, strongly believe that "Make Every Mother and Child Count" is the best strategy vital to the successful achievement of the Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 by 2015.

It is easy to talk about making every mother and child count, but how can we do this?

To begin with, we must understand the reality of the health status of mothers and children in our own countries and in the larger world around us. For mothers and children of the rich world, notable advances over recent years now offer the precious right of good health. For too many mothers and children in the developing world and the world of poverty, however, good health remains elusive. Every year in our world of today, some eleven million children die before they reach their fifth birthdays from causes that are either preventable or readily treatable. At least four million of these lost children are newborn babies who do not survive even their first week of life. And each year, more than half a million mothers do not survive the times of pregnancy and childbirth. This tragic loss of mothers and children is simply intolerable.

The tragedy of preventable death is not the only problem. We must also realize that countless millions of mothers and of children ranging in age from newborn to 18 years survive with lives diminished by poor health, stunted development, and needless suffering. The conditions causing this tragedy are rooted in poverty and neglect: newborn and maternal loss, diarrheal disease, respiratory infections, malaria, vaccine preventable diseases, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, accidents. Underlying conditions of poor nutrition, poor education, and polluted and unsafe environments add to this burden.

Why should every mother and child count? The stark tragedy of a child robbed of his or her life or health, of a family robbed of its mother, must be acknowledged. Who can place a value on the life and future of a child, or a mother? This tragic loss of life and health robs our countries and our world of their most precious resources, our families and our children. We will never have a prosperous or stable world so long as mothers and children are deprived of life and health. The futures of countries and the world alike are dimmed by this tragic and needless waste.

What can we do to make every mother and child count? The knowledge, the skills, and the tools needed to reduce the suffering and death of mothers and children exist. Our challenge is to transform our knowledge and skills into action. To meet this challenge, stakeholders in maternal and child health must work together to make better health for mothers and children a priority in all countries, and must find ways to build the needed capacity at country and community levels.

We pediatricians can and should lend our expertise and our will to this vital cause. We are doctors specifically trained in child health. We devote our professional lives to child health. We work in many places: in public hospitals and clinics, in government Ministries of Health, in academic institutions, with agencies such as UNICEF and WHO and non-governmental organizations, and in the private sector. We can do many things to help: setting standards for the health of our children and families; highlighting the problems of child health in our own communities and countries and seeking solutions; assisting our Ministries of Health; teaching and training students and health workers; working with other stakeholders who care about children; raising our voices to advocate for maternal and child health; and, perhaps dearest to our hearts, actively caring for our children.

Through the April 7, 2005, World Health Day, we are dedicated to the health of mothers and children with the promise of making every mother and child count. We pediatricians join our effort with those of all citizens in support of this crucial endeavor. May we all make every day of every year a day to promote health of mothers and children, and may we all work for a time when every mother and child will truly be counted. We of the world pediatric community look forward to continuing collaborations and partnership with WHO in the vital interests of global child health. We at IPA strongly believe that

with our joint efforts we should be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to realize the IPA mission “Healthy Children for a Healthy World”.

Thank you for your attention.