Maternal and newborn deaths ‘cost’ the world $15 billion a year in lost productivity. “There is no better investment than safe-guarding the lives of mothers” Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General (WHA, 2009)

The world must invest in health workers to ensure all women have professional care at birth. Financial barriers must be removed. Donors and national governments alike must honour their spending promises.

Annual per capita government expenditure on health (US$)

- Less than $15
- $15–$53
- $54–$99
- $100–$299
- $300–$999
- $1000 or over
- No data

*The High Level Taskforce on Innovative Finance for Health Systems (2009) estimates $54 per person per year as an absolute minimum to provide essential services.

Overseas Development Assistance as % of Gross National Income (selected preliminary OECD figures for 2008)

Many donor countries have made a commitment of 0.7% of their GNI to ODA


Atlas prepared by the White Ribbon Alliance in conjunction with GHP3 (Univ. of Southampton) & Immpact (Univ. of Aberdeen). July 2009.
Risking Death
To Give Birth

Women in Sweden have a 1 in 17,400 chance of dying from pregnancy-related causes and give birth to an average of 1.7 children in their lifetime.

Afghan women have a lifetime risk of 1 in 8 and give birth to an average of 7 children in their lifetime.

In Peru, poor women are six times more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth than rich women.

In Niger a woman has a 1 in 7 chance of dying from pregnancy-related causes in her lifetime.

In India, nearly a quarter of all maternal deaths in the world: more than 1 every 5 minutes.

In Ethiopia, only 6% of all women deliver with a trained health worker.

In Bangladesh, only 3% of the poorest women deliver with a trained health worker compared to 40% of the most wealthy women.

The Skills Gap

Trained health workers are key to preventing maternal deaths. But they must be well trained, paid, supervised and supported by a health system which can quickly provide obstetric care in emergencies. All women – especially the poor and excluded – deserve quality professional care, without barriers of cost.

Data source: Maternal Mortality in 2005
Estimates developed by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank

Data source: WHO Proportion of births attended by a skilled health worker.
Estimates by country – 2008