

RELEASE IN FULL

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Background on the Women Deliver Conference CONTEXT The second Women Deliver conference will take place in Washington, DC on June 7-9, 2010. This conference is an international gathering that focuses on maternal health and will include an estimated 3,000 representatives from governments, civil society, multilateral organizations, and the private sector. The aim of the conference is to generate political commitment and financial investment for fulfilling Millennium Development Goal 5, which pledges a three-quarter reduction in maternal mortality and universal access to reproductive health by 2015. The conference is one of several international gatherings this year that will include a focus on maternal and child health (MCH). As you know, this issue will also feature at the G-8, where the Canadians are offering a flagship initiative on MCH, and at the Millennium Development Goals Summit in September, where the UN Secretary General is sponsoring a Joint Effort on Women and Children's Health. The US will be represented at the Women Deliver conference by Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, Undersecretary of State Maria Otero, Ambassador Melanne Vermeer, and a host of other USG participants. Please note: You recently recorded a video message that will open the conference.

The full script is below.

SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

For too long and in too many places, women have received inadequate care when they give birth. As a result, childbirth remains a leading cause of death and injury to women worldwide. The United States has elevated the issue of maternal health in our development work through the Global Health Initiative, a \$63 billion dollar proposal to help countries improve health outcomes through strengthened health systems and integrated service delivery, with a particular focus on the health of women, newborns and children. This conference—along with other international gatherings this year, including the G-8 and the Millennium Development Goals Summit in September—presents a unique opportunity to reinvigorate our commitment to maternal health. When women prosper, their families and communities prosper. Women deliver for the world – now the world needs to deliver for them. ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND The theme of this year's Women Deliver conference is "Delivering Solutions for Girls and Women," with a focus on political, economic, social/cultural, and technological solutions. Conference organizers plan to emphasize the following messages: 1) The Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved without investing in women. 2) There is just enough time, if the world commits funding now, to achieve Millennium Development Goal 5—an additional US \$10 billion annually by 2010 and US \$20 billion by 2015. Women Deliver was launched at a conference in London in 2007. Jill Sheffield is the President of the organization.

FINAL VIDEO SCRIPT WOMEN DELIVER CONFERENCE WASHINGTON, DC

I am delighted to welcome all of you to this conference and to thank you for the work you are doing to put maternal health at the top of our development agenda. Your commitment to this issue has raised awareness and inspired action around the world. We know that women represent our greatest opportunity for progress in this century. If the potential of women is fully developed, everyone benefits. And this can't be done without improving maternal health. But for too long and in too many places, women have received inadequate care when they give birth. As a result, childbirth remains a leading cause of death and injury to women worldwide. The United States has elevated this issue in our development work through the Global Health Initiative, a 63 billion dollar proposal to help countries improve health outcomes through strengthened health systems, with a particular focus on the health of women, newborns and children. We commend the Canadian government for focusing much-needed attention to this issue by offering a flagship initiative on maternal and child health at the upcoming G-8 meeting in Muskoka. The US also congratulates the United Nations Secretary General for convening governments, civil society, multilateral organizations, foundations and corporations to engage in a much-needed global effort to promote women's and children's health. These efforts—and this conference—present a unique opportunity to reinvigorate our commitment to maternal health, because when women prosper, their families and communities prosper. Women deliver for the world – now the world needs to deliver for them. Thank you.