



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHALALA, VENEMAN CO-CHAIR GROUNDBREAKING MATERNAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN

UNICEF Director Joins former HHS Secretary on *Mothers Day Every Day*:

A Campaign for Healthy Moms and Newborns

Washington, DC, March 17, 2009 — The White Ribbon Alliance (WRA) and CARE today announced that two of the nation's most accomplished champions for women, girls and global health – Donna Shalala and Ann Veneman -- will co-chair an advocacy campaign to improve maternal health and save the lives of women and newborns globally.

UNICEF Executive Director Ann Veneman is teaming up with former U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary and current University of Miami President Donna Shalala to co-chair *Mothers Day Every Day*, a campaign launched by CARE and WRA for greater U.S. leadership to advance safe and healthy pregnancy and childbirth around the world.

The bold but achievable aim of *Mothers Day Every Day* is to generate the political will and action toward the key Millennium Development Goal of reducing maternal mortality by 75% by 2015. Hundreds of thousands of lives can be saved each year through basic, low-cost interventions.

Every minute somewhere in the world a woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth. For every woman who dies, 30 more are living with debilitating injuries sustained during pregnancy or childbirth. Childbirth remains the leading killer of young women worldwide. Each year hundreds of thousands of women die of pregnancy-related causes, more than 98 percent of them in the world's poorest countries.

Shalala and Veneman are leading a powerful, bipartisan Advisory Committee for *Mothers Day Every Day*, along with campaign founders Dr. Helene Gayle, President & CEO of CARE, and Theresa Shaver, President of the Global Secretariat of the White Ribbon Alliance. Also serving on the *Mothers Day Every Day* campaign Advisory Committee are former Deputy Secretary of US Transportation Maria Cino; former U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, Ambassador Mark Dybul; President of the International Center for Research on Women, Geeta Rao Gupta; video producer for *Newsweek* and President of Haddad Media, Tammy Haddad; co-founder and editor-in-chief of *The Huffington Post*, Arianna Huffington; Ethiopian model and philanthropist Liya Kebede; political strategist Mary Matalin; artist, writer and performer, Lucy Sexton; CARE maternal health advocate Christy Turlington Burns; co-founder and CEO of Vital Voices, Melanne Vermeer; and author and writer, Elsa Walsh.

"Political will is needed and now is the time," said Shalala. "Empowering women, beginning with a healthy pregnancy and safe childbirth, is the key to greater overall global health, self-sufficiency, economic growth and peaceful sustainability."

"Every day in the United States thousands of women and families experience one of the most joyous occasions in their lifetime – the birth of a child," said Veneman. "This sadly is not the case for women in the developing world where too often a pregnant woman risks death or serious injury. This campaign will bring more awareness and a stronger voice to end this international travesty."

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If you'd like more information about the *Mothers Day Every Day* campaign, please visit www.mothersdayeveryday.org

About the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood (WRA):

The White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood is an international coalition of individuals and organizations working to increase public awareness and build political support to make pregnancy and childbirth safe for all women and newborns around the world. With members in 112 countries, WRA advocates for changes to ensure every woman's access to quality health care before, during and after childbirth. WRA works to sustain life and hope for all women and honors those who have not survived pregnancy or childbirth. For more information, please go to www.whiteribbonalliance.org.

About CARE:

Founded in 1945, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. Working side by side with poor people in more than 65 countries, CARE helps empower communities to address the greatest threats to their survival. Women are at the heart of CARE's efforts to improve health, education and economic development because experience shows that a woman's achievements yield dramatic benefits for her entire family. CARE is also committed to providing lifesaving assistance during times of crisis, and helping rebuild safer, stronger communities afterward. We advocate for policies that defend the dignity of all people and promote the eradication of poverty. Get involved at www.care.org.

