



**MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT MATAMELA CYRIL RAMAPHOSA,  
FOR THE PARTNERSHIP FOR MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD  
HEALTH (PMNCH) BOARD MEETING**

**07 DECEMBER 2022**

Chair of the PMNCH Board, the Right Honourable Helen Clark,  
Board Members,  
Invited Guests,

It is a great honour for me to speak to the Board of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

The Partnership has been instrumental over the past 17 years in bringing attention and resources to the needs of many of the world's most vulnerable individuals and communities.

These efforts have contributed to the considerable progress in averting illness and saving lives.

They have helped to expand access to education, livelihoods and necessities like water and sanitation.

We are now at a crossroads.

Global progress toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals started slowing a few years ago and then halted completely when COVID-19 came along.

The threats to the well-being and security of women, children and adolescents remain intolerably high.

We cannot accept a world in which each year nearly 300,000 women die from complications of pregnancy and 5 million children die before they reach their fifth birthday.

Women and children are disproportionately affected by drought, conflict and food insecurity, which often force them to leave their homes and communities.

We cannot change where children are born, but we can change their life prospects by tackling the inequality and poverty that leave so many of them behind.

We must do this together, each of us taking on responsibilities that suit our capabilities.

The new Global Leadership Network aims to be a key player in this collaborative effort.

The Network aims to elevate issues of direct importance to the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents to the top of global, regional and national agendas.

As the Global Leadership Network, we will advocate for increased political, financial and programmatic commitments to this effort.

An important aspect of the Network's approach is the emphasis on sharing models, ideas and best practices that can mobilise progressive action.

As South Africa, we look forward to sharing our programmes and stories with other countries and partners, while also learning from them to improve our actions in priority areas.

We need to demonstrate that we meant what we said in 2015 that women, children and adolescents are at the centre of our collective development agenda.

We must seize every opportunity to give effect to that commitment.

I am confident that the Global Leaders Network and the focused efforts of the PMNCH and its partners will continue to make a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of women, children and adolescents.

I very much look forward to collaborating with you on this crucial endeavour.

I thank you.

  
**Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa**  
**President of the Republic of South Africa**