

# GENEVA POLICY DIALOGUE SERIES ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

## The 2013 Resolve Award Celebration: Delivering on the Promise of Universal Access to Reproductive Health

Wednesday, 22 May 2013  
Vieux Bois Restaurant  
Geneva, Switzerland

### OVERVIEW

[Aspen Global Health and Development](#) and the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) [Department of Reproductive Health and Research](#) presented the second annual [Resolve Awards](#) on May 22, 2013 during the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. The prestigious Award, which recognizes excellence and innovation in the field of reproductive health care, was announced in May 2011 by the [Global Leaders Council for Reproductive Health \(GLC\)](#) during the launch of the [Geneva Policy Dialogue Series on Reproductive Health](#), an annual series hosted at the [World Health Assembly](#) (WHA) each year from 2011-2014; nominations were collected from September 2012-January 2013, and a selection committee of Council members and secretariat selected the winners.

This year, the Global Leaders Council decided to recognize brave leadership and political resolve in three 2013 Resolve Award recipients: The Gambia, Kenya and Zambia, with a Special Mention for Sierra Leone.



### SPEAKERS

The Resolve Award Celebration was hosted by **Ambassador Karen Pierce**, U.K. Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, at the Vieux Bois Restaurant.

Each of the four countries being honored selected a representative to receive the Resolve Award on the country's behalf:

- **Representing The Gambia:** Honorable Bala Garba Jahumpa, Minister of Health & Social Welfare of the Gambia

- **Representing Kenya** : Honorable Beth Mugo, Nominated Senator for Nairobi; Former Minister of Public Health & Sanitation of Kenya
- **Representing Zambia**: Honorable Joseph Kasonde, Minister of Health, Zambia
- **Representing Sierra Leone**: Honorable Miatta Barlay Kargbo, Minister of Health and Sanitation of Sierra Leone

The event also featured remarks from:

- **Honorable Nils Daulaire**, Assistant Secretary, Office of Global Health Affairs, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **Honorable Joy Phumaphi**, Chair, Global Leaders Council for Reproductive Health
- **Dr. Ariel Pablos-Mendez**, Assistant Administrator for Global Health, U.S. Agency for International Development
- **Dr. Flavia Bustreo**, Assistant Director-General of Family and Community Health, World Health Organization
- **Dr. Richard Horton**, Editor-in-Chief of the Lancet Medical Journal; Co-chair, independent Expert Review Group on Information & Accountability for Women's and Children's Health Services

## SUMMARY

More than 100 individuals representing 23 countries were present to celebrate Awardees' accomplishments and share best practices relating to innovations in policy, financing, and service delivery. Attendees included several Ambassadors and Ministers of Health, as well as representatives of national and international governing bodies such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization and multiple Ministries of Health, Embassies, and Overseas Missions. Both the private sector and the public sector were represented in the form of corporate delegates and NGO workers, respectively.

"I'd like to welcome you this evening.... to the very important celebration of the critical work that some people do for family planning," **Ambassador Pierce** said in her opening remarks, going on to cite both her personal commitment as well as the U.K.'s commitment to reproductive health. "Not only is the UK very proud to be associated with the Aspen Institute, this celebration is not just a health event. On the eve of the human rights council, I think its work recalling that health is very much a human right." She concluded, "My government will continue to champion these issues...as we are determined to improve the lives of girls and women around the globe."

GHD Executive Director **Peggy Clark** then took the podium, welcoming the audience to the third annual dialogue in the series. "The members of the GLC recognize that reproductive health is a game-changing intervention and, like many of us, have become disturbed by how far the issue fell behind in terms of funding and support, and how politicized the issue came to be. But they also know that country level accomplishment really takes a lot of work to overcome the many financial, political and logistical challenges. These challenges can be overcome, but it takes very serious innovation and commitment, and in fact, resolve."

"How wonderful to be celebrating success this evening!" The Lancet's Editor-in-Chief **Richard Horton** opened his remarks with energy, providing an overview of reproductive health in the world today from the Lancet's recent edition focusing on maternal mortality. While highlighting the success and commitments made at the Family Planning Summit, he also pointed to the gaps missing in the current conversation. "Commodities alone are not enough; interventions alone are not enough. Even when you get the most important interventions to women, unless you have comprehensive high quality care in a health system that is robust and sustainable, you will not deliver success for women," he said, quoting research being spearheaded by Dr. Lale Say at HRP. He then introduced the next two speakers to speak more to the connections between health and development.

Honorable **Nils Daulaire** commented on the Obama administration's strong commitment to making safe motherhood central to the American development agenda, as well as ensuring universal access to reproductive health as an integral part of our domestic health care. "As a physician whose worked for decades for public health and whose early experiences were working on reproductive health services in Bangladesh, I can tell you that access to family planning and other reproductive health services is not only one of the most important health interventions, but it is quite literally, a matter of life or death for millions of women." He continued, "Having almost lost my own daughter a year ago to severe preeclampsia, I know how immensely important this is."

Daulaire spoke not only to the need for reproductive health for women globally, but also to the disparities that exist within countries, including in the the US. He concluded, "Health and development are not gifts, but problems that will be creatively solved in partnerships. I am honored to continue to learn from and partner with our resolve winners tonight."

**Dr. Ariel Pablos-Mendez** then spoke to USAID's commitment to ending preventable child and maternal deaths by 2035 and the importance of reproductive health services in reaching that goal. He encouraged the audience to listen closely to the accomplishments of the winners: "Let us be reminded that despite challenges, universal access to reproductive health - actually meeting the unmet need of women who want modern contraceptive methods so they can time and space their families - is an achievable goal and a powerful means to dramatically improve the life and health of women and children."

Richard Horton then introduced Global Leaders Council for Reproductive Health chair **Joy Phumpahi**, who congratulated the Resolve winners for the progress and leadership that they embody. "It is indeed a privilege to be in the company of people who are making a difference in women's lives and particularly to be in the company of representatives of countries where the government, civil society groups, private sector, professional organizations, communities and families have taken it upon themselves, to assume the responsibility, for ensuring the responsibility that women giving life does not entail a woman giving her own life."

Before presenting the awards, Phumaphi explained, "This year's Resolve Award celebration comes at a crucial moment in our global development arena. The world's nations...are debating a framework that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals, which expire in 2015." She continued, "Progress in some areas only serves to underscore the stark inequities that remain. A woman in Afghanistan faces a 1 in 7 chance of dying in childbirth; for a woman in Sweden, that risk is only about 1 in 30,000."

Phumaphi then moderated the awards presentation itself, recognizing the success of each of the leaders and countries being honored. The first 2013 Resolve Award was given in the category of financing innovations to The Gambia for mechanisms that dramatically improved health care delivery, which has made the country the first on the African continent that can reach its entire population. To overcome the unpaved roads and aging fleet of health care vehicles, the Ministry of Health worked with the Clinton Global Initiative to leverage funding for a new fleet of vehicles, then forged a partnership with Riders for Health to maintain and operate those vehicles. The Resolve Award was accepted by Honorable **Bala Garba Jahumpa**, Minister of Health & Social Welfare of the Gambia. Jahumpa explained, "Maternal mortality in my country has declined from 760 woman in 2001 to 330 in 2012, but that is not enough...We will not stop until we can stand here and tell you that we have zero deaths per 100,000 births."

Honorable **Beth Mugo**, Nominated Senator for Nairobi and Former Minister of Public Health and Sanitation of Kenya, accepted the second award in recognition of her country's innovative population policy, which places family planning and reproductive at the center of Kenya's development strategy. "Reproductive health and culture are interlinked," Mugo explained, "When people are engaged and informed about these issues, there is an enormous amount of support." Unlike previous efforts to craft a national policy on reproductive health and

population, which failed due to lack of buy-in from key stakeholders, the National Council for Population and Development launched a three-year effort to engage citizens and leaders in developing this policy, created by and for the Kenyan people. She concluded, “This award is definitely an encouragement that will help us do better.”

The Resolve Award for service delivery was then presented to Zambia for providing integrated services that meet all of their client’s family planning and maternal and child health needs, free of charge. The ministry is leveraging resources from better funded initiatives for TB, Malaria and HIV/AIDS to integrate reproductive health services into the health provisions they offer their people. Minister of Health Dr. **Joseph Kasonde** represented Zambia, thanking the GLC for the encouragement given by the Resolve Award: “This gesture has done and will do more to bring back the spring in our step, thus enabling us to speed up or accelerate the rate at which we attain our cherished goals.”

In addition to the three Resolve Awards, the Global Leaders Council for Reproductive Health also recognized Sierra Leone with a Special Mention. The Special Mention was accepted by Honorable **Miatta Barlay Kargbo**, Minister of Health and Sanitation, who thanked the audience for the support of their efforts in Sierra Leone to engage all citizens – including women, children, young people and men- with reproductive health information and services. She added, “Reaching men is an important component to all the work we’ve been doing to empower women.” She concluded by thanking the audience: “I’d like to remind everyone that what we are doing is planting a seed for further promoting respect for women and providing a better future for our girls.”

Following the remarks made by the Resolve Awardees, Dr. **Marleen Temmerman**, Director of WHO’s Department of Reproductive Health and Research (RHR) spoke to her own experiences, having spent her early career delivering babies in Pumwani Maternity hospital in Kenya, where there were often 100 deliveries a day, sometimes without essential supplies. “It was a life-changing experience that shaped my resolve to work for universal access to reproductive health.” Temmerman reminded the audience that the Resolve Award winners embody what can be accomplished, as well as “remind[ing] us of what remains to be done. Each of us has a role to play in making that happen.”

Dr. **Flavia Bustreo’s** closing remarks highlighted how the innovative, holistic approach that Resolve Award countries have exhibited in each of their innovations relates to the larger efforts for global development. “As we countdown the last 1,000 days before 2015, there is much unfinished business in women’s and children’s health. While working on finishing the unfinished business, we must also think beyond 2015, and put forward a bold vision where all preventable maternal and child deaths end, all family planning needs are met, and universal access to reproductive health is reached.” She concluded, “As we have seen tonight, Resolve Award winners can teach us, inspire us, and point the way forward. Let us continue to identify and celebrate the most effective innovators at every level.”

Dr. Bustreo reminded the audience to nominate countries for the 2014 Award in the fall and invited everyone to stay for the reception. Many audience members stayed for an hour long reception, to eat and drink, and continued to celebrate the 2013 Resolve Winners. Although a long program of speakers, it was an inspiring evening that offered a different tone, that of energy and hope, during the busy week of WHA meetings.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- See the [agenda](#) and the program
- Watch the [ceremony video](#) and look at [photographs](#)
- Read the GLC Resolve Award Innovation Profiles featuring [The Gambia](#), [Kenya](#) and [Zambia](#)
- Review the Media Report
- Review the Event Analysis and Survey Results

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

Anyone working at country level may submit a nomination for the 2014 Resolve Award at [www.resolveaward.org](http://www.resolveaward.org). The nomination period will open from September 2013 to January 2014. The award will be presented each year at the Geneva Policy Dialogue Series for Reproductive Health events during the time of the annual World Health Assembly. Please contact [GHD.info@aspennst.org](mailto:GHD.info@aspennst.org) with any questions about the award.