

Over 250 organisations including White Ribbon Alliance, Merlin, Every Mother Counts and Save the Children, have come **together to call for urgent action for more health workers, better supported**. For the 2 months prior to the UN General Assembly meetings the organisations will be building **pressure on global leaders to deal with the health worker shortfall** and make new commitments for supporting health workers.

### Why health workers?

Health workers are critical to saving lives: they are the single most important element of any health service. Without them, no vaccine can be administered, no life-saving drugs prescribed, no family planning advice provided and no woman can be given expert care during childbirth. Without health workers conditions like pneumonia and diarrhoea – which can be treated easily by someone with the right skills, supplies and equipment – become deadly.

Health workers are vital for progress on maternal and child survival. Ensuring that a health worker is within reach, and is trained, equipped and supported, is crucial to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5. Health workers are also vital for addressing MDG 6, non-communicable diseases, and other important health and development issues.

### Why now?

In September around the UN General Assembly meeting in New York, countries will meet to assess progress on women and children's health and discuss ways forward. A growing number of organisations, together with several UN bodies, are working together to **make this a crunch moment** – an opportunity for a major political breakthrough on health workers.

On 20 September an informal but high-level political event will provide the platform for world leaders to set out their commitments to increase the number of health workers in their own countries and ensure resources and support for new and existing health workers. We want key

donor and developing countries to see September as a moment for a step-change involving substantial and specific commitments to expand the number of health workers and give them the support they need.

### Who's behind this?

In late May 50 organisations issued an **urgent call** for more health workers, better supported, published in the UK newspaper, The Guardian. Since then hundreds more organisations have added their voice to the call. See the latest list and [sign up your organisation here](#).

### Take action

If you are an Organization, [take action](#) here.

If you are an Individual, [support the call](#) here.

Download [communications and resource material](#) here.

### What exactly is the campaign calling for?

Organisations and individuals are supporting this statement:

“As the UN secretary general has noted, **the world is suffering from a massive gap of more than 3.5 million health workers** . This includes a pressing need for at least 1 million community health workers and 350,000 midwives. Millions

more existing health workers lack the support, equipment and training they need.

**Health workers are vital for progress on global health and development**, and for ensuring the millennium development goals are met.

**Bold leadership is needed**

. World leaders each need to make new, substantial and specific commitments to expand the number of health workers and better support those workers who are already in place.

To motivate this kind of bold leadership will require **a powerful coalition with strong public support**. For this reason, **a diverse range of organisations are issuing today this urgent call for more health workers, better supported**. We share a vision where there is a health worker within reach of everyone, in every community. Together we are determined to help inspire action on health workers that will save millions of lives, with a breakthrough at the UN general assembly meetings in September.”