

Parliamentarians Take Action for Maternal and Newborn Health

*The Hague, The Netherlands,
26-28 November 2008*



Objectives of the meeting

Identify key priorities and parliamentary actions

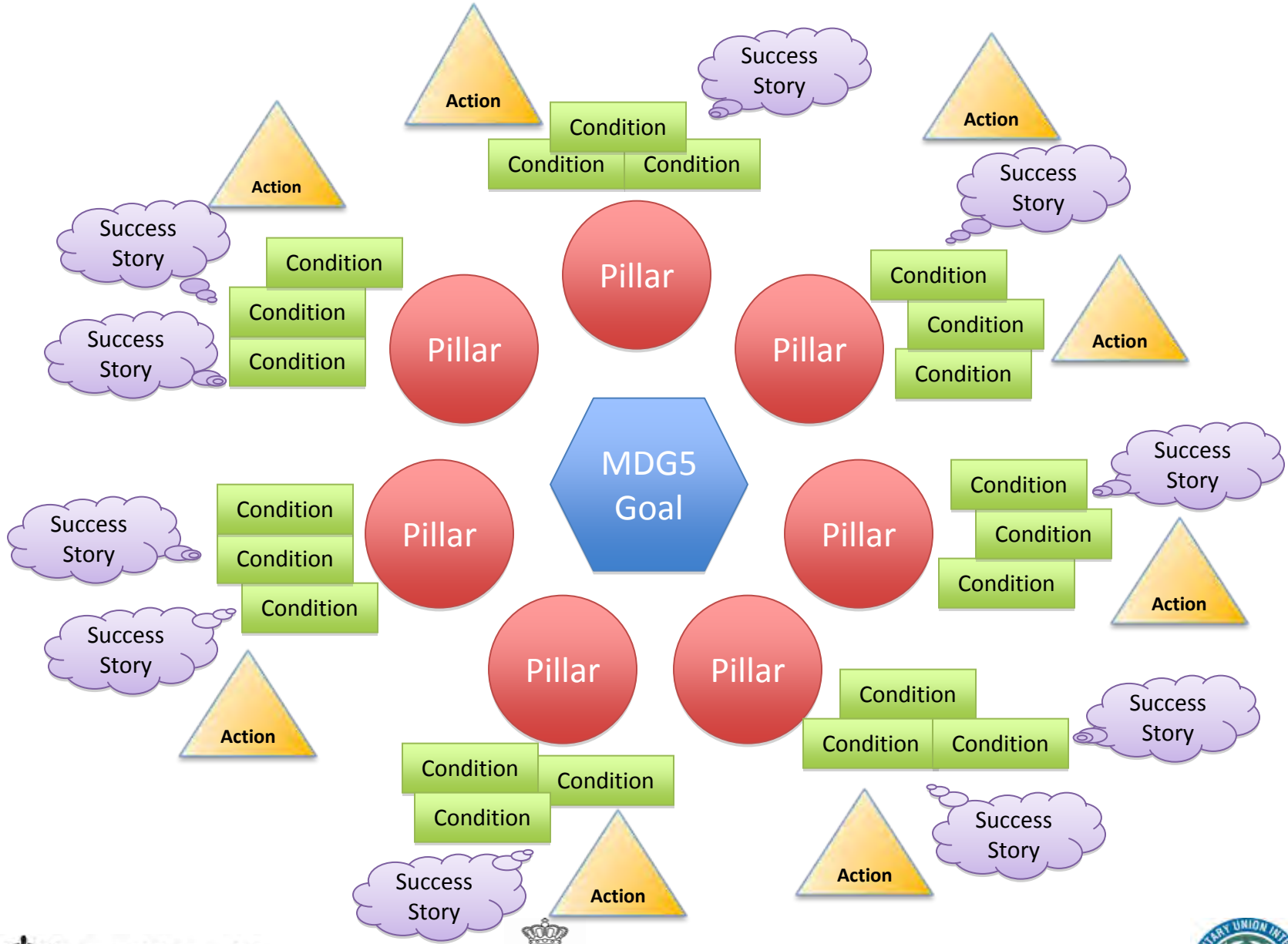
to achieve

Millennium Development Goal
(MDG) 5 on maternal health and
MDG 4 on newborn health

Highlights of situation

1. Action is urgent : every year more than half a million women die, many of them adolescents, due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth; every year 3 million newborn die.
2. No country is exempt - we are all concerned
3. Action has to be targeted
4. Achieving MDGs 5 and 4 is possible, if the will is there

Roadmap for MDG5



Pillars for MDG5

- Political Commitment
- Legislation
- Financial Resourcing
- Health System
- Education
- Cultural Practices
- Partnership

Pillar 1 : Political Commitment

Conditions for Success

- Accurate data
- Good governance, including transparency
- Media awareness
- International pressure
- Awareness in Political Parties

Pillar 1 : Political Commitment

Parliamentary action

- *Speak out in parliament and publicly for MDG 5;*
- *Champion MDG 5 and identify other parliamentary champions who will lead the way;*
- *Build cross party coalitions;*
- *Adopt a motion in parliament on MDG 5;*
- *Question government publicly about its commitment to MDG5 and call Ministers to account on their commitments;*

Pillar 1 : Political Commitment

Parliamentary action

- *Hold briefings and hearings in parliament to convince and engage MPs and political leaders;*
- *Organize public events to sensitize the wider public and strengthen national commitment*
- *Liaise regularly with constituents to educate them on MDG5 and seek training to do that effectively*
- *Organize field visits to facilities and projects in order to monitor the situation and evaluate initiatives*

Pillar 2: Legislation

Conditions for Success

- Support for safe motherhood
- Shared language
- Partner support and coordination

Pillar 2: Legislation

Parliamentary action

- *Identify one or several parliamentary committees to take the lead on legislating or reviewing legislation to facilitate maternal health*
- *Hold hearings with government, civil society, private sector and other actors to identify legislative gaps, challenges and solutions*
- *Initiate a review of existing laws to address gender discrimination and eliminate legal obstacles that limit women's access to health care services*

Pillar 2: Legislation

Parliamentary action

- *Work with Court of Audits to monitor the implementation of legislation*
- *Adopt legislation facilitating and supporting the work of mid-wives*
- *Ensure that legislation passed is complementary with other existing legal instruments and that MDG5 concerns are mainstreamed adequately*

Pillar 3: Financial Resourcing

Conditions for Success

- Health Budgeting
- Gender Budgeting
- Micro-finance
- Insurance System
- Free Services
- Taxation support

Pillar 3: Financial Resourcing

Parliamentary action

- *Liaise/work with the budget/finance committee to pay particular focus on Health and MDG5*
- *Ask questions to Government during the budget debate and make MDG5 a budgetary priority*
- *Hold hearings with women and health associations on needs and priorities prior to the budget debate*
- *Ask that responsible ministers regularly report to parliament on use of funds on MDG5 so as to monitor work done*

Pillar 3: Financial Resourcing

Parliamentary action

- *Ensure that national budgets are gender-sensitive; sensitize and inform MPs on gender sensitive parliaments and train parliamentary staff*
- *Ensure that the national budget process makes use of sex-disaggregated data*
- *Ensure that budgets adequately reflect the needs of indigenous people*
- *Organize a raising awareness/media/ event on MDG5 to put pressure during the budget debate*

Pillar 4 : Health System

Conditions for Success

- Human Resources
- Quality Care
- Reproductive Health Rights
- Information and Data
- Training
- Availability of Services
- Budget Allocation

Pillar 4 : Health System

Parliamentary action

- *Use parliamentary oversight mechanisms (oral and written questions to government, enquiries, hearings, parliamentary committee work) to ensure accountability and meet health objective set;*
- *During the budget process, pay particular attention to health allocations, ask questions and monitor allocated amounts and their effective use; use health statistics to question level of allocations made*

Pillar 4 : Health System

Parliamentary action

- *Support sufficient funding to build independent national statistics institutes; liaise with UN and other sources to access data*
- *Ensure that health concerns are cross-cutting in parliamentary work and that parliamentary committees work in complementarity*
- *Review legislation; start a debate in parliament on gender discrimination, especially harmful traditional practices*

Pillar 5 : Education

Conditions for Success

- National Strategic Plan
- Budget allocation for Education
- Training Teachers and Midwives
- Mass media

Pillar 5 : Education

Parliamentary action

- *Use parliamentary oversight mechanisms to regularly monitoring and evaluate government work on education; Focus in particular on women and girls' education*
- *Support the granting of bursaries to girls*
- *Request sex-disaggregated data to closely monitor the situation of girls;*
- *During the budget process, pay particular attention to education budgetary allocations, ask questions and monitor allocated amounts and their effective use;*

Pillar 5 : Education

Parliamentary action

- *Organize events with the media to educate the public on maternal health issues*
- *Engage with communities*
- *Ensure that human rights and gender equality are part of the school curricula*
- *Ensure that new members of parliament are educated and briefed on MDG5; develop mentoring to pass on the knowledge*

Pillar 6 : Cultural Practices

Conditions for Success

- Media support
- Linking culture, human rights and legislation
- Challenging harmful cultural practices
- Financing grassroots initiatives

Pillar 6 : Cultural Practices

Parliamentary action

- *Raise awareness in your constituencies and hold debates on harmful traditional practices*
- *Speak out publicly against them; set the example*
- *Debate harmful practices in parliament, within the framework of human rights standards and initiate legislation, if needed*
- *Promote use of community advisors*

Pillar 7: Partnership

Conditions for Success

- Common objectives
- Mutual respect
- Identify needs
- Inclusive approach and Cross-level co-operation
- Information Sharing

Pillar 7: Partnership

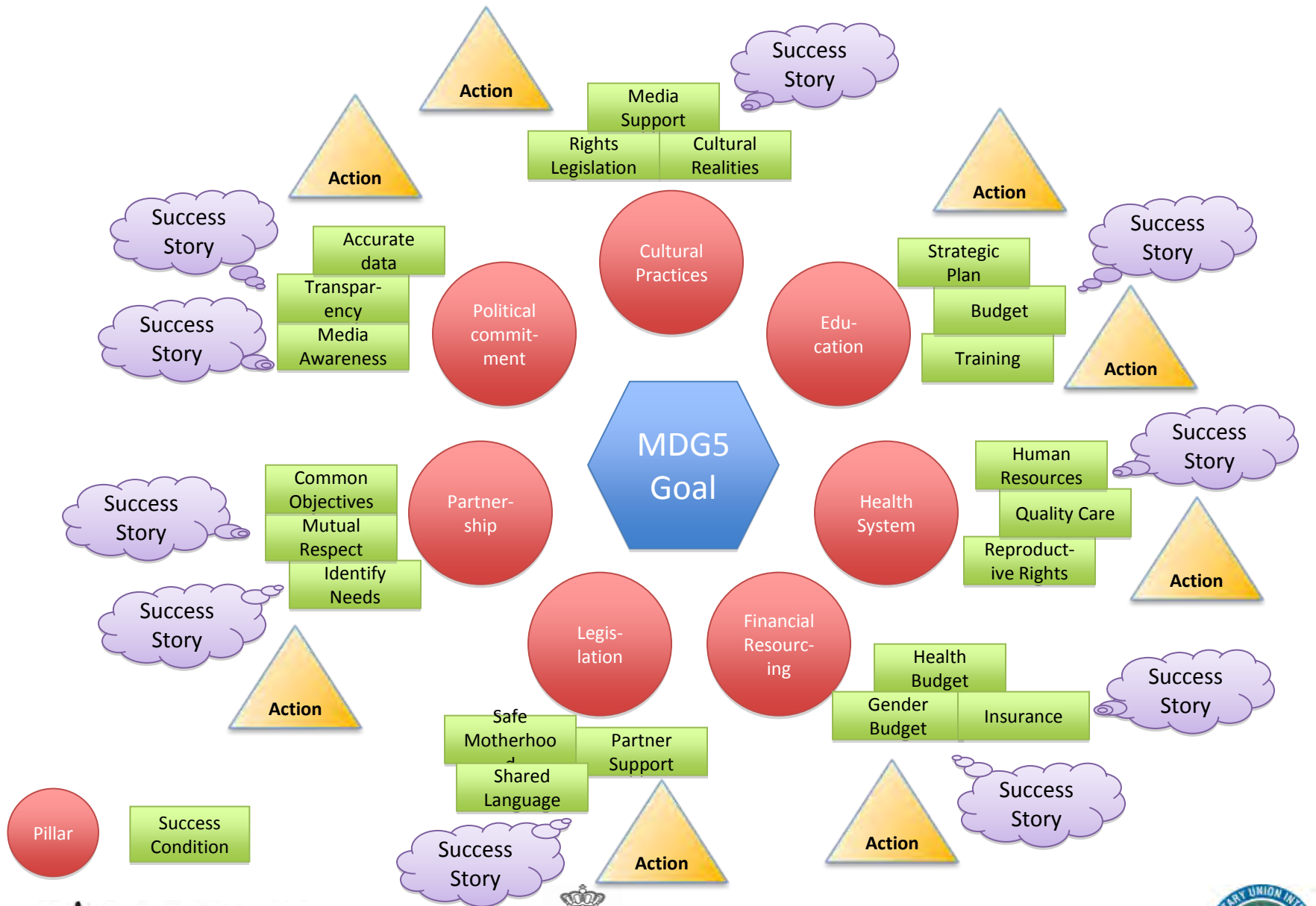
Parliamentary action

- *Build cross party coalitions*
- *Hold regular meetings with various partners (breakfast meetings with Ministries; regular sessions with civil society organization etc)*
- *Engage men parliamentarians on MDG5*
- *Reach out to communities , grassroots organizations and local partners*
- *Invest in Parliament's technical capacity to bridge the digital divide and facilitate communication*

Roadmap

- The Roadmap is designed as a framework to assist us in taking action back home
- We need to keep it alive, build on it and continue to share our experiences and help each other out to achieve change

Evolving Roadmap for MDG5



Contact details for further information

- WHO, Dr. Monir Islam, Director Department Making Pregnancy Safer, E-mail:
- IPU, Ms Kareen Jabre, Manager, Programme for Partnership between Men and Women,
E-mail: kj@mail.ipu.org; phone: +41 22 919 41 50
- Dutch Parliament: Ms Chantal Gill'ard, MP
E-mail: c.gillard@tweedekamer.nl; phone: +31618305837