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Good oral health important component of mother and child health

07.04.2005 – In recognition of World Health Day 2005, the World Dental Federation notes that good oral health is key to this year's theme "Make Every Mother and Child Count".

Mothers (as all other women) and children are amongst the most vulnerable of all populations around the world. Very often women and children experience higher levels of ill health and limited access to care. Greater prominence needs to be given to equal provision of basic human rights, which include the right to good general and oral health.

"Good oral health is a basic human right and inseparable from general health and wellbeing. Only by taking a holistic approach to health promotion, by addressing risk factors that are shared by systemic and oral diseases, can we succeed in achieving improved levels of oral health for mothers and children" said Dr JT Barnard, FDI Executive Director.

The FDI World Federation supports action to improve the health of mothers through asserting their basic human rights, including access to health care, education, employment opportunities and safe and healthy environments. The FDI World Federation also endorses the rights of every child as articulated in the *UN Declaration on The Rights of the Child*, emphasising the importance of education, safe environments and access to health care.

All health professionals, such as physicians, dentists, nurses or midwives, need to be aware of the serious impact of oral diseases on health, nutrition and wellbeing of mothers and children. The promotion of oral health should be part of all health education programmes and appropriate oral health care services for children and their mothers should be available.

The FDI World Dental Federation therefore welcomes and supports the World Health Day theme of "Make every mother and child count" and urges governments and health professional organisations to give more emphasis on health programmes addressing the oral needs of mothers and children.

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About the FDI:

The FDI is the authoritative, worldwide voice of dentistry with 156 member associations in 137 countries around the world, representing more than 800,000 dentists worldwide. For more information: www.fdiworldental.org