

May 22, 2023
Country: Belize

Item 12

12 Global Strategy for Women's, Children and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030)

Belize is making good progress towards women's, children's and adolescents' health in keeping with the goals outlined in the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030). Total fertility rate declined from 2.6 in 2015 to 2.27 in 2019.

The maternal mortality ratio fell from 134/100,000 live births in 2018 to 57/100,000 live births in 2020. Neonatal, infant and under 5 mortality also showed declining trends with ranges of 24%-33% decline in 2020/2021 compared to baselines of 2009 and 2015. The country is close to achieving elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis and has had zero indigenous cases of malaria since December 2018. Adolescent fertility rate declined from 71 in 2015 to 67.7 in 2020 but still remains high compared to the regional average of 48.3.

After the launch of the “Every Woman Every Child” (EWEC) initiative in 2010, a Technical Working Group started to develop evidence-based tools and interventions to strengthen the response to social inequities affecting the health of women, children and adolescents. After Belize adopted the global strategy of Accelerating Action for Health of Adolescents, a needs assessment was undertaken and an analysis of adolescent health programs, policies, legislation and resources was conducted. Participation of young persons for the review of the situation analysis and consultations with stakeholders across the country allowed for the identification of priorities and validation of findings. These actions lead to the development of Belize's Adolescent Health Strategy 2019-2030.

As the strategy was beginning to be implemented, the world entered a health and socio-economic crisis leading to changes in prioritization for the health sector. While resources were dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic, exposure to the adverse impacts of the pandemic has resulted in development losses for adolescent health. With the world's new determination to move beyond the pandemic, a sense of urgency to provide interventions for adolescents led to the launch of the Belize National Adolescent Health Strategy 2019-2030. An implementation plan has been drafted and a multisectoral technical working group has been established to coordinate activities in the implementation plan, participate in periodic reviews and make recommendations on planned strategies and activities. The training of clinicians to build capacity to provide adolescent-centred care will begin June 2023.

Let me proudly state that during the past 15 months, Belize has not reported hospital maternal deaths. This reflects the priority placed on maternal health.