

Progress reports

Report by the Director-General

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H. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH STRATEGY TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS (RESOLUTION WHA57.12 (2004))

1. This report highlights recent data and initiatives concerning implementation of the reproductive health strategy (2004). The strategy defines five priority aspects of sexual and reproductive health.¹ Progress related to sexual and reproductive health is lagging, most acutely among the poorest and most disadvantaged populations in all countries.
2. The latest data show that there were 295 000 maternal deaths in 2017, 35% lower than in 2000, when there were an estimated 451 000 deaths. The global maternal mortality ratio in 2017 was estimated at 211 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia accounted for approximately 86% of the estimated global maternal deaths.
3. **Antenatal, childbirth, postnatal and newborn care.** In 2016, WHO launched its *Recommendations on antenatal care for a positive pregnancy experience*, and in 2018 its *Recommendations: intrapartum care for a positive childbirth experience*. These guidelines provide the basis for implementation of such services by Member States.
4. **Family planning.** Through multiple partnerships, the Secretariat supported 50 countries (28 in the African Region, 12 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and 10 in the South-East Asia Region) to develop or update family planning guidelines. WHO has also released revised recommendations on the use of contraception by women at high risk of HIV infection.
5. **Unsafe abortion.** In 2019, the Secretariat continued to provide support to multiple countries that requested support to reduce maternal mortality related to unsafe abortion through health system strengthening.
6. **Sexually transmitted infections.** More than 376 million curable sexually transmitted infections occur annually worldwide.² Progress has been made in dual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of syphilis and HIV, and in increasing human papillomavirus vaccine coverage. In 2019, WHO developed a draft global strategy for the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem for consideration by the Seventy-third World Health Assembly.³ To strengthen community engagement in implementing the WHO *Consolidated guideline on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women living with HIV*, the Director-General established WHO's first community advisory group of women living with HIV.
7. **Sexual health.** In January 2018, six United Nations agencies, including WHO, launched a fully updated edition of the *International technical guidance on sexuality education*, which provides guidance

¹ The five priority aspects in the strategy are as follows: improving antenatal, delivery, postpartum and newborn care; providing high-quality services for family planning; eliminating unsafe abortion; combating sexually transmitted infections; and promoting sexual health.

² Rowley J, Vander Hoorn S, Korenromp E, Low N, Unemo M, Abu-Raddad LJ et al. Chlamydia, gonorrhoea, trichomoniasis and syphilis: global prevalence and incidence estimates, 2016. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*. 2019;97:548–62.

³ See document A73/4; see also resolution WHA73.2.

on designing and delivering comprehensive sexuality education to support young people's health and well-being.

8. **Violence against women.** To support Member States in strengthening their health response to violence against women and girls,¹ WHO has developed various tools.² An increasing number of countries are implementing these tools, including in humanitarian settings.

9. **Adolescents.** In 2019, WHO operationalized a technical assistance mechanism to support countries in strengthening sexual and reproductive services for adolescents and young people and continued to support the application of evidence-based interventions through multicountry programmes, partnerships and initiatives.

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¹ In accordance with the WHO Global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children (resolution WHA67.15 (2014)).

² Evidence-based guidelines and standards: Health care for women subjected to violence: a clinical handbook (2014); Strengthening health systems for women subjected to violence: a health manager's manual (2017); Responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused (2017); Caring for women subjected to violence: a WHO training curriculum (2019); and RESPECT women: preventing violence against women (2019).