



## Summary SRHR around the world

**Access:** Reproductive health conditions – including HIV/AIDS - are the leading cause of death and illness in women worldwide (15-44 years of age). Forty percent (40%) of the world's women do not have access to basic sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. Only one-fourth of the 12 billion condoms needed around the world are available, and 120 million women in developing countries do not have access to contraception when they need it.

**Maternal Mortality:** Every minute, a woman dies from a pregnancy-related cause. At this moment, 300 million women suffer from illnesses and injuries related to pregnancy and childbirth. 99 percent of maternal deaths during child birth occur in the developing world. In sub-Saharan Africa, one in every 16 women dies of pregnancy-related causes during her lifetime. In developed countries, one woman in 4,000 dies of pregnancy-related causes.

**HIV / AIDS:** Globally, 20 million people have died and 39.5 million people are HIV infected, 80% of which are infected through sex and 10% from mothers to their infants. 24.7 million of those infected people live in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2006, 4.3 million new HIV cases were registered of which 65 % in Africa. Surveys indicate that half of the women and girls living in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa do not know basic information, like how HIV / AIDS is transmitted. 95% of people living with HIV / AIDS are in low-and middle-income countries. Women's HIV / AIDS infection rates are rising very rapidly; women now comprise half of people around the world with HIV / AIDS. Teens and young adults (age 15-24) account for 40 % new infections, and more than half of those are girls.

**Sexual Violence:** Sexual assault and violence is the major cause of death and disabilities among women aged 15 - 44. 8% of people living in Rio de Janeiro; almost 6% of people in Buenos Aires and Dar es Salaam and over 4% of people in Kampala (Uganda) are victimized by sexual assault. About 1 out of 4 women are sexually abused during pregnancy. Around the world, about 2 million persons are being traf-



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ficked each year, women constituting the majority. They are bought and sold into marriage, prostitution or slavery.

**Obstetric fistula:** Obstetric fistula is a hole in the birth canal caused by prolonged labour without prompt medical intervention, usually a Caesarean section. The woman is left with chronic incontinence and, in most cases, a stillborn baby. A simple surgery can normally repair the injury, with success rates as high as 90 per cent for experienced surgeons. The average cost of fistula treatment and post-operative care is just US \$300. Sadly, most women with the condition do not know that treatment is available, or they cannot afford it. At least 2 million women in Africa, Asia and the Arab region are living with obstetric fistula, and some 50,000 to 100,000 new cases develop each year.

**State of the World Population:** The world's population more than doubled in the last half century to reach 6 billion in late 1999. Early 2007, 6.7 billion people shared the planet. Some 76 million people are added to the world's population every year. World population is expected to rise in the next 45 years by 2.6 billion, to reach a total of 9.1 billion in 2050. Nearly all of the growth will take place in the less developed countries, and will be concentrated among the poorest populations in urban areas. The population of the 50 poorest countries is projected to more than double by 2050. Sub-Saharan Africa, the world's poorest region, is the fastest growing.

**Conflict:** Countries with rapid rates of urban population growth and a high percentage of citizens under the age of 15 are twice as likely as other countries to experience civil conflict. As less than 10 percent of the 15.2 million AIDS orphans receive support or services from outside their communities, many of them make ends meet through criminal activities or are recruited as child soldiers fighting in civil wars. In recent years, mass rape during war has been documented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia, Peru, Somalia and Uganda. During the conflict in Sierra Leone, more than half the women there experienced some type of sexual violence.



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**Poverty:** SRH is key to global poverty reduction. The ability to control the number and timing of children is key to families' health and finances. Women earn 40 - 60% of household income in many developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, women contribute 60 to 80 percent of the labour in food production for household consumption and for sale. When they are sick or disabled, the household suffers financially. HIV / AIDS devastates communities' economic prospects, as labor forces become disabled or are simply wiped out. In 2005, more than 3 million people - 75% in sub-Saharan Africa - were unable to work because of illness due to AIDS.

## **Solutions:**

11 years ago, 179 countries endorsed a Program of Action affirming that SRH is essential to human well-being. The conference in Cairo in 1994 was a ground-breaking event, placing the individual at the core of population and development policies. The UN General Assembly reaffirmed this consensus five years later when the world leaders agreed to include access to reproductive health services in their national strategies to achieve the MDGs. The interventions that could prevent or effectively treat the conditions that kill children and women of reproductive age are well-known. Most are low-cost, and highly cost-effective. While progress has been made in the development of AIDS vaccines and microbicides, further financial commitments are needed to lead the research activities to a success. Unfortunately, governments in developing countries are neither delivering on their financial commitments nor on their promises to assure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services by the year 2015. It's time for citizens to speak up!



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