

Forum: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Issue: Ensuring availability of reproductive healthcare for all citizens

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Introduction

“There’s nothing more important than our good health- that’s our principal capital asset.” says Arlen Specter while addressing the significance of health. Health and reproductive healthcare are two features that succeeded to maintain its importance for decades and will continue to do so. Regardless of a person’s gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, stage of life and many other aspects or the region’s health policy; reproductive healthcare plays an irreplaceable role in both ensuring the sustainability of the generations to come and the life itself.

However, by the time being, the facts about the amount of people who don’t have access to reproductive healthcare are extremely shocking and devastating. About 12 percent of the World’s population (over 800 million people) spend 10 percent of their belongings and earnings to pay for a proper healthcare. Reproductive healthcare and full coverage of necessary health services are not available for at least half of the world’s current population. Moreover, nearly 100 million people face extreme poverty (living on \$1.90 or less a day) because they don’t have enough money to supply healthcare.

With the aim of ensuring available reproductive healthcare for all citizens and achieving the universal health coverage (UHC), all member states collaborated and agreed to attempt to solve the issue before 2030 by making the topic a part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Definition of Key Terms

Universal health coverage (UHC): UHC makes sure that all people have access to the health services they need without facing financial obstacles. It also ensures that the quality of these health services are high. It protects people from suffering due to financial problems and an unhealthy environment.

World Health Organization (WHO): WHO is an organization which aims to strive to combat sicknesses while leaving the next generations a better world by coordinating with governments, civil society organizations and private sector within the United Nations' system.

Reproductive health: WHO's official definition of reproductive health states that *reproductive health addresses the reproductive processes, functions and system at all stages of life*. Reproductive health also implicates the importance of safe and gratifying sex as well the freedom to decide when and how often to reproduce.

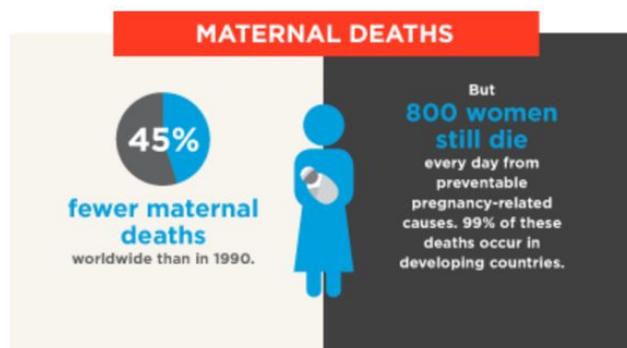
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA): UNFPA is the United Nations reproductive health and rights agency. It aims to decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies while making sure that the child births are safe.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (United Nations Women): UN Women is a United Nations agency which covers the gender equality and the human rights parts of the issue while taking actions with the aim of preventing AIDS and HIV from spreading. The organization also empowers women and protects their rights.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS): UNAIDS aims to end AIDS which is a threat to both public health and peace by 2030 as a part of Sustainable Development Goals.

General Overview

The significance of reproductive healthcare starts from the childhood stage of life and continues during the person's adolescence, adulthood and the rest of their life. The aim of this report is to explore the needs of the reproductive healthcare among both men and women as well as to reflect the extraordinary

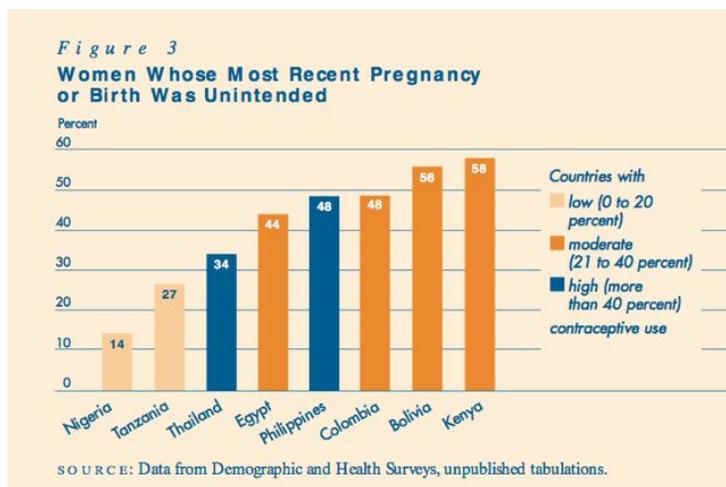


situations regarding sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS. Besides, reproductive health for people can be categorized as two different stages which are risk and fulfillment. Such as to have a desired child or to prevent unwanted or unsafe pregnancy which may end up with the death of the mother and the fetus.

Data 1: The amount of maternal deaths around the World

Relating reproductive healthcare to only one sexual orientation and gender is completely inaccurate because of the fact that individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex or transgender are highly in need of reproductive healthcare and usually at a higher risk in certain situations. They also face obstacles such as discrimination or refusal of care they need. Even though many people focus on the women's needs for reproductive healthcare, it is known that men are also the important counterpart of the issue.

Mutually accepted sex, intended pregnancy and healthy birth are the needs and the most important stages of public health. Between 20 and 40 percent of births in developing countries are undesired and unwanted while nearly 50 million abortions cases are performed. Moreover, approximately 22 million people suffer from sexually transmitted diseases.



Data 2: Women Whose Most Recent Pregnancy or Birth Was Unintended (Graphic according to countries)

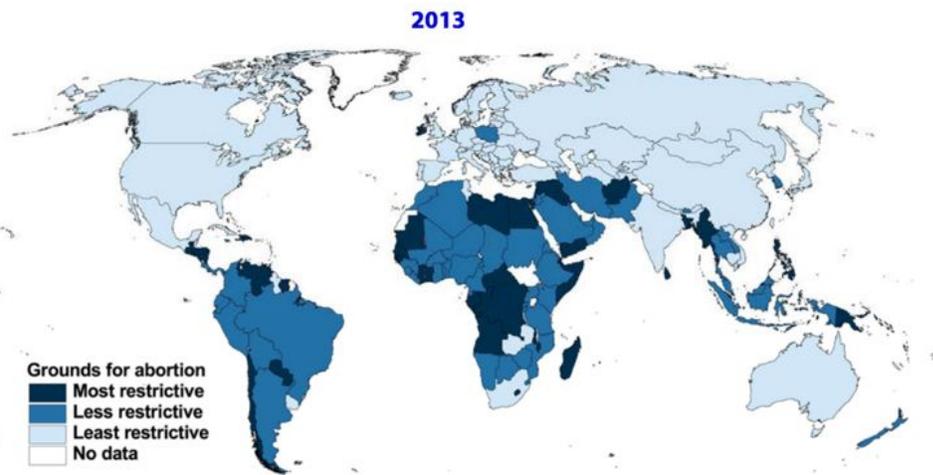
To be able to have an access to healthcare services is a crucial factor in the society. The majority of the people in less economically developed countries have poor knowledge of where they should turn to when they need sexual and reproductive healthcare services. On the other hand, low utilization of healthcare services is associated with poor knowledge of healthcare services in terms of the healthcare staff is concerned. In other words, the healthcare staff is not properly educated which leads to death cases as well as disabilities. There is also the fact that the discrimination is based on race, gender, age and disabilities. Most public healthcare services and hospitals are simply not geared or poorly equipped to the needs of people with important diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Another issue is that women have poor knowledge on how to prevent an unwanted pregnancies and sex related diseases.



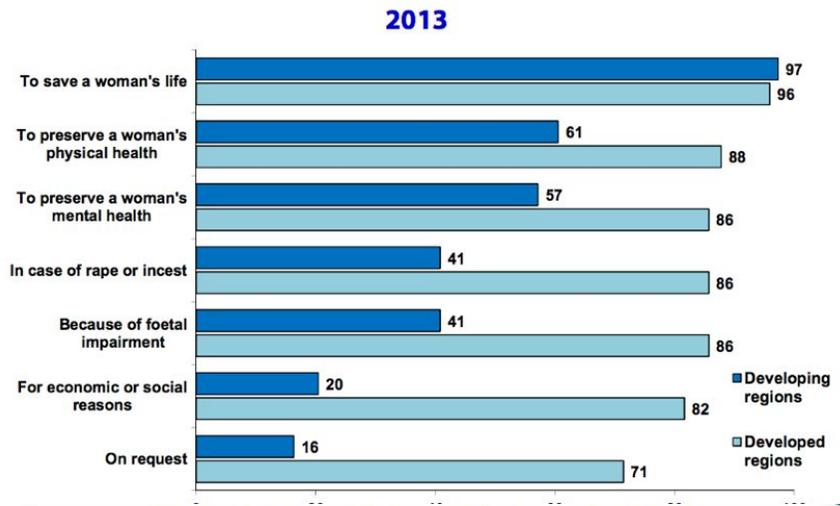
Data 3: Graphic of the Births Delivered by Medically Trained Attendant

Abortion is another aspect of the public reproductive health care issue. There are different kinds of abortion steps that women may choose (ex.abortion pill, surgical abortion and unscientific abortion). Unscientific abortion may risk the women's health and life. In fact U.S \$553 million

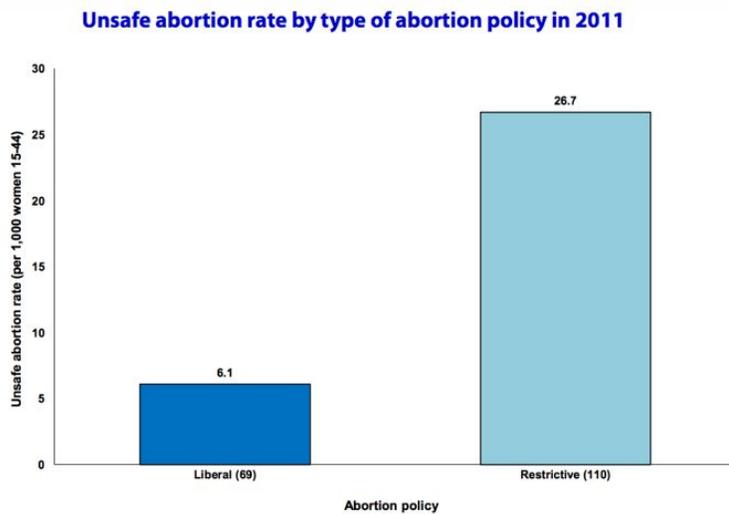
(WHO) was spent while trying to solve unsafe abortion-related health problems around the world. On the other hand, in 2013 97 percent of the governments allowed abortion in order to save women's life while two thirds of countries allowed abortion when an abnormal situation was present such as the mental or physical danger of the mother. Thus, only one third of the countries legally allowed abortion due to socioeconomic reasons. However, there are countries who completely banned abortion such as Malta, El Salvador, Chile and such. Graphics are given below in order for the delegates to examine.



Data 4: The map of Grounds for abortion



Data 5: Graphic of the reasons of abortion according to developed and developing regions



Data 6: Graphic of Unsafe abortion rate by type of abortion policy in 2011

Thus, there are several reproductive health problems which men suffer from due to physiological or physical reasons. However, some people avoid turning to the healthcare services for help. Erectile Dysfunction (ED) is the problem which men experience when they cannot achieve an erection for sexual relationship with his partner. There are also other problems such as low sperm count, low testosterone, Peyroine's Disease, testicular cancer and such. This shows that man suffer from reproductive illnesses just like women and they are in need of a proper and high quality reproductive healthcare as well.

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can threaten one's unborn child or the fertility and even the person's life. These diseases are Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Human Papilloma Virus, Syphilis and Gonorrhea and Herpes and such. In addition to the diseases or infections relating to reproductive health, HIV and AIDS are the most common and important medical issues in most of the countries. However, even the most educated people still do not know the difference between HIV and AIDS. HIV is a

virus while AIDS is a condition caused by HIV. In other words, it is possible to have HIV without developing AIDS. Many people live for several years with HIV without ending up with AIDS. However, if a person has AIDS that person has to have HIV. Having sex with someone who has HIV without any protection may end up with a person getting HIV. HIV caused 60.000 maternal deaths in 2008. In 2016, 1.8 million people got newly infected by HIV virus. Besides, AIDS is currently causing the death of many adolescents between age 10 and 19 in Africa while being the second most common cause of death around the world. AIDS and AIDS-related diseases caused the death of 1 million people in 2016. The disease itself has caused nearly 35 million people's death since its first appearance. These statistics clearly demonstrate that sexually transmitted diseases are becoming more common and dangerous day by day which makes reproductive healthcare necessary and very important.

Table 2
New Cases of Curable STDs among Adults, 1995

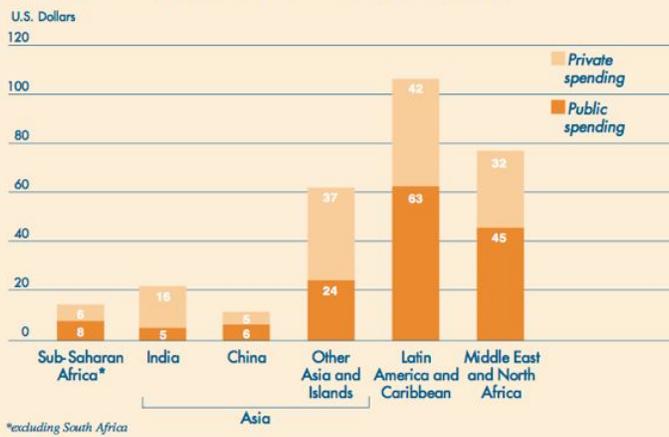
	Millions
World	333
South and Southeast Asia	150
Sub-Saharan Africa	65
Latin America and Caribbean	36
East Asia and Pacific	23
North Africa and Middle East	10

Data 7: New Cases of Curable STDs among Adults in 1995

SOURCE: WHO, "An Overview of Selected Curable Sexually Transmitted Diseases," unpublished paper (Geneva, Switzerland: WHO Global Programme on AIDS, 1995).

It is possible to observe that in low-income countries, financial resources for healthcare is limited compared to middle income countries. In low income countries, average spending on healthcare services is only U.S \$14 while in middle income countries the number increases to \$62. In addition, besides the

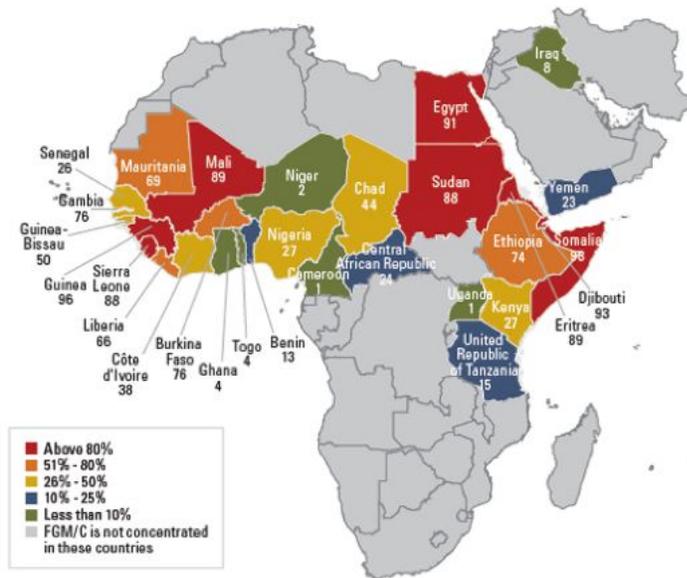
Per Capita Expenditures on Health, by Region



fact that the amount of both private and public spendings differs among countries, there are lots of aspects of the issue that people can invest in. Family planning, treatment of STDs, AIDS prevention programs are some examples..

Data 8: Graphic of private and public spending on health according to regions

Furthermore, female genital mutilation (FGM) is another aspect of the issue. The accepted definition of FGM is *“the procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or other non-medical reasons.”* (WHO) The main objective is to prevent the newborn children to grow in an environment free from the dangers of this procedure and the protect the girls who are at risk. Approximately 200 million female alive have experienced this practice. It is stated that complications occur in all types of FGM such as haemorrhage; which is a large flow of blood from a damaged blood vessel. During the practice of FGM, sometimes only one tool is used to use cut several girls which leads to HIV transmission.



Data 9: The map of regions that FGM is conducted

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

India: In India for several years, a number of workshops on health and human rights has been conducted to improve the issue of maternal anaemia. However, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee) criticized India (10.07.14) for failing to address human rights violations which results with high rates of maternal death resulting from lack of access to modern abortion services.

Kenya: Previous researches prove that women in Kenya suffer from sexual violence such as rape, female genital mutilation, early or first marriages which ends up with unwanted pregnancies as well as the occurrence of sexually transmitted diseases. Thus, Adolescent Reproductive Health and Development

(ARHD) Policy was developed in 2003 which is the first in the country to focus on improving the well-being and reproductive health of adolescents. Ten years since the policy was implemented, it is possible to observe Kenya's improvement in the social, economic, and political environment.

Philippines: The Commission of Human Rights in Philippines supplied the national government information and advice about the issues of reproductive rights and health. In the region, people go through the regulations which restrict access to birth control due to religious policies.

China: China has a higher ratio of infant and maternal mortality cases compared to most of the developed countries even though the number decreased in years. The country had over 211 million migrants in 2009, and it is expected that an additional 300 million people will be migrating from rural to urban areas in following years. Chinese government has ensured that these migrants have proper and equitable access to health care services.

Timeline of Events

1988	First World's AIDS Day
5-13 September 1994	International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Cairo.
1996	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) became operational.

28 September 2012	September 28 became the Global Day of Action for Safe and Legal Abortion.
2014	In the 20 th anniversary of the establishment of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, the community especially focused on sexual and reproductive health and its process throughout the years.
8-10 June 2016	United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS was held.
21-22 May 2018	3 rd International Conference on Reproductive Health and Medicine is going to be held in Vienna, Austria.

UN Involvement

The UN Foundation implemented a project called “Universal Access Project” with the aim of reaching the Millennium Development Goal 5: achieving universal access to healthcare that can directly connect to healthier generations and a better future. In addition, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) also works for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 which calls for good health and well-being. UNFPA works with communities and governments while supporting the implementation of projects to improve the quality of reproductive healthcare such as UNFPA Supplies and The Maternal Health Thematic Fund.

While doing these work, UNFPA also focuses on the disadvantaged groups in the society which consists of the urban poor, local population as well as the youth. Thus, United Nations Development (UNDP) takes actions in order to accomplish SDG 3 while using various kinds of strategies such as developing a new sustainable development agenda under the acronym 'MAPS' (Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support).

Relevant UN Documents

- Rights to Sexual and Reproductive Health- the ICPD and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (March 18 1998)
- General Debate on National Experience in Population Matters: Fertility, Reproductive Health and Development (28 January 2011) E/CN.9/2011/NGO/2
- Resolution 2002/1 Reproductive right and reproductive health, including human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (1-5 April 2002) E/2002/25 E/CN.9/2002/6
- Ending Female Genital Mutilation (11 March 2018) E/CN.6/2008/L.2/Rev.1
- "Sexual and Reproductive Health" in the UN Convention on the Rights Of Persons with Disabilities (October 9 2013)

Treaties and Events

"Sexual and Reproductive Health" in the UN Convention on the Rights Of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a treaty that was not accepted by UN due to the fact that 23 nations objected the term which has been used to promote abortion as a right. The first time includes the controversial term "sexual and reproductive health about the rights of persons with disabilities. In the closing remarks of the negotiations it was clearly declared by The U.S. that the treaty "*cannot be interpreted to constitute support, endorsement, or promotion of abortion.*" (C-Fam)

Thus, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) monitors the co-international human rights treaties. The human rights treaty bodies are a number of committees which include independent expert. They monitor implementation of the core international rights treaties. Such as Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (1965), Committee of Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979).

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was one of the major attempts to resolve the issue as 179 countries adopted progressive, people-centered and 20-year Programme of Action which extended in 2010. The Programme itself was very significant and contained various actions and recognition in the subjects reproductive health and rights. Thus, the Programme also focused on women's empowerment and gender equality.

Moreover, there are currently several laws that aim to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation such as Constitutional recognition of the rights of girls and women which protects women rights and equality, Child Protection Laws and Civil Laws and Remedies aims to prevent FGM from happening in the first place. Thus, treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 aims to eliminate FGM. Besides these treaties, Protocol of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in 2003 while The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution for a global ban on FGM on 20 December 2012.

Furthermore, Reproductive Health Access Project is another attempt which draws attention to miscarriage, abortion and contraception. These attempts increased awareness while strengthening the legal side of the issue.

Besides these many previous attempts to resolve the issue, it is obvious that the issue still exists and is far away from being solved. This clearly demonstrates that other than these attempts, this situation is in need of unique and beneficial solutions. That is why the delegates are highly recommended to analyze these attempts in order to find better solutions, or make the already existing ones more useful.

Possible Solutions

- Both men and women should be informed about the possible ways to access essential, safe, effective and moderate healthcare services. They also should be aware of their rights to have access to reproductive healthcare as well as their freedom of choice to choose the method of fertility they want to use.

- People should be aware of the consequences and dangers that STDs and know the ways to protect themselves from the various kinds of diseases. It is also very important for them to not spread the disease if they are infected and be in touch with their healthcare provider frequently.
- People should be educated about the discrimination regarding sex, race, age etc. and how it can affect people in an extremely unpleasant way.
- All member states should take precautions to make the accessibility of reproductive healthcare easier by making it more affordable and investing in the subject more. Poverty shouldn't be an obstacle for people to have access to reproductive healthcare services.
- Healthcare staff in hospitals and primary healthcare centers should be educated and provided with the necessary information and equipment in order to increase the quality of the healthcare services.
- The technology in clinical and educational programs should be increased in order to prevent unsafe abortion.
- Activists who fights against FGM should be supported and frequently encouraged.

Notes from the Chair

This chair report does not contain every single information about the issue. For further research you can take a look at the relevant UN documents as well as the links in the bibliography.

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