Building the capacity of African Policy makers for reproductive health and family planning: Challenges and Opportunities for Parliaments to enhance Reproductive Health/ Family Planning

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Population in Africa continues to rise due to fertility

Women in developing countries continue to die in big numbers (over 14 times higher than developed regions) due to pregnancy related complications

Maternal deaths in SSA and Asia account for 86% of all deaths globally.
Abuja Declaration - 2001

Set a target of allocating at least 15% of annual national budgets to the health sector
The ultimate goal of the Maputo Plan of Action is for African Governments to effectively implement the continental policy framework of universal access to sexual and reproductive health by 2015 in all countries in Africa.
## Achievements in 15 years MDGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Sub-Saharan Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **MMR fell**  
  - from 380 to 210 per 100,000 live births |  
  - 990 to 510 per 100,000 live births |
| **Skilled attendance increased**  
  - from 59% to 71% |  
  - 43% to 52% |
| **Contraceptive use increased**  
  - from 55 to 64% |  
  - 13% to 28% (still low) |
| **Unmet need for FP reduced**  
  - from 15% to 12% |  
  - 24% |
| **64%** of women receive the recommended 4 ANC care visits |  
  - 49% of women receive the recommended 4 ANC care visits |
| Adolescent birth rate reduced  
  - from 59/1,000 to 51/1,000 |  
  - 123/1,000 to 116/1,000 |
Maternal mortality
Every minute ----

- 1 woman dies from a pregnancy-related complication
- 380 women become pregnant
- 190 get unplanned pregnancies
Risk of maternal death in Africa

- In Africa, on average, the lifetime risk of death in pregnancy and childbirth is 1 in 14. It is 1 in 7 in Niger.

- This is in stark contrast to 1 in 17,400 in Sweden.
Maternal morbidity

Debilitating injuries

For every woman who dies, there are 30 who sustain chronic injuries that can be debilitating or crippling e.g.:

- fistula
- chronic pelvic pain
Contraceptive use is still low with high unmet need for specific countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>CPR</th>
<th>Unmet need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MDG Country progress reports
Role of Parliamentarians

- As **representatives** of the people, MPs can reflect the voices and concerns of all the people.

- As **lawmakers**, MPs can enact, adopt and oversee the implementation of legislation that protects human rights and advances access to sexual and reproductive health services.
Role of Parliamentarians

- As **overseers** of government activity, MPs can ensure that government commitments on sexual and reproductive health and rights are respected and also ensure that there is **accountability** for the resources.

- As **overseers** of national **budget** appropriations, MPs can ensure that adequate and cost effective funding is provided to SRH programmes.
Role of Parliamentarians…

- As opinion leaders and decision makers, MPs can promote issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and can also encourage and direct informed debate on the same issues. MPs’ open support for SRH services motivates their supporters to use the services.
Lessons

Mortality Ratios

Family Planning Reduces Maternal Death Up to 40%

Graph showing the maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) and modern CPR% for various countries.
Lessons

Investment of $1 in family planning (FP) saves expenditures of $2-4 on maternal and newborn health
Lessons....

- High maternal death rates are an indicator of inadequate health care system, which is clearly a direct violation of women’s fundamental rights to life, health, and self determination.

- Every year, the world loses US $15 billion to lost productivity by letting women die in pregnancy and childbirth.
Lessons

- MP’s are of paramount importance in creating political will and ensuring accountability
- A strong and coordinated group of parliamentarians creates positive change
What is needed...

- There is need to build the capacity of Parliamentarians including sharing experiences and learning from each other.

- Need for Parliamentarians and other elected leaders to openly speak out on Maternal and Child health issues in order to influence change and facilitate transformation

- Need for involvement of Parliamentarians in the implementation and monitoring of SDGs and other development frameworks
What is needed..

- Plan for an increasing population and develop human capital, address youth and gender issues to harness the demographic dividend
- Improve financing of the health sector and strengthen health systems
- Improve quality and access to affordable maternal and child health services
Together, we can make life BRIGHTER and BETTER
THANK YOU