

Headline	Their needs and rights still not met		
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# Their needs and rights still not met

**E**VERY day, 800 women die of maternal mortality. On Monday, the International Planned Parenthood Federation launched a series of key goals for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) at the United Nations, titled "Vision 2020". Cutting maternal mortality by 75 per cent by 2020 is one of them.

As the world works towards a new framework for development, which will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is time to put SRHR at the very heart of what the international community wants to achieve.

Many sexual and reproductive health and rights were either left out of the MDGs completely or added at a late stage. In 2008, access to family planning was incorporated but the key strategy to reduce poverty, improve maternal and child health, and promote gender equality was absent for nearly a decade until after the Millennium Summit. As a result, MDGs relating to reproductive health, including access to contraceptives and adolescent fertility rates, made the least progress and that has caused a great human toll.

As of last year, there were 222 million women whose need for modern contraception remains unmet. That's an astonishing figure.

No high street pharmacy for them, no safe back-up when things go wrong. And, of course, as with

maternal mortality, the deficit is most significant in the developing world.

In the East, Southeast Asia and Oceania region, many women still do not have access to reproductive health services. In many countries, sexual and reproductive rights are still being denied, children are not taught sexual education and there is a great need to invest more in sexual and reproductive health and rights issues and services. Governments need to prioritise maternal health and care, allow youth voices to be heard and address gender discrimination.

When we ensure better health support programmes that provide voluntary access to modern family planning, we help reduce the incidence of unsafe abortion, improve women's health and enable them to better care of their children. A greater proportion of children will have access to education. We build healthier families and communities.

By 2020, if an additional 120 million women and couples are given access to desired contraception op-

tions, 200,000 fewer women and girls will die in pregnancy and childbirth, and 50 million abortions will be prevented.

Reaching this goal depends on all of us working together to make Vision 2020 a reality. It's a global call, urging governments to prioritise this issue as central to achieving

sustainable development.

Among the measures governments should consider are:

**REDUCING** maternal mortality due to unsafe abortion by 75 per cent by 2020;

**REDUCING** by at least 50 per cent the current unmet need for family planning by 2020;

**INCREASING** access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and close the gap between the top and bottom wealth quintiles by 50 per cent by 2020;

**ENGAGING** young people in all policy decisions affecting their lives;

**MAKING** comprehensive sexuality education available to all by 2020;

**ESTABLISHING** a new international development framework that includes SRHR as essential priorities;

**RECOGNISING** sexual rights as human rights by 2020;

**PROVIDING** comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive health and HIV services within the public, private and not-for-profit health systems by 2020; and,

**ALLOCATING** sufficient resources to make all these targets achievable by 2020.

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