

Contraception: the key to achieving SDGs by 2030

Currently, in low income countries, 885 million women of reproductive age want to avoid a pregnancy. Twenty-three million girls aged 15 to 19 years in developing regions have an unmet need for modern contraception and every year an estimated 21 million girls aged 15 to 19 years and 2 million girls aged under 15 years become pregnant.

Every one of these girls is therefore unlikely to complete her education, making it harder for her to find work, making her more dependant and often more vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse; having an impact upon her health and wellbeing for the rest of her life.

“Globally there are 214 million women with an unmet need for contraception. This signals a disconnect between a woman’s desire to plan her pregnancies and her ability to do so. Unmet need can lead to shorter birth-spacing, which has a negative impact on both maternal and newborn health, and can put additional economic strain on a family, perpetuating the poverty cycle”.

Dr Anita Makins, Deputy Director, PPIUD Initiative, FIGO

FIGO position on issue:

Access to modern contraceptives saves lives – they are essential to the development of all.

Long-term investments in the sexual and reproductive health of girls and women can allow them to make important life choices such as when they marry, when they begin sexual activity, and how many children they have and when.

“Family planning saves lives and more so in low income countries where contraceptive needs are humungous, and contraceptive prevalence rates are low impacting negatively on maternal and child mortality and morbidity rates. It is within those countries with dire conditions where efforts and resources should be channelled”.

Dr Faysal El-Kak, Executive Board FIGO, Lebanon.

Depriving women of contraceptive choice can therefore negatively impact upon their future. Acknowledging this, in 2015, all 193 members of the United Nations committed to a set of [17 ambitious global Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), including two directly related to sexual and reproductive health.

“Gender and women’s empowerment are key to achieving the 17 ambitious SDG goals. Goal 5 is fundamental in that regard. Gender equality, education, health care, and ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights all contribute to raising status of women”.

Dr Faysal El-Kak, Executive Board FIGO, Lebanon.

“When pregnancies are planned and spaced using modern contraceptives, then the risk of maternal mortality will drop as evidenced in successful outcomes of Millennium Development Goal 5 when the maternal mortality ratio was cut nearly in half from 1990 levels, and most of the reduction occurring after 2000”.

Dr Faysal El-Kak, Executive Board FIGO, Lebanon.

FIGO commits to taking the following actions:

Next month [FIGO World Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil](#), will facilitate vital discussions around this important area including:

- Panel sessions from sector experts entitled *'Unmet need – the global challenge' and 'Contraception: the key to achieving SDGs by 2030'*
- African Federation Obstetrics and Gynecology (AFOG) presenting on *'Sexual and Reproductive health care services in Africa: the past, the present and the future'*
- WHO presenting on *'Improving quality of care for maternal and newborn health – measuring women's experiences'*
- Guttmacher Institute presenting on *'Accelerating progress: Sexual and reproductive health and rights for all'*.

About FIGO

FIGO is a professional organisation that brings together obstetrical and gynecological associations from all over the world.

FIGO's vision is that women of the world achieve the highest possible standards of physical, mental, reproductive and sexual health and wellbeing throughout their lives. We lead on global programme activities, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia.

FIGO advocates on a global stage, especially in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pertaining to reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and non-communicable diseases (SDG3). We also work to raise the status of women and enable their active participation to achieve their reproductive and sexual rights, including addressing FGM and gender based violence (SDG5).

We also provide education and training for our Member Societies and build capacities of those from low-resource countries through strengthening leadership, good practice and promotion of policy dialogues.

FIGO is in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and a consultative status with the United Nations (UN).