



## Global Partners in Action: NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development

**ICPD@15** International Conference on  
Population and Development

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### Glossary

Here are some useful definitions for the ICPD@15 discussion of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

**AIDS orphan** – A child under 18 who has lost one or both parents to AIDS. More than 15 million AIDS orphans exist today, 12 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. UNAIDS projects 25 million by 2010.<sup>1</sup>

**Anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs)** – Drugs taken to fight HIV. They inhibit reproduction of the human immune-system retrovirus (HIV) that causes adult immune-system deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

**Emergency obstetric care** – Skilled medical personnel with the medications, safe blood supplies and other equipment needed to deal with complications of pregnancy and childbirth, including obstetric surgery and neonatal resuscitation.

**Family planning** – The conscious effort of couples or individuals to plan for the number of their children and to regulate the spacing and timing of their births, through contraception and the treatment of infertility.

**Female genital cutting** – All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other deliberate injury to the female genital organs, whether for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons. Often called “female genital mutilation” or “female circumcision,” it has been inflicted on up to 140 million living women, usually with crude instruments and without anaesthesia.<sup>2</sup>

**Fistula (obstetric)** – An opening or rupture linking the vagina, rectum, bladder and/or abdominal cavity, usually caused by obstructed labour. The result is uncontrollable leakage of urine or feces, odor, infections and usually social ostracism for the woman.

**Gender bias** – Any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms that prevents a person from enjoying full human rights. The term can refer to either males or females, but in practice, preference for boys leads to sex-selective abortions, abandonment or neglect of girl infants and children, and restrictions on their care, education, legal rights and social and political roles.

**Gender-based violence** – Violence that targets anyone on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. It includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault and domestic violence, and is often used as a weapon of war.

**Gender-disaggregated data** – Facts and figures that break out data by gender. Its use allows decision-makers to focus on issues of particular relevance to women and men, girls and boys, and their different social roles.

**Human rights** – The rights people have simply because they are human beings, held inalienably, universally and forever. Citizenship, nationality, race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality and abilities are irrelevant.

**Maternal death** – A woman’s death due to complications of pregnancy or childbirth, usually within 42 days before death. Some definitions specify a woman be pregnant within three to 12 weeks before death.<sup>3</sup>

**Maternal morbidity** – Injury or disability that occurs during pregnancy, birth or within 42 days after giving birth, either acute (such as eclampsia or hemorrhage) or chronic (such as infertility), or both (fistula).

**Maternal mortality rate** – Number of maternal deaths per 100,000 women of reproductive age (15 to 49).

**Maternal mortality ratio** – Number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births during the same time period.

**Maternal-newborn health** – The health of newborn babies is so intimately linked to the health and survival of the mother that the World Health Organization (WHO) now refers to newborns’ health only in this way.

**Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** – An eight-point agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives worldwide, agreed upon by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in 2000. For each goal, one or more targets have been set, most for 2015, using 1990 as a benchmark. [See fact sheet: *ABCs of the MDGs*]

**Morbidity rate** – Number of individuals who become ill with a particular disease within a susceptible population during a specified time period.

**Mortality rate** – Ratio of the number of deaths from a disease to the total cases of that disease.

**Neonatal** – Referring to the first four weeks of a child's life.

**PMTCT** – Abbreviation for programmes to Prevent Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV/ AIDS. PMTCTs administer anti-retroviral drugs to newborns, and less often to their mothers and siblings. The most successful PMTCTs integrate two doses to both mothers and newborns with HIV counseling and testing.<sup>4</sup>

**Reproductive health** – see *sexual and reproductive health*, below.

**Safe motherhood** – A family, community and social environment that allows women to experience a pregnancy to term without unnecessary interventions, and delivery of a healthy infant into a postpartum period of medical and social support for all the needs of the woman, infant, and the entire family.<sup>5</sup>

**Safe Motherhood Initiative** – A global campaign launched in 1987 by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank, Family Care International and other organizations, to ensure that all pregnancies are wanted, all women can go safely through pregnancy and childbirth, and infants are born alive and healthy.

**Safer sex** – Any sexual practice that aims to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and of passing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections from one person to another. Examples are non-penetrative sex or vaginal intercourse with a condom.

**Sexual and reproductive health** – The full spectrum of education, information, affordable and effective supplies and services necessary to allow all people to decide responsibly (free of coercion, discrimination and violence) the number, spacing and timing of their children. This is not just the absence of infirmity but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.<sup>6</sup>

**Sexual and reproductive rights** – The rights of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, to the highest attainable standard of health in relation to the following: sexuality, including access to sexual and reproductive health care services; information and education on sexuality; respect for bodily integrity; choice of sexual partner; the decision to be sexually active or not; consensual sexual relations and marriage; the decision of when and whether to have children; and to pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life. These rights are recognized in national laws and international human rights and consensus documents.<sup>7</sup>

**Son preference (or boy preference)** – A desire to have male rather than female children. This is usually due to the perception that sons contribute more to their families and/or cost the family less than girls, through pay, continuing the family line and carrying out family rites and rituals, and caring for aging parents.

**Unsafe abortion** – A procedure for terminating unintended pregnancy, either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking minimal medical standards, or both.

**Women of reproductive (or childbearing) age** – Women age 15 to 49, according to WHO.

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<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS, "Orphans," *Uniting the World Against AIDS*, [www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/ChildAndOrphans/](http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/ChildAndOrphans/) (accessed Aug. 8, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, "Female Genital Mutilation," Health Topics, [http://www.who.int/topics/female\\_genital\\_mutilation/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/female_genital_mutilation/en/) (accessed Aug. 8, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> International Planned Parenthood Federation, *Glossary*, IPPF, London, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF, "Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV," [www.unicef.org/aids/index\\_preventionyoung.html](http://www.unicef.org/aids/index_preventionyoung.html) (accessed Aug. 10, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Safe Motherhood," [www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/index.htm), CDC, Atlanta GA, (accessed Aug. 10, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Geneva: United Nations, 1994, para 7.3, <http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/icpd-programme.cfm#ch7> (accessed Aug. 10, 2009)

<sup>7</sup> World Health Organization, Gender and Reproductive Rights, Glossary, Geneva, <https://apps.who.int/reproductive-health/gender/glossary.html> (accessed Aug. 10, 2009)