Strengthening Systems for Maternal and Reproductive Health

Dr. Eunice Brookman-Amissah, MB.ChB, FWACP, FRCOG
Vice President for Africa, Ipas

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Overview

• Inequities and gaps in maternal and reproductive health in Africa
• Priorities in strengthening health systems
• Priorities beyond the health system
• Unsafe abortion – neglected and preventable
Inequities and gaps

• Underserved countries and populations across all aspects of reproductive health
Inequities and gaps

• Young people’s RH needs
• Access to and use of modern contraception
• Maternal mortality
• Unsafe abortion
Priorities in strengthening health systems

Invest in primary health care workers
• Motivate and train
• Facilitative supervision and other support mechanisms
Priorities in strengthening health systems

• RH (including MCH) too fragmented
• Better integrated services—ON SITE
• Establish regulations, standards and guidelines for service delivery
• Improve quality of care, including attention to values clarification and rights
• Improve collection and use of data
• Strengthen logistics systems
Priorities beyond the health system

Effective engagement of communities:

- Youth needs
- Information/Education
- Reduce stigma

Private Midwives outreach in Uganda
Priorities beyond the health system

Improve policies:

• Ensure that health system and national laws and policies reflect public health evidence and human rights -- not ideology

• Incorporate needs of neglected groups, including youth, into policy frameworks

• Mobilise human and financial resources
Priorities beyond the health system

• Use the UN, AU and national legal systems to hold governments accountable

• Ensure active participation of women and youth

• Stay the course post-2015
The burden of unsafe abortion in Africa and South Asia
Deaths from unsafe abortion per 100,000 live births, 2008
(Source: WHO, 2011)
Unsafe abortion: Risks of inaction

• 150,000 preventable maternal deaths in Africa in the next five years
• Millions of injuries, increased infertility, harms to families and children
• High costs to health systems and women
• MDGs not met
• Violations of women’s human rights
Responses to unsafe abortion

- **Global**: Safe abortion addressed in WHO guidance and other key documents
- **Regional**: Africa protocol affirms abortion as a woman’s right for several indications; Maputo Plan of Action includes safe abortion
- **National**: Changes in laws and policies; expanded access to safe abortion and postabortion care
• Talking since Alma-Ata 1978
• Safe Motherhood conferences
• Conference after conference
• Numerous strategies-latest being CARMMA
• Shifting goal post
• Let us stop and consider what is happening on the ground--at implementation level
• We need to DELIVER---- in Africa
Reducing Maternal Mortality

- Is it family planning?
- Or is it access to safe abortion/PAC?
- Is it increased age at first pregnancy?
- Or is it BEMOC or EMOC and skilled attendance?

IT IS ALL OF THE ABOVE AND MORE.

TOGETHER

We need to be consistent in our message and advocacy—avoid confusion.
They count on us!