



## 25 Years of the ICPD: Accelerating the Promise

The year 2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994. At the Cairo conference, 179 governments adopted a visionary Programme of Action that called for women's reproductive health and rights to take centre stage in national and global development efforts. Since 1994, remarkable progress has been made around the world, but there are still millions of women and girls who have not benefited from the promise of ICPD.

As we celebrate the achievements realized over the past 25 years, we need to set a roadmap to complete the unfinished business of ICPD. The world is committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030, but this cannot be done without the ICPD agenda. The ICPD anniversary is a unique opportunity to inspire action and mobilize political commitment to fully implement its Programme of Action.

To mark this event, the Governments of Kenya and Denmark and UNFPA are co-convening the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 in Nairobi, Kenya on 12-14 November. The goal is to elicit commitments to end preventable maternal deaths, eliminate unmet need for modern contraceptive methods, and end gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls – as an indispensable part of Agenda 2030. The Nairobi Summit will provide an inclusive platform for Member States and a broad range of stakeholders to come together around the universally applicable principle of rights and choices for all.

### WHAT'S CHANGED IN NEPAL SINCE THE CAIRO CONFERENCE

Nepal has made remarkable gains in the last decades:

- The pregnancy-related mortality ratio has come down from 660 (1995) to 258 (2015)<sup>i</sup>.
- The births attended by skilled health personnel has gone up from 9% (1996) to 58% (2016).
- The total fertility rate has decreased from 4.6 (1996) to 2.3 (2016).
- The adolescent fertility rate has decreased from 127 (1996) to 88 (2016).
- The modern contraceptive prevalence rate has gone up from 26.0% (1996) to 43.0% (2016).
- Unmet need for family planning has slightly dropped from 24.6% (2006) to 23.7% (2016).

As real reproductive choices have become a reality for more and more women and girls, they are making the individual choice to avoid an unplanned pregnancy and safeguard their health and wellbeing. Millions of women in Nepal are exercising their rights to make decisions about their own bodies, including whether, when, and how many children to have. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 enshrines safe motherhood and reproductive health rights, equity and inclusiveness – a prerequisite to moving Nepal towards greater gender equality and empowerment of women.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Despite the remarkable progress, millions of women and girls in Nepal still cannot exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights:

- In Nepal, 239<sup>ii</sup> mothers die for every 100,000 births. Many more suffer from injuries and chronic disability incurred during childbirth. This is long way from the global target set in 1994 to reduce maternal deaths to fewer than 75 per 100,000 live births, and the Agenda 2030 target of 70.
- About 1.5 million currently married women in Nepal who would like to control their own fertility still do not have access to modern contraceptives. Without this access, they lack the power to make decisions about their own bodies, including whether or when to become pregnant. The lack of this power—which influences so many other facets of life: education, income, safety—leaves women and girls unable to shape their own futures.
- Still 22 per cent of women in Nepal age 15-49 have experienced physical violence since age 15 and 7 per cent have ever experienced sexual violence.

## ACCELERATING THE PROMISE: CALL FOR ACTION

The Nairobi Summit has the potential to be a watershed moment with national and global commitments made to fulfil the ICPD promise and move us closer to the world we want by 2030.

It is time to be bold and do what is right. Removing social, economic and institutional barriers that stand between women and girls and their rights has the potential to not only improve the lives of individuals but also help propel economies forward and build a new foundation for more prosperous, equitable and resilience societies.

Join the movement and be a part of this unique opportunity to help lift up women and girls, their families and communities, and create a better world with rights and choices for all.

Learn more and get involved: <https://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/>

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<sup>i</sup> WHO (2015). *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2015. Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and the UN Population Division.* 2015.

<sup>ii</sup> MoH, Nepal; New ERA; and ICF. 2017. *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016.* Kathmandu, Nepal: Ministry of Health, Nepal.