



Launch of the ICPD Global Review report

Remarks by Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, UNFPA Executive Director

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Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General. It is an honour to have you with us today for the launch of this very important report. I would like to thank you for your leadership and commitment to women's health, to upholding the rights of women and girls and to advancing the Cairo agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Two decades ago, the International Conference on Population and Development forged a groundbreaking consensus. Delegates from all regions and cultures recognized that increasing social, economic and political equality, and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, is the basis for individual well-being, lower population growth, and sustainable development.

The evidence of the ICPD Global Review Report that we are presenting to you today overwhelmingly supports that consensus. Drawing on data from 176 countries, expert consultations and academic research, and a series of regional and thematic consultations, the report shows significant achievements over the past 20 years.

Fewer women are dying in pregnancy and childbirth. **Maternal mortality worldwide fell by nearly half between 1990 and 2010.**

More women have access to education, work and political participation.

More children, girls in particular, are going to school, with **primary school enrolment rates approaching 90%.**

And as the Secretary-General pointed out, **nearly 1 billion people have moved out of extreme poverty.**

But this progress does not tell the whole story. The report reveals in stark detail the persistent inequalities and discrimination threatening to derail development.

In many countries progress is limited to the wealthy, with **enormous numbers of people being excluded** from the process and benefits of development.

More than **half of the absolute gains in global income from 1988 to 2008 went to the richest 5%.** None went to the bottom 10%.

In the poorest communities, women's status, maternal death, child marriage and many of the concerns of the Cairo conference have seen little progress over the past two decades.

Today, around **800 women will die giving life.** About 15 during the course of this press briefing.

1 in 3 women worldwide reports having experienced **physical and/or sexual abuse.**

In a recent study from one region, **1 in 4 men admitted to rape**. 8 out of 10 of those men thought they had a right to sex without a woman's consent. And it's no wonder: the **majority of those men faced no legal consequences**.

Marriage under the age of 18 is illegal in 158 countries, yet **1 in 3 girls in developing countries is married before the age of 18**.

And marriage too early, leads to pregnancy too soon effectively closing the door to education and other opportunities for a better life.

Today, there is no country in which women are equal to men in political or economic power.

Too many people, particularly the poor, still live without access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning.

And laws designed to protect the rights of women and girls, where they exist, are often not enforced.

Twenty years on, we still have a long way to go in realizing the vision of Cairo, but the ICPD@20 review shows us that vision is as relevant today as it was in 1994.

Adolescent girls are particularly at risk in the poorest communities. More girls are finishing primary school, but they are facing challenges in accessing and completing secondary education.

Supporting their aspirations – and the aspirations of all young people – is key.

Investments are critically needed to guarantee their human rights and expand their capabilities through **quality health and education, freedom from early marriage and childbearing, opportunities for safe paid work, and political participation**. Educated, healthy, safe and skilled, they can become powerful drivers of economic growth and development.

The report's findings point to why governments must enact and enforce laws that eliminate inequalities and that protect human rights – why they must fulfill the commitments they made in Cairo to ensure that dignity and human rights are the foundation of a more resilient, sustainable future.

The good news is that 70 percent of governments have said that equality and rights are priorities for development.

It's time then to move from words to action. We cannot afford to wait another 20 years to address the inequalities plaguing our collective well-being. Development gains should not be limited to the fortunate; they should reach all populations.

As a barometer of how we are doing in addressing these inequalities, I suggest we look to the adolescent girl. Every girl, regardless of where she lives, or her economic circumstances, has the right to fulfil her human potential. The sustainable, equitable, inclusive future we all want depends on the actions we take today to ensure her dignity, health and well-being.

Thank you.