

Maternal health

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party convening in Palermo, Italy on 23-25 November 2011

Notes that

- The target of the UN Millennium Development Goal on improving maternal health is to
 1. Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.
 2. Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health.
 - Every year, 536,000 women and girls die as a result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or the six weeks following delivery;
 - 99% of these deaths occur in developing countries, half of them in sub-Saharan Africa and one third in South Asia;
 - A further nine million women suffer complications that can result in life-long pain, disability and socio-economic exclusion;
 - Around 215 million couples per year do not have access to modern methods of contraception;
 - Many women suffer or die after being forced into seeking illegal and unsafe abortions, as a result of restrictions regarding the legalisation of abortions.

Recognises that

- Every one of those deaths is a tragedy for the families and children affected but also devastating for the societies where they occur;
- The even greater tragedy is the useless loss of lives, of which the majority in fact could have been avoided, as most maternal deaths in connection with birth are preventable;
- The overall progress to reach the UN MDG target for maternal health has been too slow, although the measures needed are well-known and have long been practiced in cultures around the world;
- Medical attention during pregnancy as well as information regarding methods of contraception to avoid or delay childbearing still remain the key factors in reducing maternal deaths;
- Despite the explicit facts and the obvious solutions, there is substantially less money to fund the reproductive and maternal health programmes today than in the year 2000. According to the United Nations, official development assistance for family planning declined sharply between 2000 and 2008, from 8.2 to 3.2 percent. Other external funding also declined;

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- It remains unacceptable that still today, every woman's right to her own body is not fully respected in all countries, not even in Europe.

Calls on

- All governments to foster the acknowledged vaccination programmes including recent ones like the UNICEF-Kiwanis Eliminate Project preventing maternal/neonatal tetanus;
- All governments to act swiftly in order to provide the necessary funding for reproductive and maternal health programmes worldwide;
- All governments to incorporate into their foreign development strategies, measures to reduce maternal deaths;
- All governments to incorporate into their SRH and HIV/Aids strategies the MDG 5;
- All governments to spare no effort in contributing to reach the UN Millennium Goals by 2015;
- All governments to recognise the right of every woman to legal and safe abortion

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