

## USAID ACTING ON THE CALL & SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

October 2014

In June 2014, USAID launched [Acting on the Call: Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths](#). Based on USAID's 18-month review of maternal and newborn child health funding, the action plan outlines USAID's expressed commitment to end preventable child and maternal deaths by shifting resources to maternal health and family planning, and implementing technical approaches and proven interventions. The action plan sets the direction for maternal health programs and includes discussion of family planning and HIV – major components of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

### MATERNAL HEALTH

The action plan asserts that almost all of the annual 289,000 deaths due to pregnancy and childbirth can be prevented by: “provision of family planning and post-abortion care,” “access to high quality antenatal, labor and delivery, and postpartum care,” and “focused attention to significant morbidities such as HIV, malaria, TB, and malnutrition” (p. 97).

The plan outlines priority actions that seek to address some of the social and economic barriers to maternal health, including discrimination due to age and marital status, among other factors; and disrespect and abuse of women and girls during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum periods. The plan notes: “Women and girls must have access to affordable, quality, respectful maternity care, while men, boys, and other decision-makers must be engaged as advocates and change agents” (p. 98). Through the plan, USAID commits to: “focus on women, girls, and gender equity,” “promote and advocate for women's informed choice in use of family planning, maternity care, and other health services,” and promote policies and programs that support evidence-based interventions (p. 100).

### FAMILY PLANNING

Family planning contributes directly to improved health by reducing unintended pregnancies and births, thus lowering the number of women exposed to pregnancy-related health risks and reducing the number of high-risk pregnancies. USAID is partnering with countries to “expand availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability of high quality, voluntary family planning information, services, and methods,” and to “enhance women's and couples' ability to choose whether, when, and how often to become pregnant” (p.103).

USAID's stated objective is to “provide everyone with the greatest possible choice of methods through the widest variety of accessible and quality platforms” (p.105). It has launched a comprehensive process to identify “evidence-based, high-impact and promising practices in family planning and reproductive health” (p.105). Going forward, USAID will invest in: community-based family planning, postpartum family planning programs, post-abortion care, adolescent reproductive health programs, and behavior change communication (p. 106).

### ABOUT THE CENTER FOR HEALTH AND GENDER EQUITY (CHANGE)

[The Center for Health and Gender Equity \(CHANGE\)](#) is a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization that promotes the sexual and reproductive health and human rights of women and girls worldwide through education and advocacy efforts that affect the development and implementation of U.S. policies.