

Motivated by a Milestone:

A Call to Action for Family Planning



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Because Health Workers Save Lives.



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A Call to Action for Family Planning

On October 31, 2011 the seven billionth person on our planet arrived. Such a milestone draws attention to the need to invest in family planning programs. But what happens now? This event gains real meaning only if it leads to meaningful action. Family planning is essential. Much has been done to improve access to and use of family planning services, but more efforts are needed by a range of actors to continue to ensure access to family planning for those in need.

The need is significant and family planning is essential

Globally, 215 million women have an unmet need for family planning. These women would like to avoid a pregnancy but do not have access to family planning services and contraceptive methods. Family planning saves lives, with benefits for women, babies, children, families, communities, countries—and the world.

Every day, 1,000 women and girls die in pregnancy or during childbirth. **Modern contraceptive use prevents 188 million unintended pregnancies each year, resulting in 150,000 fewer maternal deaths.**¹ If the unmet need were met—if an additional 215 million women and couples were able to use contraception—**another 90,000 women’s lives would be saved each year.** Meeting unmet need also could **prevent more than two million children’s deaths annually.**

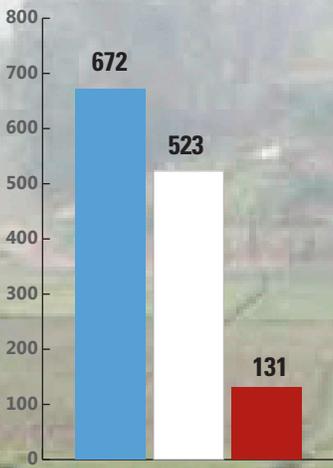
Women in sub-Saharan Africa have the greatest unmet need for family planning. The need for family planning is not distributed evenly, as shown by the large proportion of women who would like, but are unable to, plan their families; the high total fertility rates; and the low use of modern methods of contraception in sub-Saharan Africa in general—especially in West Africa.

Women in sub-Saharan Africa have more than twice as many children as women in other regions: 5.2 on average, compared with 2.2 in Latin America and 2.7 in South Central Asia. Across sub-Saharan Africa, 19% of women use modern contraception; in West Africa, only half that many, or 10%, use modern contraception. In Latin America, two-thirds of women use modern contraception.²

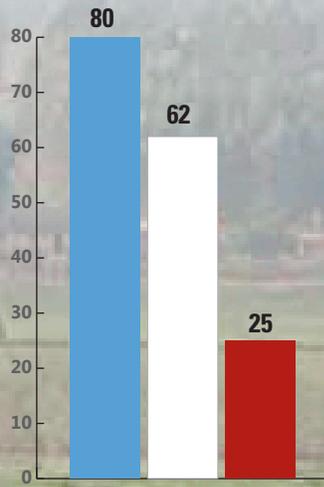
¹ Singh S, et al., *Adding It Up: The Costs and Benefits of Investing in Family Planning and Maternal and Newborn Health*, New York: Guttmacher Institute and United Nations Population Fund, 2009.

² Population Reference Bureau, 2011. *2011 World Population Data Sheet*. Washington D.C.

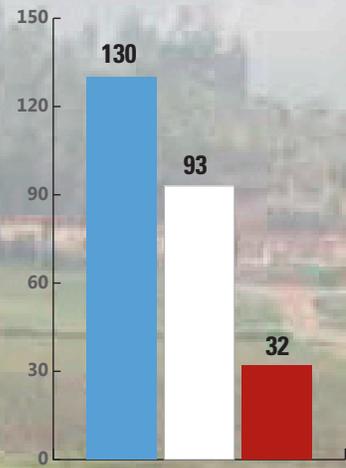
**MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO
PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS**



**INFANT MORTALITY RATE
PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS**



**UNDER 5 MORTALITY RATE
PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS**



 WEST AFRICA

 EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

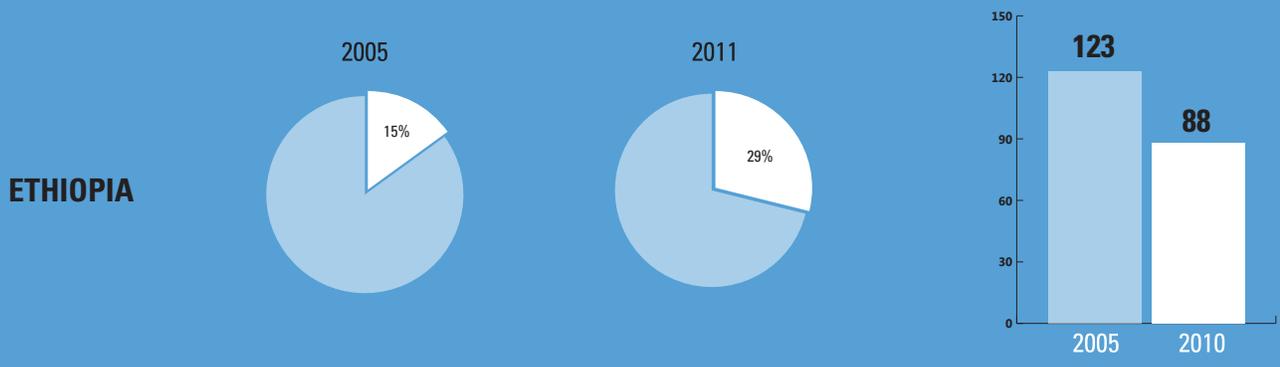
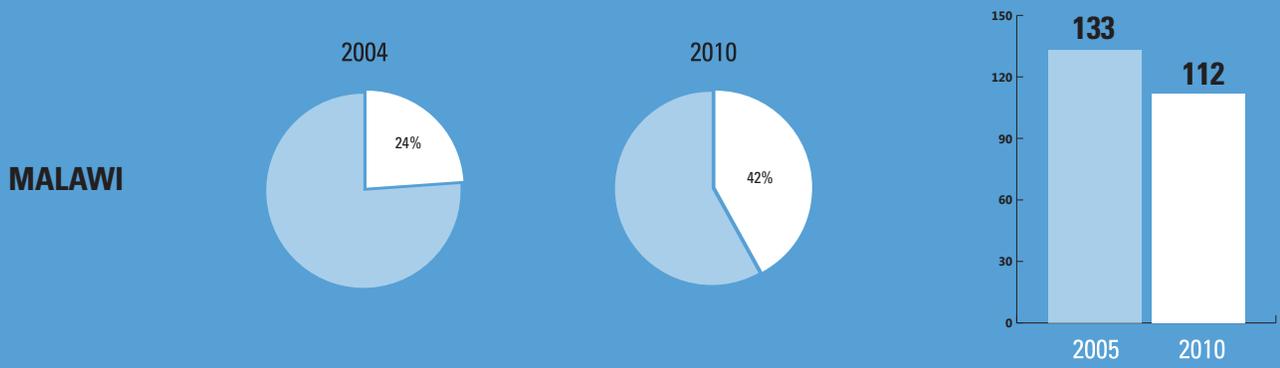
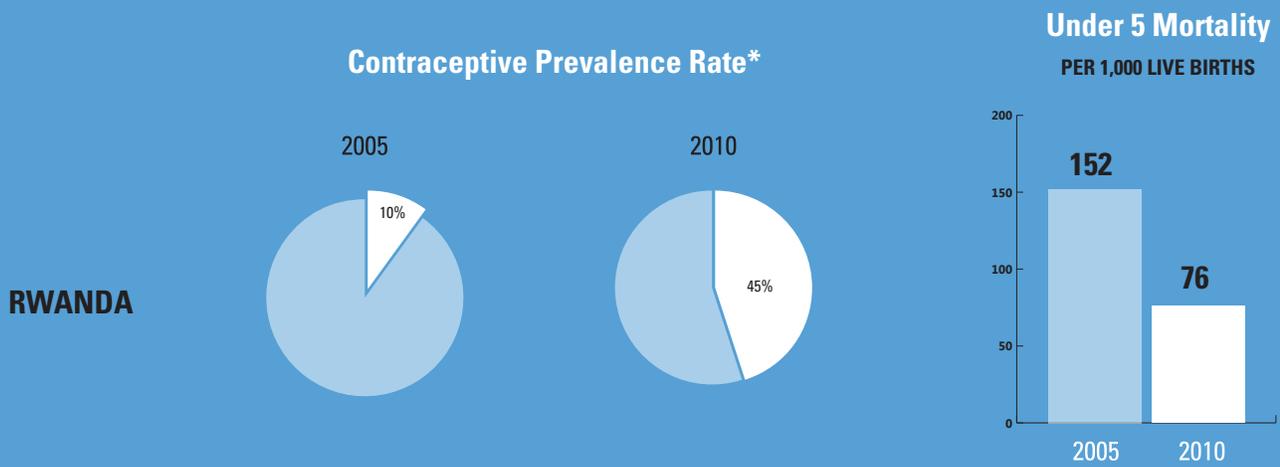
 REST OF DEVELOPING WORLD

Sources: World Bank and WHO | **Note:** Rest of Developing World does not contain China



Rapid change is possible, even in challenging contexts

The challenges can seem daunting, but recent experiences in several sub-Saharan African countries show what is possible with government commitment, coordinated efforts, and a focus on extending access. These examples show how increases in the use of contraception have been accompanied by significant declines in under five mortality rates.



*The proportion of women of reproductive age who are using (or whose partner is using) a contraceptive method at a given point in time



What can you do?

National Governments

- Develop strategies to address supply, distribution, and support of health workers
 - Support policies that expand access to family planning at all levels of health care and in communities
 - Ensure long-term contraceptive security
 - Support an all-government approach to family planning
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Donors

- Support efforts to address family planning and the health worker crisis
 - Provide coordinated support to national governments to ensure contraceptive security
 - Collaborate to ensure long-term and consistent support to national family planning programs
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Journalists

- Consult with IntraHealth and other organizations to increase your knowledge of family planning and related health issues
- Cover family planning issues, including the dire health, economic, and development implications of limited access to family planning as well as family planning success stories



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