

# Addressing Global Reproductive Health Challenges



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# Overview

## ❑ Reproductive health: the global framework

## ❑ Positive trends

## ❑ Inequities and gaps

- Underserved regions and countries, especially Africa
- Youth
- Maternal health, including unsafe abortion

## ■ Reproductive health priorities

- Implement cost-effective interventions
- Strengthen health systems
- Address socio-cultural context
- Improve policies

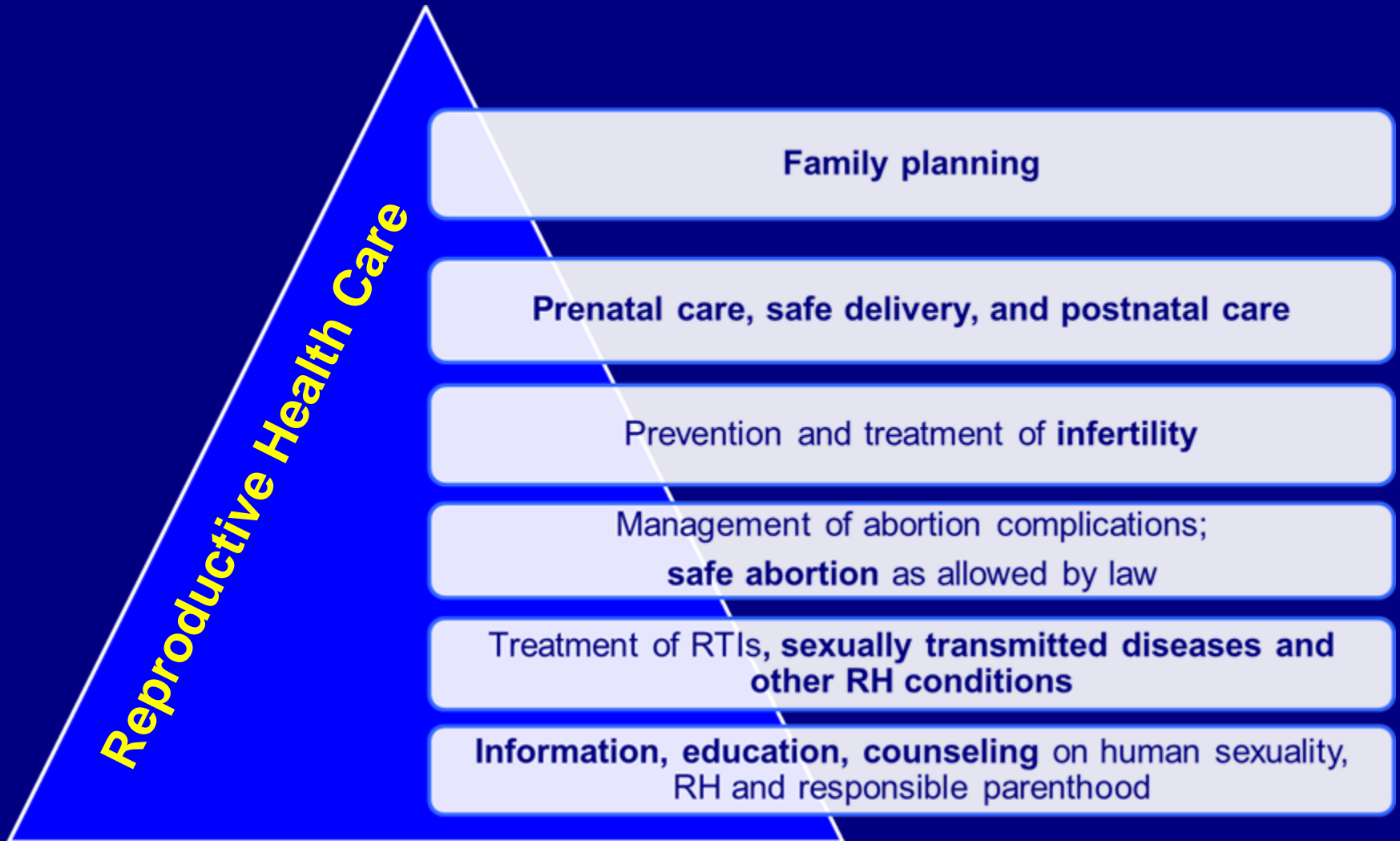
## ❑ Unsafe abortion – neglected and preventable

# Reproductive health

“ ... a state of **complete physical, mental and social well-being** and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in **all matters relating to the reproductive system**, and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a safe and satisfying sex life and that they have the **capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.**”

- **ICPD Programme of Action**

# Reproductive health care (ICPD)



# **Millennium Development Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health**

## **☐ Target 5.A:**

**Reduce by three-quarters the  
maternal mortality ratio between  
1990 and 2015**

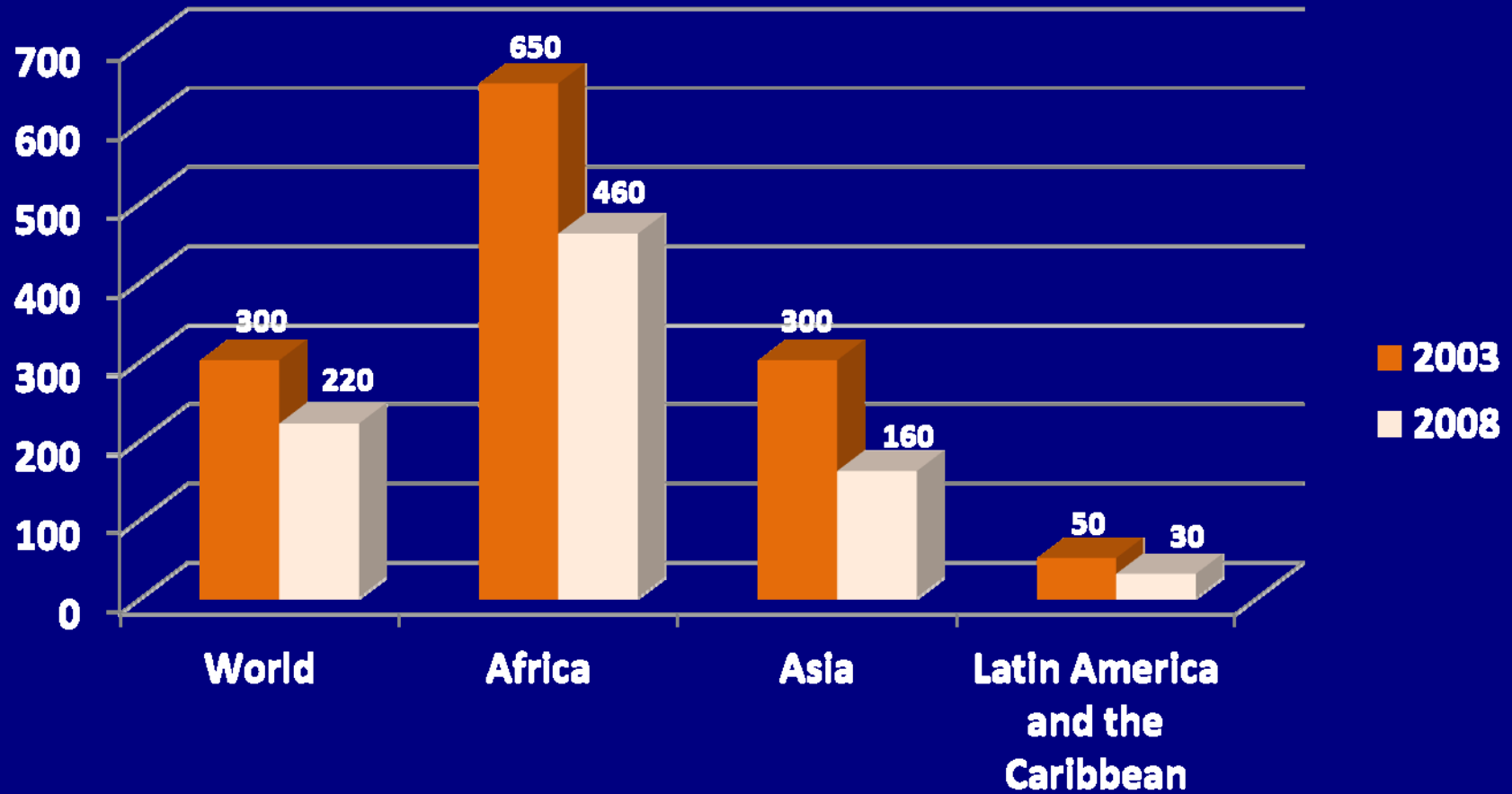
## **☐ Target 5.B:**

**Achieve universal access to  
reproductive health**

# Positive global trends

- ❑ Improved access to and use of modern contraception – 56% of women married or in union
- ❑ New HIV infections down by 20% over the past decade
- ❑ Decline in maternal deaths by one-third since 1990
- ❑ Decline in maternal deaths from unsafe abortions by 16% since 2003

# Decreases in deaths per 100,000 unsafe abortions, by region



Source: WHO, 2007; WHO, 2011.

# Inequities and gaps

**Underserved countries and populations across all aspects of reproductive health, especially Africa**

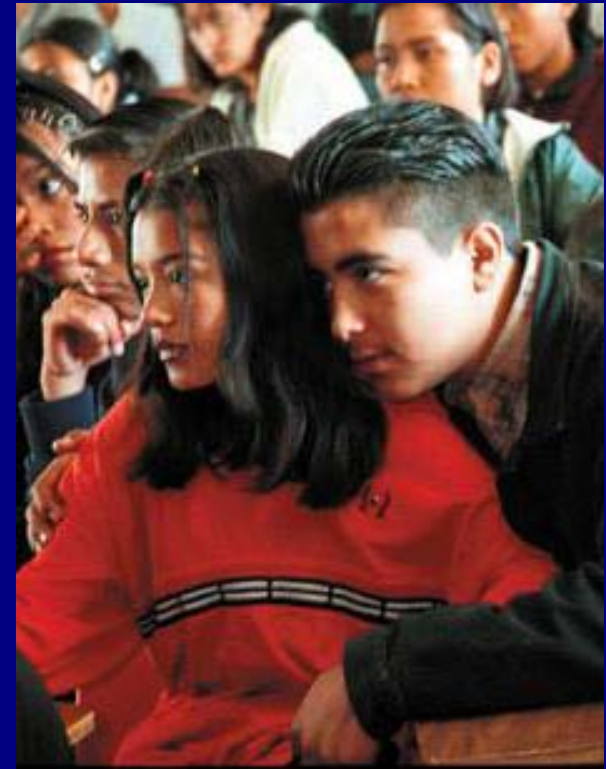




# Inequities and gaps

## Youth access to sexual and reproductive health information and services

- ❑ Low use of modern contraception – less than 5% of the world's poorest young people
- ❑ High HIV infection rates – 45% of newly infected individuals over 15
- ❑ High numbers of deaths due to unsafe abortion - almost half among young women under 25



# Inequities and gaps

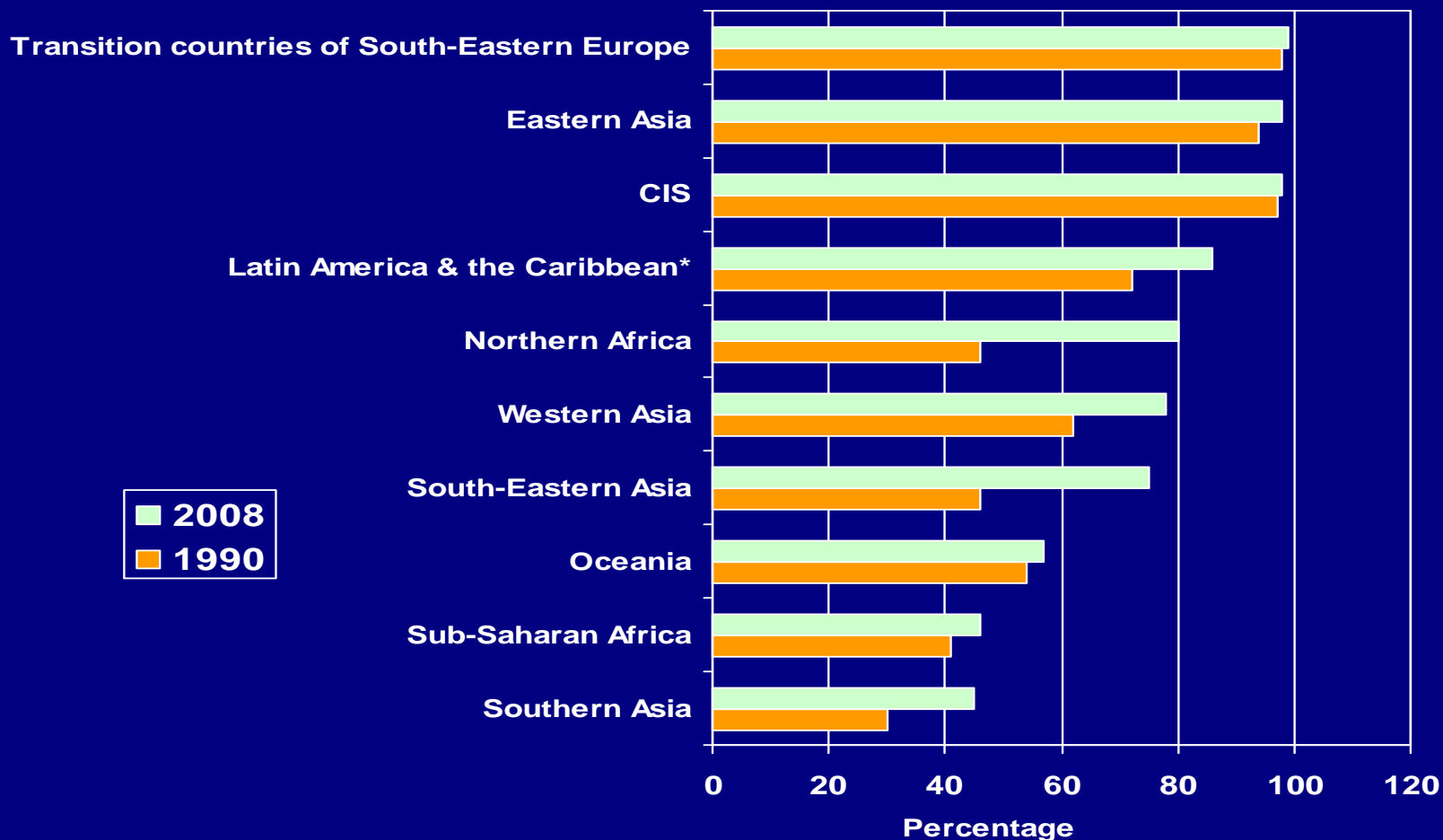
## ❑ Neglected reproductive health conditions

- Reproductive cancers
- Maternal health – the lagging MDG



David and Lucile Packard Foundation

# Attended deliveries, by region



\* Includes only deliveries in health-care institutions

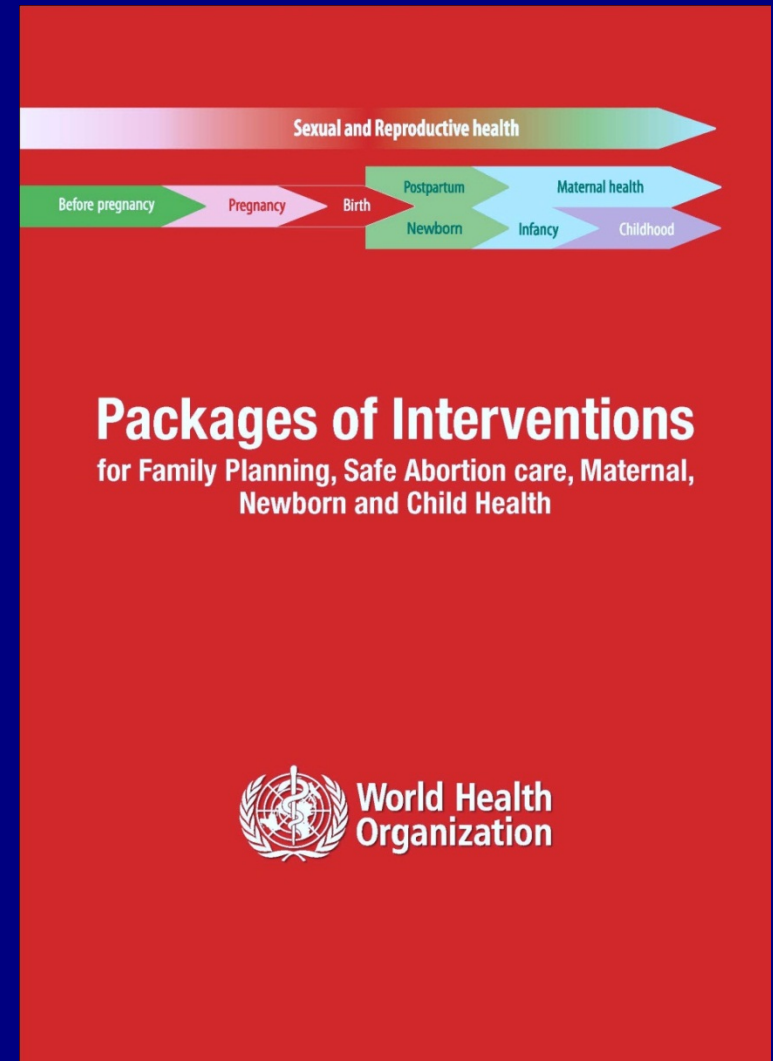
Source: UN, 2010

# **Maternal health: the lagging MDG**

- ❑ Maternal mortality declining as fertility declines and health care improves – but the pace must increase**
- ❑ Maternal morbidity**
- ❑ Deaths and disabilities due to unsafe abortion – over 90% in Africa and South-Central Asia**

# Priorities: implement cost-effective interventions

**Integrated maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) care,** including contraception and safe legal abortion



Source: WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank, 2010.

# Priorities: strengthen health systems

- ❑ Invest in **primary health care workers**
- ❑ Better **integrate services**
- ❑ Improve **quality of care**
- ❑ Improve collection and use of **data**
- ❑ Strengthen **logistics systems**





# Priorities: address sociocultural context

- ❑ Youth needs
- ❑ Reduction of stigma
- ❑ Reduction of gender-based violence
- ❑ Effective engagement of communities



# Priorities: improve policies

- ❑ Ensure that health system and national policies reflect public health **evidence and human rights**  
-- not ideology
- ❑ Incorporate needs of **neglected groups**, including youth, into policy frameworks
- ❑ Mobilize human and financial **resources**



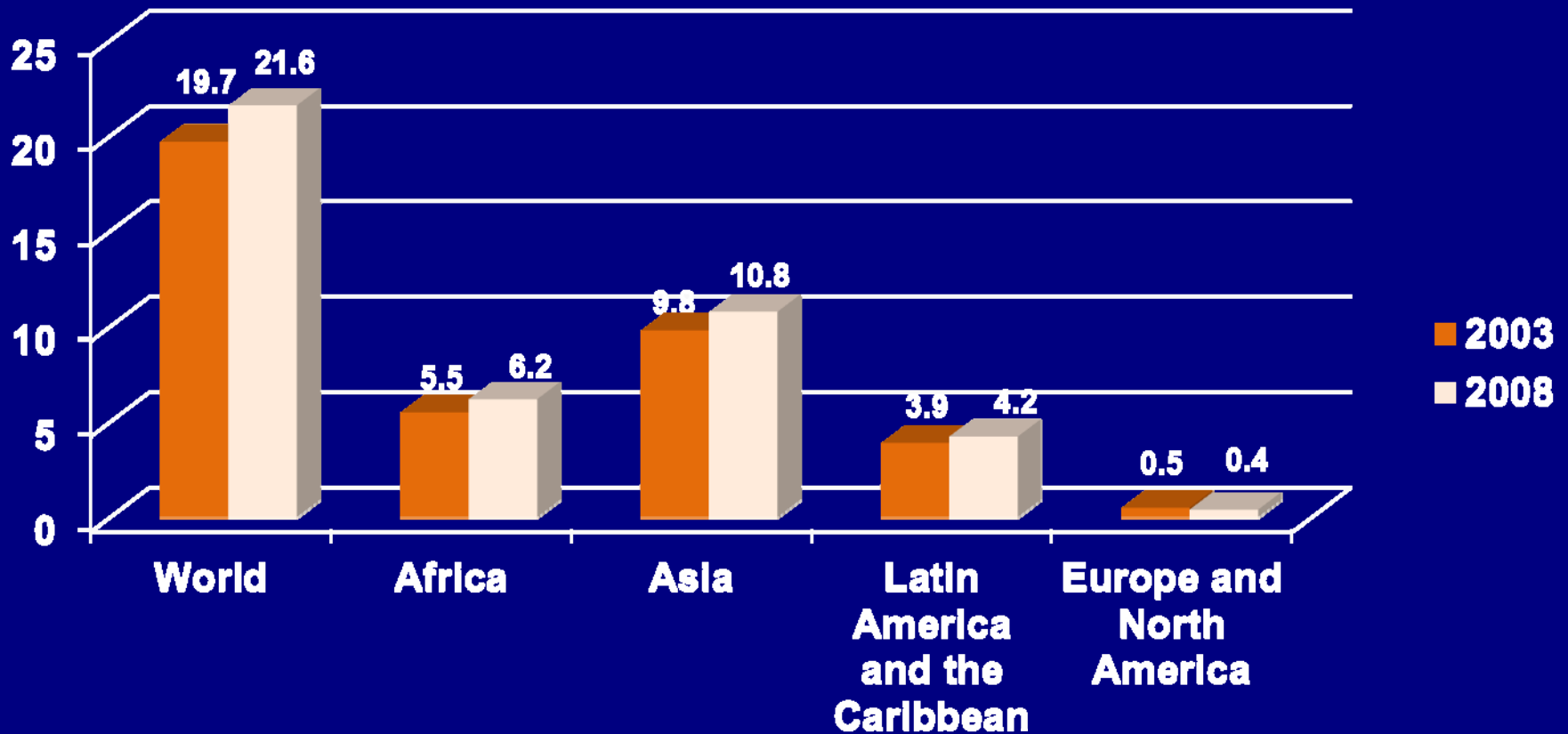
# Unsafe abortion: neglected and preventable

- ❑ 21.6 million each year (as of 2008)
- ❑ Effective contraception: key to prevention

Source: WHO, 2011

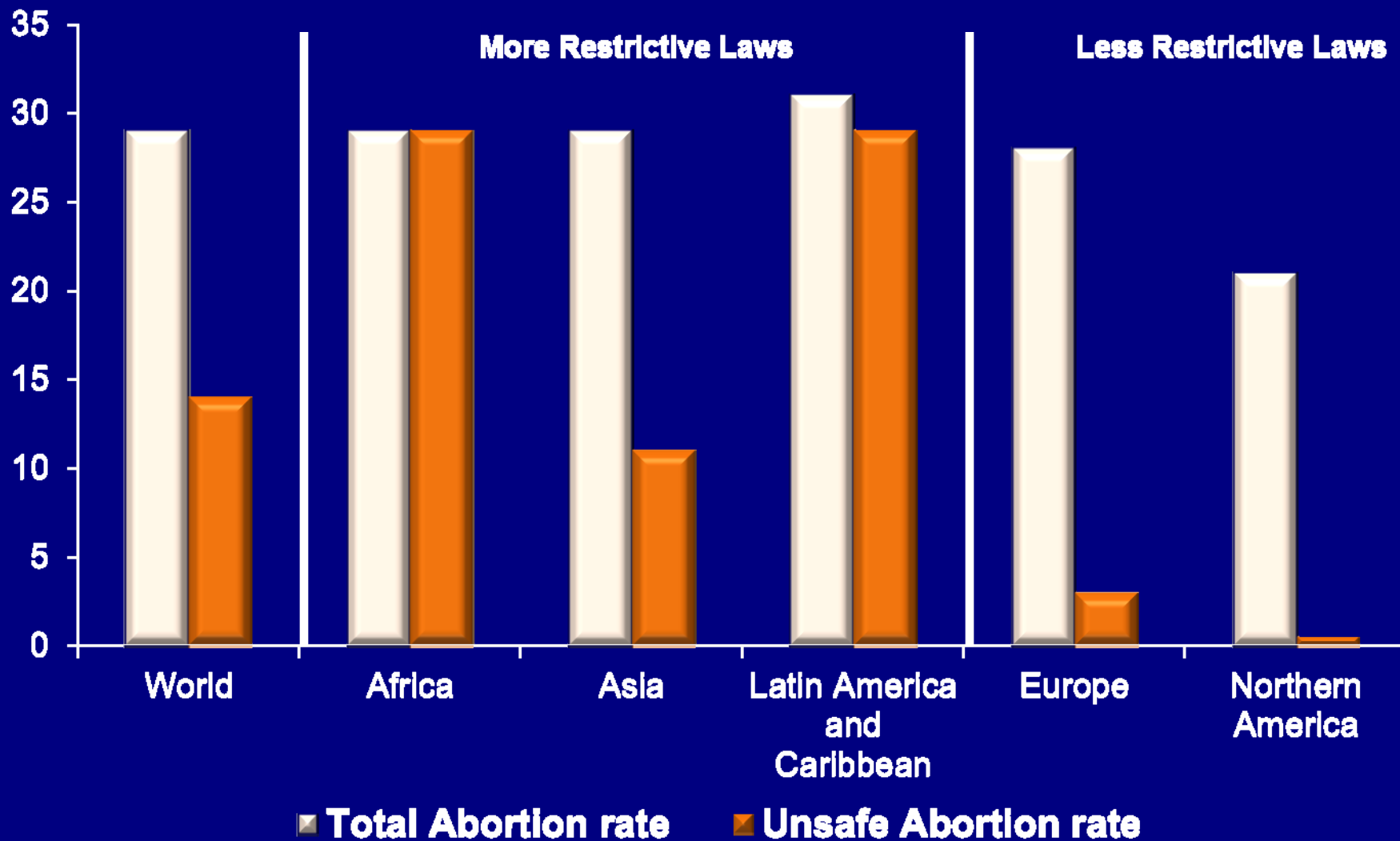


# Increases in unsafe abortions (millions per year)



# Abortion rates are similar, safety varies dramatically

(number of abortions per 1,000 women ages 15 – 44)



**"The evidence shows that women who seek an abortion will do so regardless of legal restrictions... Where there are few restrictions on the availability of safe abortion, deaths and illness are dramatically reduced."**

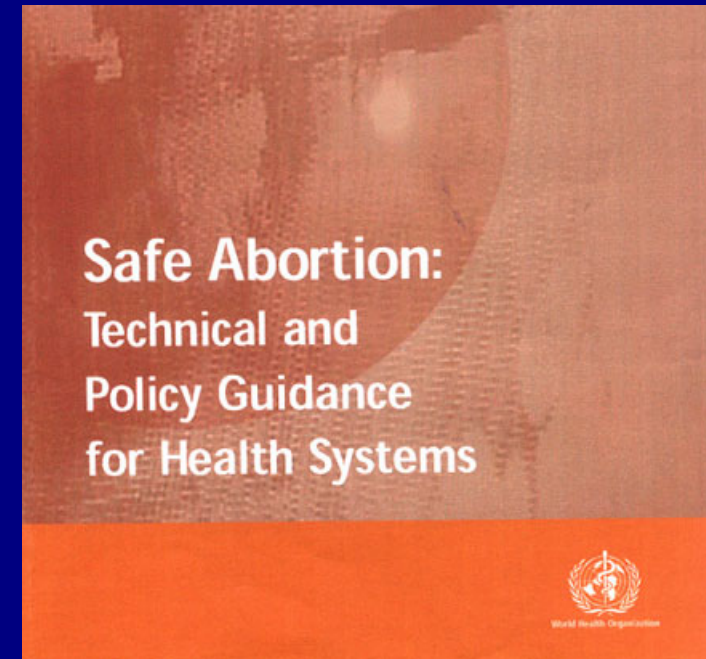
**-- WHO. *Women and Health: Today's Evidence Tomorrow's Agenda*, 2009**

# **Unsafe abortion: risks of inaction**

- ❑ 250,000 preventable deaths in the next five years**
- ❑ Millions of injuries, increased infertility, harms to families**
- ❑ High costs to health systems**
- ❑ MDGs not met**
- ❑ Violations of women's human rights**

# Responses to unsafe abortion

- ❑ Global Safe abortion addressed in WHO guidance and other key documents
- ❑ Regional Africa women's rights protocol authorizes abortion when pregnancy threatens a woman's health; Maputo Plan of Action includes safe abortion
- ❑ National: Changes in laws and policies; expanded access to safe abortion and postabortion care



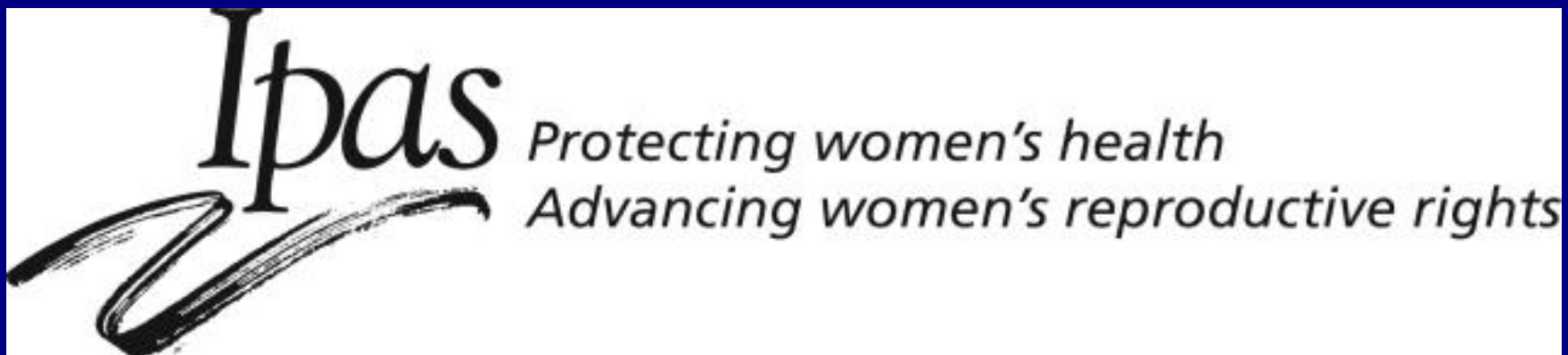
# They are counting on us!



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