

WHY AREN'T THERE MORE MATERNAL DEATHS?

THE EFFECT OF FERTILITY DECLINE ON REDUCING MATERNAL DEATHS

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THE CORE FOUR

1

Family
planning with
related
reproductive
health
services

2

Skilled
care during
pregnancy
and childbirth

3

Emergency
obstetric care

4

Immediate
postnatal care

QUESTIONS

What have been the separate contributions of declines in the:

- fertility rate
- the maternal mortality ratio

to reducing the number of maternal deaths over the past 15 years and what are the variations by major region?

How have maternal mortality rates declined?

FOCUS ON NUMBER OF DEATHS

Deaths = WRA x GFR x MMR

- WRA: women of reproductive age (15-49)
- GFR: general fertility rate (births/year/1000 WRA)
- MMR: the maternal mortality ratio

EXAMPLE

Maternal Deaths = WRA x GFR x MMR

Sub-Saharan Africa

In 1990

117,149,000 WRA x 196 GFR = 22,928,000 Births x 867 MMR = 198,799 deaths

In 2008

194,797,000 WRA x 161 GFR = 31,447,000 Births x 646 MMR = 203,086 deaths

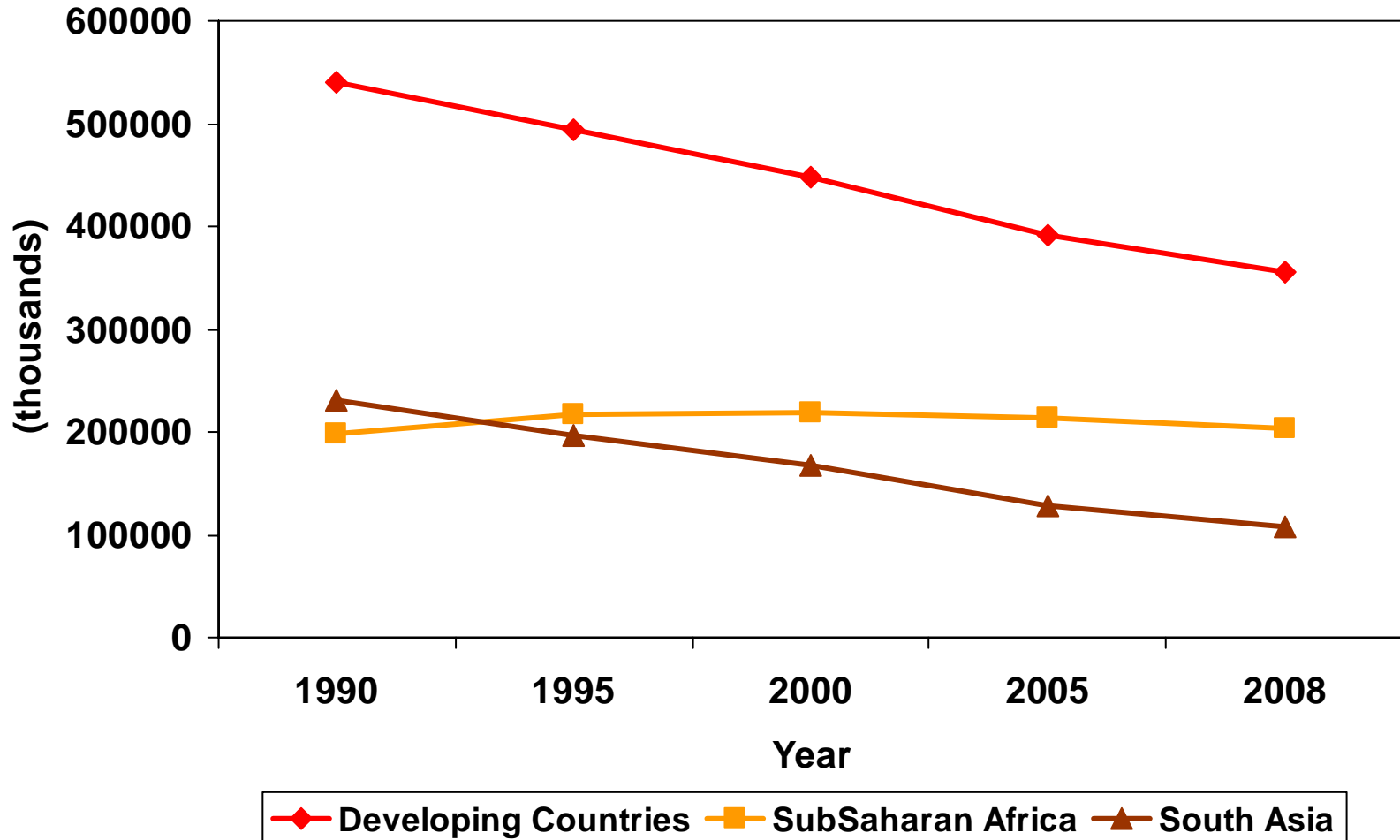
DATA SOURCES

UN Population Division 2008 Database

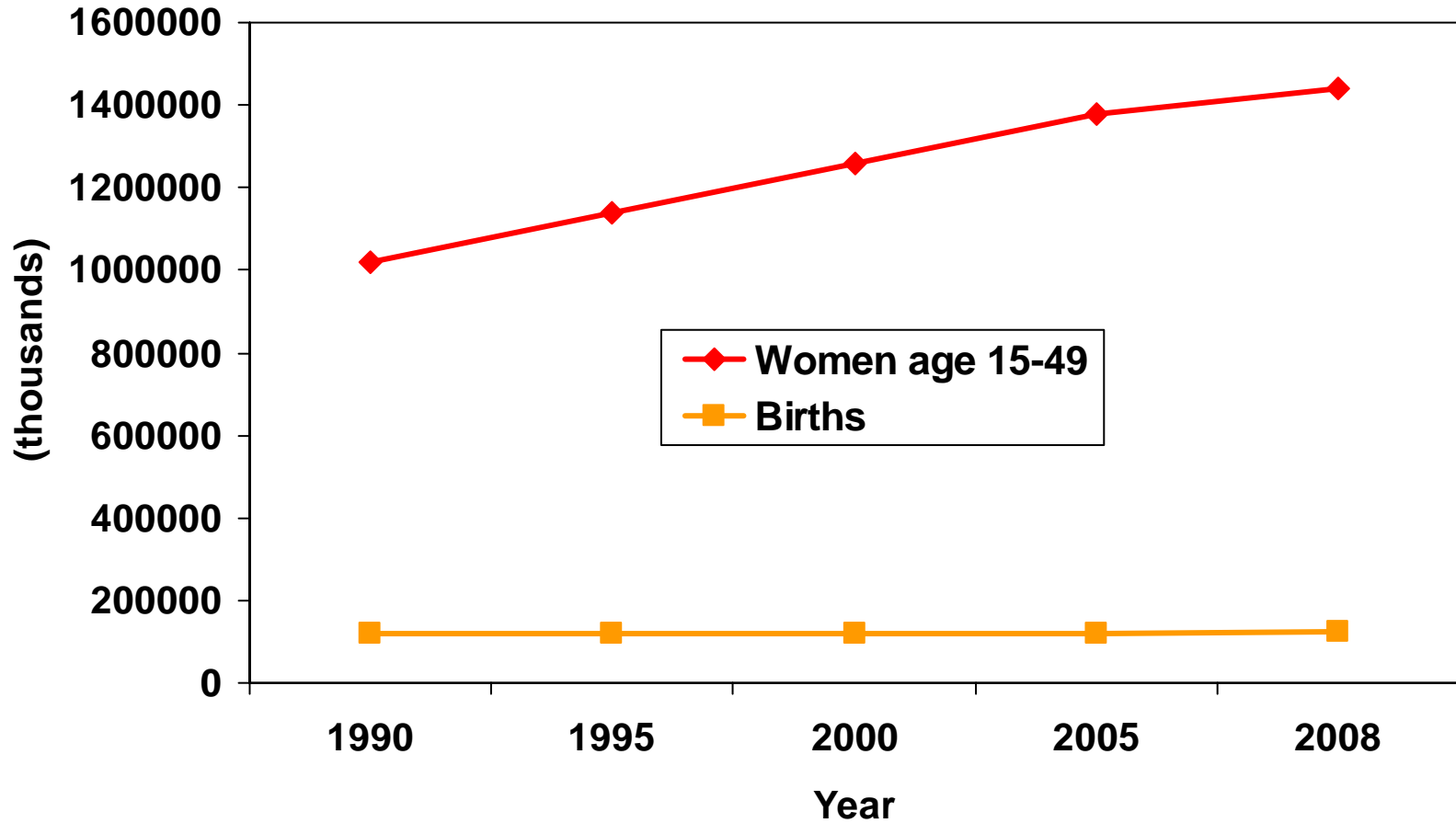
- No. of women of reproductive age
- Births

- WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA/The World Bank
 - Maternal mortality ratios, 2008

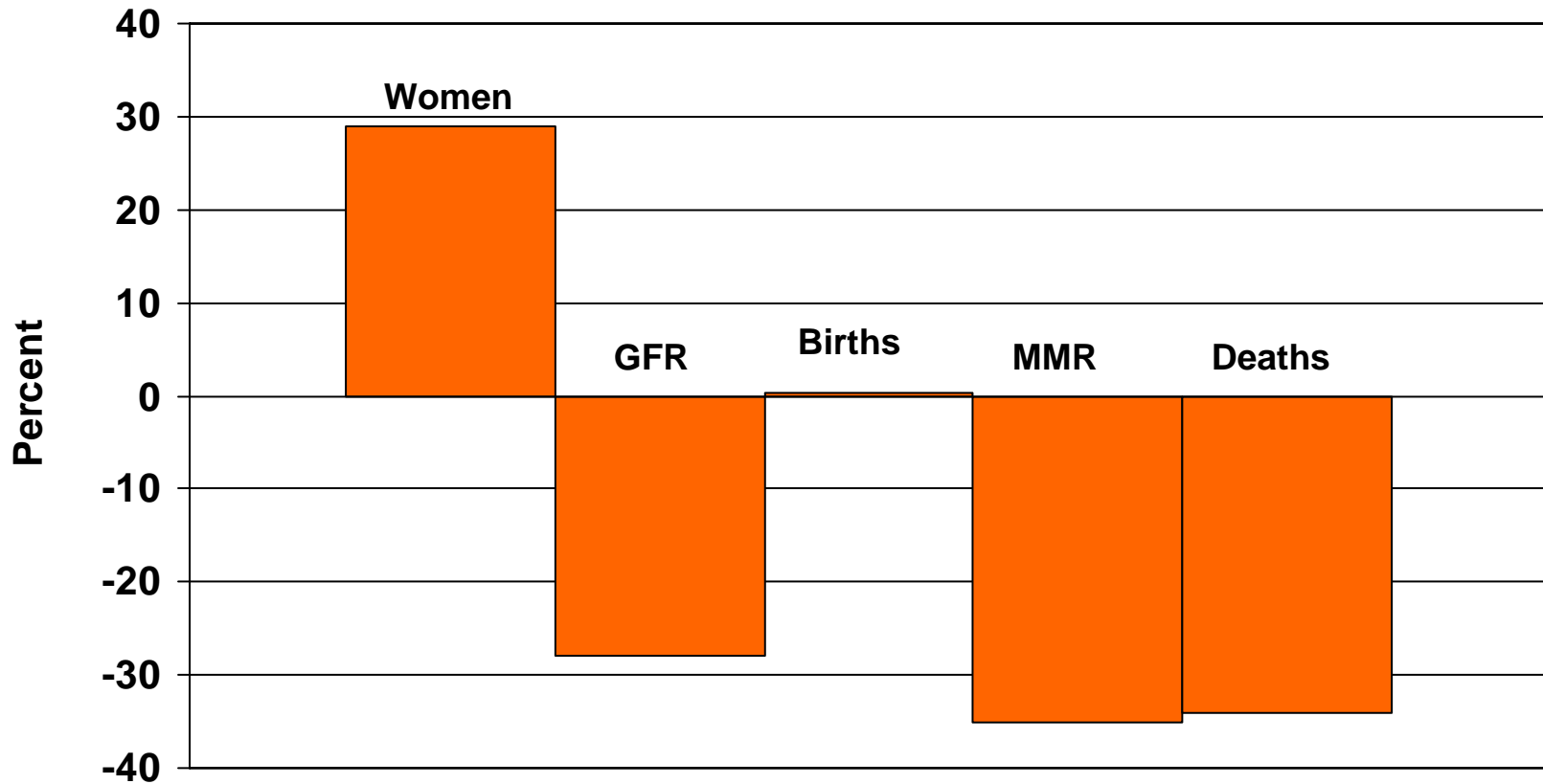
Numbers of Maternal Deaths 1990-2008 (UN Estimates)



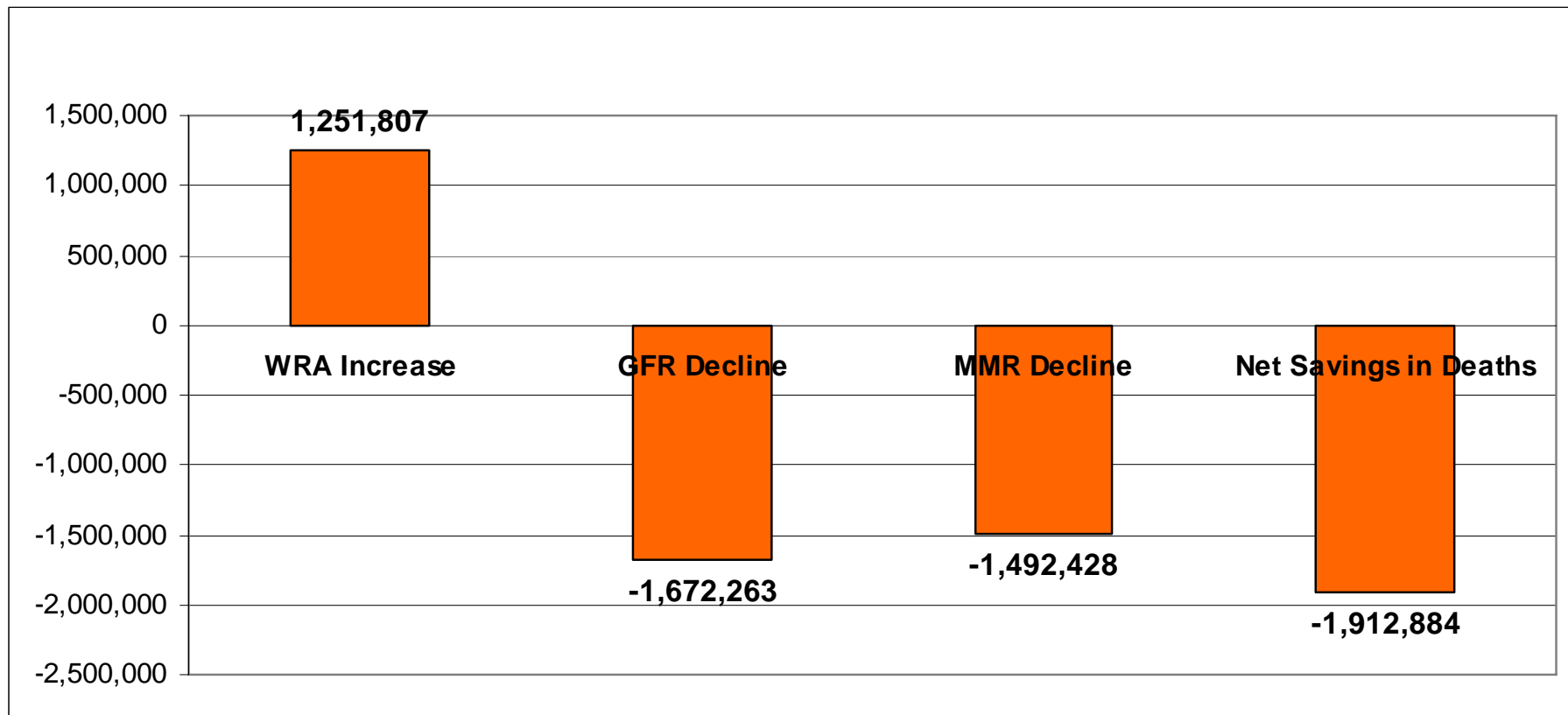
Numbers of Women Age 15-49 and Births, Developing Countries, 1990-2008



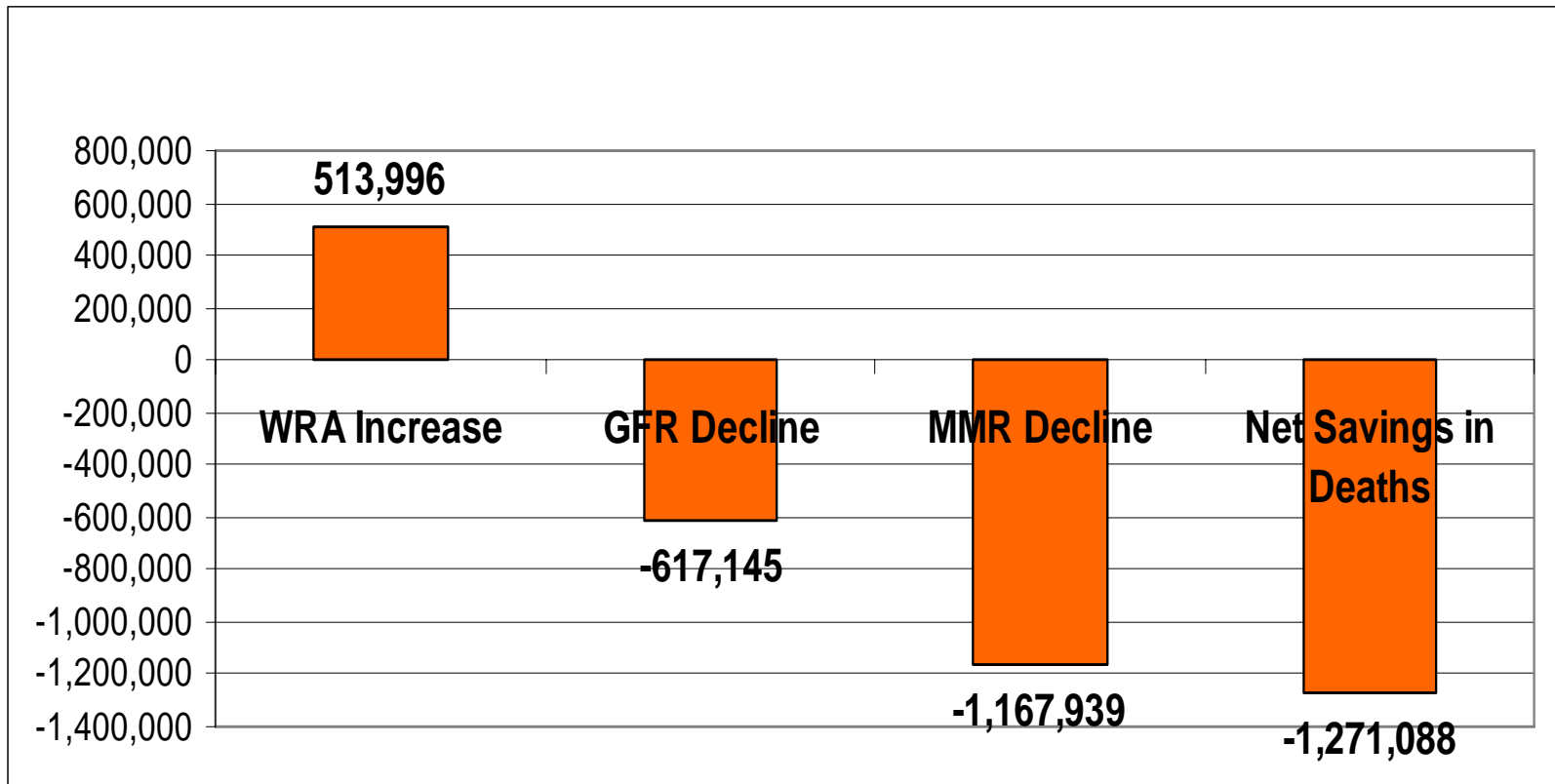
Percent Change in Determinants of Numbers of Maternal Deaths, Developing Countries, 1990-2008



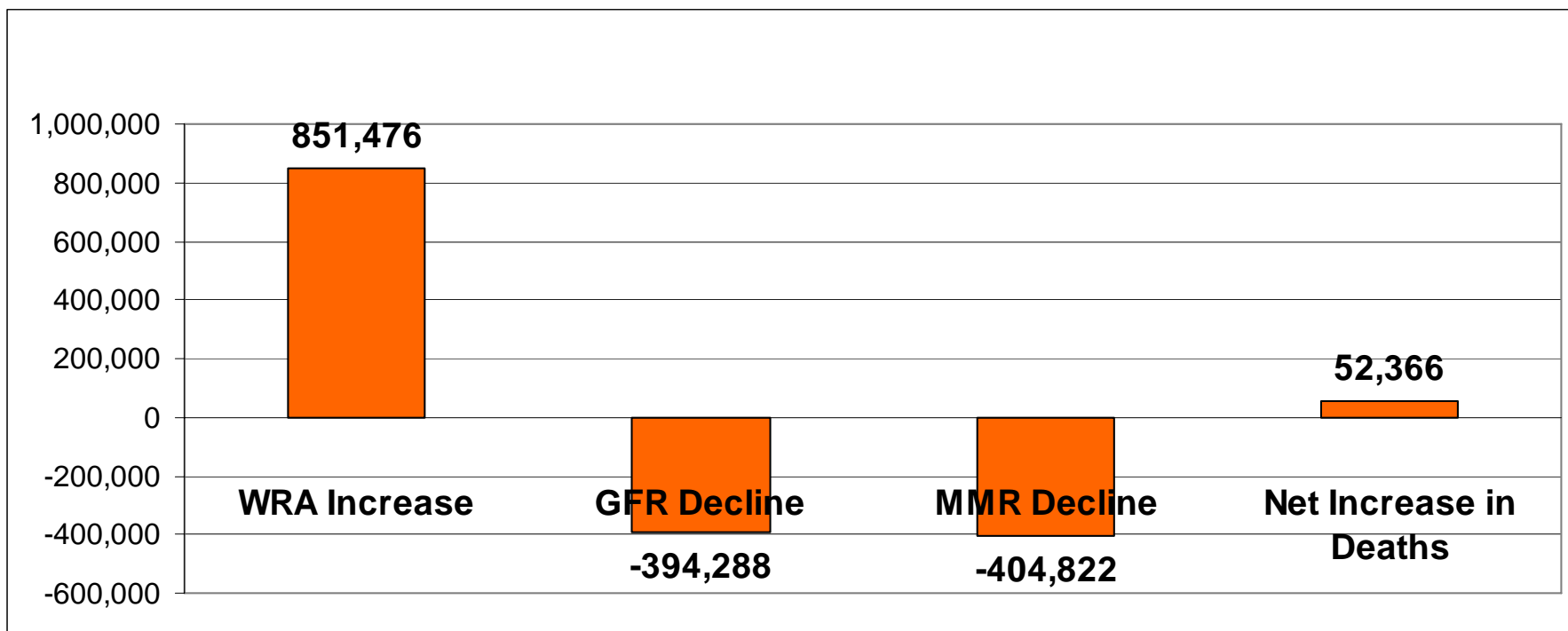
Upward and Downward Forces on Numbers of Deaths Developing Countries, 1990-2008



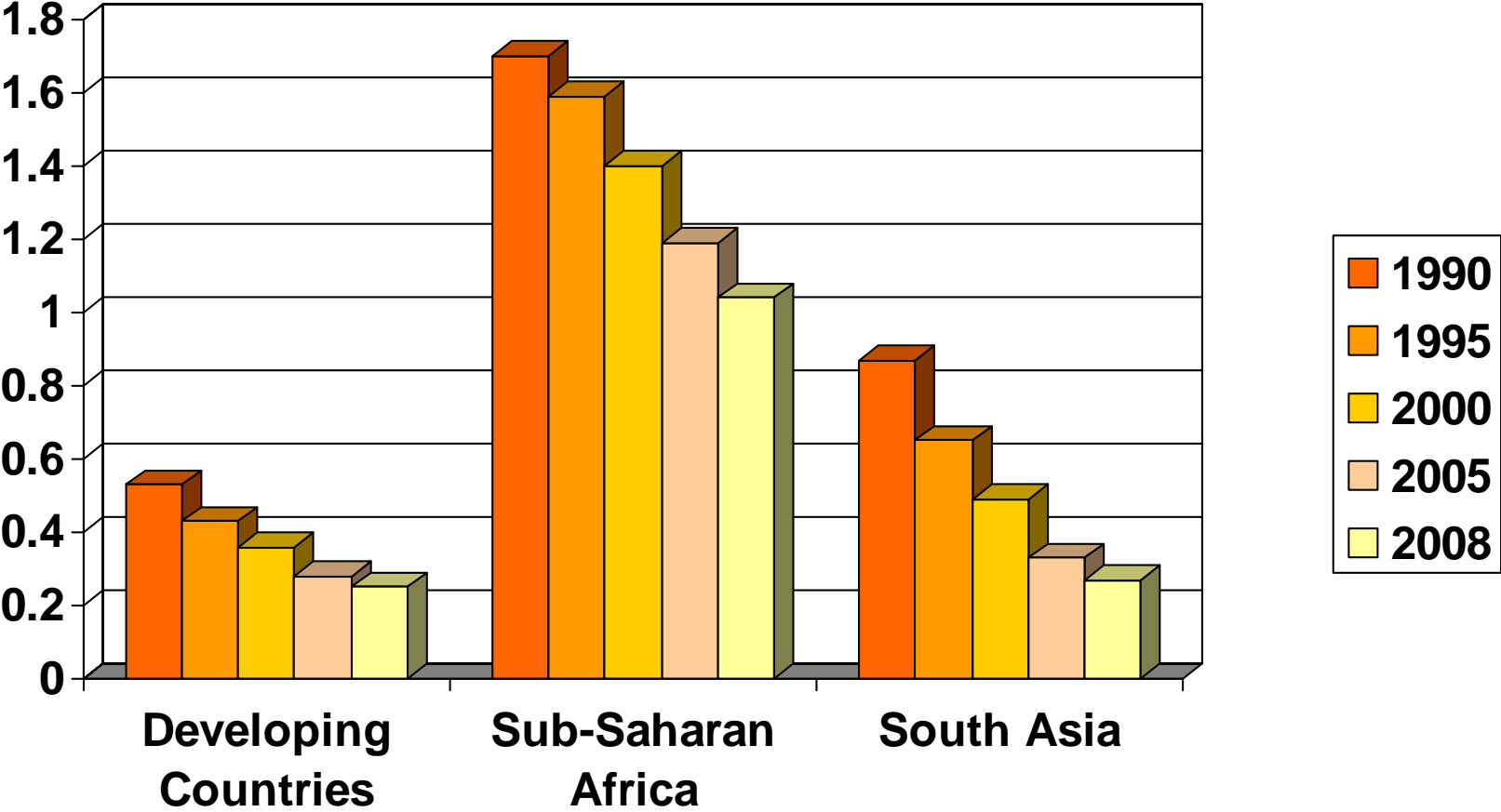
Upward and Downward Forces on Numbers of Deaths South Asia, 1990-2008



Upward and Downward Forces on Number of Deaths Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990-2008

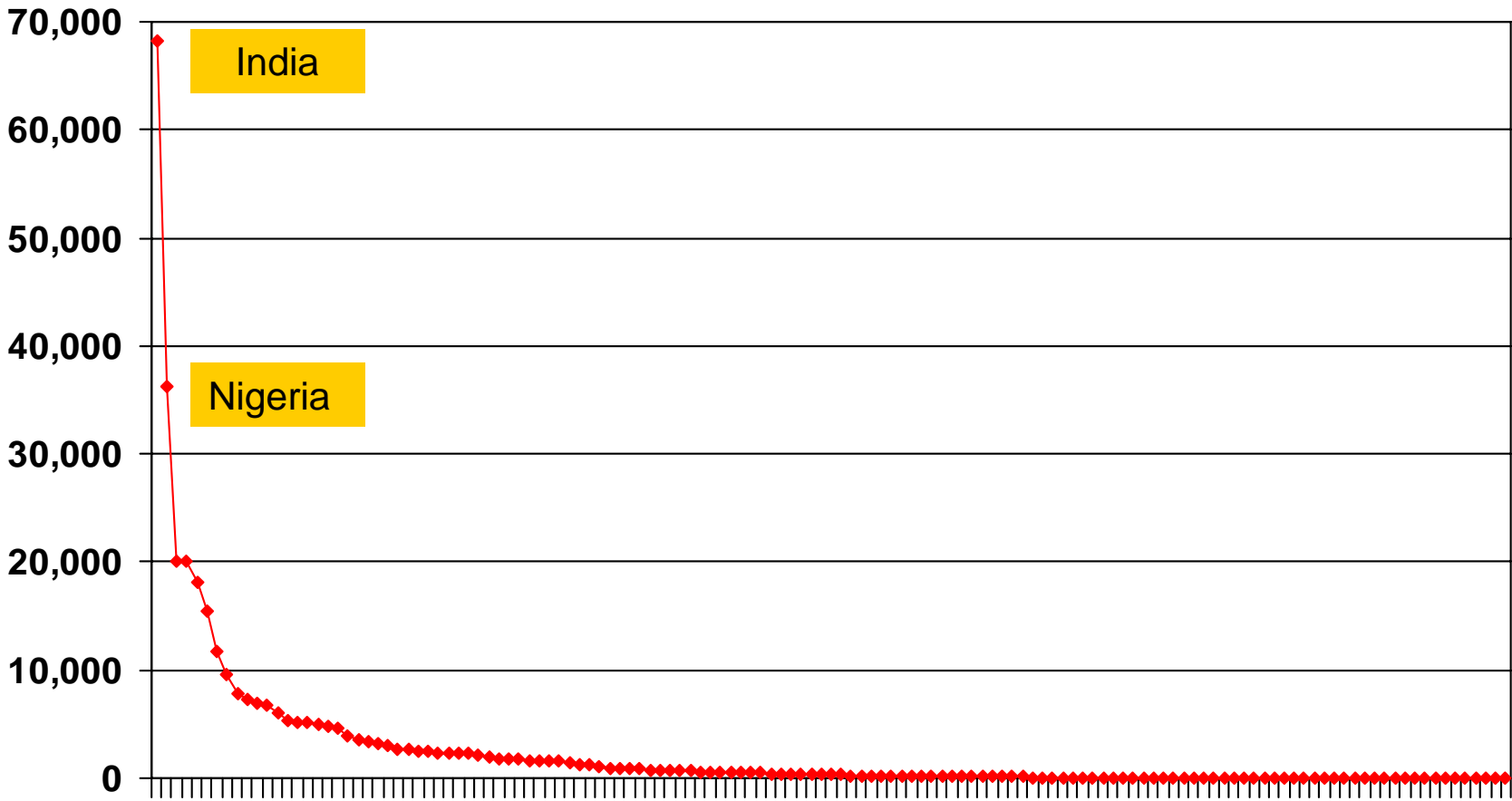


Maternal Mortality Rates, 1990-2008



Maternal deaths are concentrated in only a few countries.

135 countries ordered by number of maternal deaths 2008



CONCLUSIONS

- Without past declines in fertility – due largely to increased contraceptive use - the numbers of maternal deaths would have been about 1.7 million higher between 1990 and 2008.
- The MMR – the risk of dying once pregnant - has declined by 34% as maternal health services have improved. Without this decline, the numbers of maternal deaths would have been about 1.5 million higher.
- Reduced fertility accounts for 53% of the decline in the number of maternal deaths; lower MMR accounts for 47%

CONCLUSIONS

The decline in maternal deaths over the last fifteen years has been achieved despite substantial growth in the numbers of women, an achievement often overlooked in international discourse.

Programs to satisfy the unmet need for contraception are strong allies of programs that lower the risks of death during pregnancy and childbirth.



Maternal Health **Task Force**

Please register at:
www.maternalhealthtaskforce.org