



African Parliamentary Union

42nd CONFERENCE  
75th Session of the Executive Committee  
Djibouti, 25 – 29 november 2019



National Assembly  
Djibouti

RCF. 13/42/19

## Role of parliaments in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality rates in Africa

*Resolution adopted by the 42<sup>nd</sup> APU Conference  
(Djibouti, 29 november 2019)*

The Committee of African Women Parliamentarians of the African Parliamentary Union, meeting on 27 November 2019 in Djibouti,

*Aware of the poor performance of health systems in some African countries and the low quality of care for mothers and newborns in most health facilities;*

*Recognizing the place and role of parliaments in the fight against maternal and neonatal mortality;*

*Considering the reduction of the maternal and neonatal mortality rate as a key factor for the survival and development of all children through adolescence, particularly in Africa;*

*Recalling the relevant Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3), which, in 2018, provided for a reduction in maternal and infant mortality by 2030;*

*Noting that the risk of death is also higher in rural areas and in the poorest households;*

*Considering that while the under-five mortality rate has declined overall, the proportion of deaths in Africa is increasing;*

*Noting that the education of mothers remains a powerful determinant of inequality: children of educated mothers are more likely to survive than those of uneducated mothers;*

*Considering that HIV is the leading cause of death among women of childbearing age;*

*Considering that in times of conflict, insecurity and the vulnerability of women and children lead to many deaths;*

**Proposes the following recommendations to the 42nd Conference:**



1. Strengthen security in countries in conflict in order to protect especially women and children.
2. Take into account some WHO recommendations: care throughout labour and delivery; care during the first phase of labour; the second and third phases; and immediate care of the newborn and the mother after delivery.
3. Improve skilled health care to reduce premature deaths by one third by 2030 and achieve SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all people at all ages.
4. Ensure more effective financing of health systems for improved sanitation and hygiene, better access to health professionals and improved advice on how to reduce environmental pollution; thereby making progress can be made to save lives.
5. Promote health services by providing scholarships for training health personnel and supporting institutions such as WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women to improve maternal and newborn health.
6. Pass laws to update and enhance reproductive health legislation in order to punish traditional practices harmful to maternal and child health.
7. Raise awareness by African parliaments, among their governments, about increasing funding for community health, infrastructure construction and equipment, training of public health staff and supplying anti-malaria drugs during antenatal consultations and distributing impregnated bed nets.
8. Ensure free access by women to family planning services.
9. Ensure that delivery takes place in the presence of skilled personnel and provide access to emergency obstetric care to save lives.
10. Women parliamentarians to organize awareness sessions, women's associations, women's business associations in high schools, middle schools for girls and couples as well as in rural areas.
11. Establish family planning counselling centres.
12. Facilitate the implementation of a programme to reduce women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, noncommunicable diseases and hepatitis.



13. Mobilize resources for the acquisition of antiretroviral drugs at affordable cost for HIV-positive mothers and children.
14. Mobilize resources to support non-formal education and adult literacy among women in rural areas to improve their health-seeking behavior.
15. Seek funding sources to open breastmilk banks.
16. Establish of free and accessible immunization services for all infants.
17. Adopt laws for the care and protection of AIDS patients.

