

Nairobi Summit Commitments

Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka made 10 Commitments pursuant to the Nairobi Summit



Sri Lanka's new National Policy Framework and 2030 Sustainability Plan Support its commitments



The National Strategic Plan for the Well Woman Programme highlights women's health issues in achieving these goals



Harnessing the Potential of Women and Youth

Female labor force participation is about half of men's, youth unemployment is rising, and only 12% of MPs are under 40 (and only 5% are women).

Sri Lanka seeks to improve the quality of education, promote TVET, reduce GBV, and protect women in the workplace from harassment and discrimination through laws and policies.



Free education supports health goals

Sri Lanka has had free and universal education since the 1930's, which now includes free university education for qualified students. The net primary enrollment rate is 99%, and 91% at the secondary level.

Free and universal education allows adolescents to have greater access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, and promotes empowerment of all citizens, especially in accessing their health rights.



Prevention of reproductive cancers and STIs

Sri Lanka has committed to reduce reproductive cancers and eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis. In 2018, Sri Lanka adopted a policy on elimination of mother-to-child transmission--syphilis transmission is now at 2 cases per 100,000 live births, and no HIV transmission cases have been recorded since 2017.

Sri Lanka has taken the lead in shifting to HPV screening for cervical cancer testing, a faster, easier, more reliable method, hoping to increase testing above the current rate of 50-70%.



Universal Health Coverage and primary care

Sri Lanka first committed to achieving universal health coverage in 1951. In implementing universal coverage, Sri Lanka has prioritized women's health, the health of vulnerable groups, and the development of the private healthcare system alongside the public health system.

Sri Lanka has committed to strengthening primary healthcare as a means to fight gender-based violence, where primary healthcare providers are a frontline of defense in detecting gender-based violence.



Monitoring reproductive health services

Sri Lanka has committed to improving reproductive health monitoring through digitizing the monitoring system and making the system of supervision of regional health centers more detailed and robust.

Making reproductive health services available at decentralized levels is essential in improving access to reproductive health services. However, taking the steps necessary to ensure the quality of services, as Sri Lanka has committed to do, is equally important.



Reducing Maternal Mortality

Sri Lanka's maternal death rate is 36 per 100,000 live births, falling sharply since 2000 when the rate was 56. While Sri Lanka has one of the lowest maternal death rates in the world, it is committed to reducing the maternal death rate to 20, and hopefully even 10, by 2030.

Sri Lanka's Policy on Healthcare Delivery for Universal Coverage encourages utilization and improvement of services at local and district clinics. The policy supports primary healthcare as a frontline intervention for improving maternal death rates. The Policy aims to place one accessible primary care doctor per 5,000 individuals in the country.



Reducing unmet need for family planning

Sri Lanka's unmet need for family planning (7.5%) is low compared to other countries in the region, but reducing the unmet need for family planning lowers maternal deaths and demand for abortions. 99% of Sri Lankan women have knowledge of contraceptive methods, and 74% use modern methods.

The Well Woman Programme supports strengthening the health system to improve human resource skill and availability and the information and availability of family planning commodities, reducing the unmet need for family planning.

Best Practices and Recommendations

1. Universal Education and linking education with health and empowerment

Sri Lanka has prioritized universal education as a general policy, but it has many positive benefits for health goals as well. Strong education develops an empowered population. Universal education also ensures that children and youth can be reached with health information and education through the curriculum. When all children attend school, schools can also become a site of intervention for adolescent-friendly health services.

2. UHC and expanding primary care to promote SRHR

Sri Lanka's priority to achieve universal health coverage facilitates many of its other goals as well. Sri Lanka has linked UHC to improving and increasing primary care, which allows more individuals to reach more health providers more easily. Sri Lanka's policies create a link between expanded primary care and expanded reproductive health services--more pregnant women will have greater access to care, and victims of gender-based violence have better access to help, and are more likely to see a healthcare provider when they have injuries or health needs related to the violence.

3. Expanding reproductive cancer screening

Based on new evidence and consensus in the health field, Sri Lanka is moving toward HPV testing as the primary method for cervical cancer screening. In the process of changing from pap smear testing to HPV testing, Sri Lanka has developed and adopted policies and plans that allow for monitoring the transition and ensuring evidence continues to support the shift. Sri Lanka's approach can be observed evaluated by other countries as well in determining how to improve cervical cancer screening and reduce reproductive cancer rates.

4. Improving reproductive health monitoring

Many of the key reproductive health services in Sri Lanka are delivered at decentralized levels of the public health system. For this reason, monitoring and supervision of reproductive health services is essential to achieving Sri Lanka's commitments and goals in reproductive health. First, the system of monitoring and reporting was standardized nation-wide. Then, it was digitized and the Family Health Bureau is responsible for collecting the data and following up on any issues and needs shown by the data.

5. Setting specific goals for maternal mortality and family planning

Sri Lanka has set bold and specific goals for reducing maternal mortality rates and reducing the unmet need for family planning, recognizing the link between the two issues as well. Setting specific goals for maternal mortality and the unmet need for family planning allows for government-wide policy alignment and programmatic and research support for closing the gap on these two challenges.

6. Recognizing the importance of participation of women and youth

Sri Lanka has identified full participation of women and youth as a cross-cutting policy issue, and an overall goal that will enable the achievement of its other goals and commitments. Identifying and prioritizing the participation of women and youth as a cross-cutting policy issue can allow for coordinated, multi-sector responses to improve health access and services for women, youth, and all citizens.