

The world is facing a global health pandemic without a clear end in sight. COVID-19 presents a massive shock to already struggling health systems globally and the world economy. Countries are grappling with how best to address mortality and morbidity due to the virus. At the same time, the pandemic is disrupting the provision of life-saving maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (MNCAH) services, contributing to the erosion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women and adolescents, and further exposing and exacerbating systematic and structural racial, ethnic and gender inequities everywhere.

As the 1,000 partners of PMNCH, we are coming together to advocate urgent action to respond to the devastating effects of the pandemic on the health and well-being of women, children, and adolescents, as well as the societies and economies that support them. Our call to action can prevent the COVID-19 pandemic from becoming a lasting crisis, while forging stronger primary healthcare systems as a pathway to Universal Health Coverage and fostering a more equitable world. There is no time to lose.

Throughout the Covid-19 response and recovery, we urge governments to protect and promote the health, well-being and rights of women, children and adolescents through strengthened political commitment, policies and domestic resource mobilization and financing, supported by ODA, for:

1.  Sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (SRMNCAH) services, supplies, and information and demand generation including for contraception, safe abortion, immunization, safe delivery, stillbirth prevention, and mental health;
2.  Advancing sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality;
3.  Quality care, including respectful and dignified care, and effective community engagement and redress mechanisms;
4.  Recruitment, training, equal and fair pay, and safe working conditions, including protective personal equipment, for frontline health workers, notably midwives and nurses;

5.  Social protections, including food and nutrition security, for marginalized and vulnerable groups and enhanced data to better understand and address disparities experienced by adolescents, refugees, the internally displaced, migrants, indigenous communities, persons living with disabilities, among others;
6.  Functional, safe, and clean toilet and hand washing facilities and quality potable drinking water, with a particular focus on healthcare centers, schools, and centers for refugees and internally displaced persons; and
7.  Prevention of violence against women, children and adolescents through education and protection programs.

TO REALIZE THIS CALL TO ACTION, PMNCH IS WORKING COLLECTIVELY TO:

- Incorporate all stakeholders, including health professionals, such as midwives; community-based representatives; adolescents and young people, in COVID-19 response task forces within national multi-stakeholder platforms.
- Implement real-time mechanisms to gather community experiences on women's, children's, and adolescents' health throughout all phases of the crisis and response to strengthen decision-making and accountability.
- Create integrated, 'all of government' COVID-19 response plans that bring together different sectors, including health, finance, security, gender, education, employment, agriculture, and technology to outline the role they each play in ensuring women, children and adolescents can safely access health services and other priority social protections throughout the crisis and recovery periods.
- Partner strategically with the private sector to augment government's capacity and bring forth innovations to deliver quality services safely.
- Support uptake of the call to action on women's, adolescent's, children's, and newborn health and rights by other advocacy communities, including water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), gender-based violence, education, and UHC.

This Call to Action contributes to intended outcomes of the PMNCH 2021-2025 Strategy. Indicators measuring progress for the Call to Action will be developed in full alignment with the Results Framework for the PMNCH Strategy.