Reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health and human rights:

A toolbox for examining laws, regulations and policies

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Module 1: Sexual and Reproductive Health

Module 2: Newborn and Child Health (Forthcoming)

Checklist (Forthcoming)

World Health Organization

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The "Continuum of Care" for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health (RMNCH) includes integrated service delivery for mothers and children from pre-pregnancy to delivery, the immediate postnatal period, and childhood. Such care is provided by families and communities, through outpatient services, clinics and other health facilities.*

The Continuum of Care recognizes that safe childbirth is critical to the health of both the woman and the newborn child—and that a healthy start in life is an essential step towards a sound childhood and a productive life.

Laws, policies and regulations have a profound impact on an individual's ability to have access to the continuum of care in relation to RMNCH. Laws, policies and regulations can both facilitate or obstruct an individual's access to RMNCH programmes, services and information. In many countries, laws, regulations and policies are not always consistent with human rights standards and may represent a barrier for people achieving the highest attainable standard of health.

This WHO RMNCH Toolbox (Toolbox) enables countries to use a human rights framework to identify those barriers and make proposals to overcome or reduce them.

In addition, using the Tool will help countries to:

- recognize national human rights obligations related to RMNCH;
- review and document efforts by governments to establish legal and policy frameworks that support RMNCH;
- identify the most vulnerable groups and existing government efforts to address their needs;
- engage actors from the health sector and non-health sectors to help eliminate legal, policy and regulatory barriers to RMNCH.

The Toolbox is divided into two modules and a checklist.

Module 1: provides guidance on a comprehensive analysis of laws, policies and regulations in relation to Sexual and Reproductive Health. The module also covers specific issues related to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and maternal health.

Module 2: provides guidance on a comprehensive analysis of laws, policies and regulations in context of Newborn and Child Health.

Checklist: provides countries with an opportunity to undertake an assessment of laws, policies and regulations in relation to RMNCH, and to identify areas for further in-depth analysis through use of Modules 1 and 2.

The Toolbox is jointly developed by the Department of Reproductive Health and Research and Department of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health at the World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, Switzerland.

* PMNCH, *Factsheet: RMNCH Continuum of Care*, 2011, Geneva.

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Module 1: Sexual and Reproductive Health

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