



Over 4 Million Unsafe Abortions Occur in Africa:Experts Ethiopia to Impliment Abortion Law

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More than 4.2 million unsafe abortions occur in Africa resulting in the death of thousands of women every year, health experts attending a regional consultation on maternal mortality said here on Tuesday.

The health experts who gathered in Addis Ababa to discuss about unsafe abortion revealed that the problem was still on the rise in the majority of the African countries.

"Unsafe abortion continues to exert heavy and negative impact on women's lives in Africa. Maternal deaths and disability have had and continue to have a huge and tragic impact on African societies, disrupting families, their economic lives and the very fabric that supports human existence ," Dr.Eunice Brookman Amissah Africa Vice- president of Ipas , an international organization working on women reproductive health and related issues told participants of the meeting.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), all countries in Africa permit legal abortion under at least some circumstances, and 4.2 million unsafe abortions occur each year as a result.

"African women suffer more from this tragedy than those in any other part of the world, representing 44 % of the women who die from abortion -related causes globally. These preventable deaths and illness represent not only a major public health crises, but also a social injustice and violation of women's human rights and dignity," WHO said in its report.

Abortion is an act made to terminat an unwanted pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards or both,according to WHO.

Dr.Tewordos Adhanom, Ethiopian Minister of Health said that among the 77,000 annual abortion-related deaths in the developing countries, around 33,000 deathes occur in Africa.

"The average unsafe abortion ratio in Africa is 110 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is more than twice of that of any other region in the world. As abortion is highly stigmatized in our communities, it is also understood that most of the cases go unreported and unaccounted for," Adhanom said.

According to the minister, abortion is the second cause of death among Ethiopian women admitted to hospitals.

"My ministry has been authorized to develop guidelines to put in place for the implimentation of the abortion law. The process of developing the guidelines is now in its final stage and we hope to launch the document soon. We recognize not only the significant contribution that unsafe abortion has for maternal mortality in this country, but also the availability at our disposal of interventions that can significantly reduce disabilities and mortalities arising thereof,"Adhanom said.

According to reports at the consaltation, the first of its kind in Africa, 90 women undergo unsafe abortion in the Sub Saharan Africa countries every day.

Around 80 million pregnancies each year are unintended and more than half of them end up with an induced abortion.

Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, and Chad are countries with the highest maternal deaths in the world, according to Ipas.

More than 150 researchers, health care providers, and policymakers are attending the three-day consultation meeting which will end on Thursday.

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