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## Featured Stories

### Researchers, Policymakers Pledge Partnership to Prevent Unsafe Abortion in Africa

March 23, 2006 (Addis Ababa): Researchers, health-care professionals and policymakers who met in Addis Ababa this week called for the creation of the Consortium for Research on Unsafe Abortion. The Consortium is intended to prevent further deaths and disabilities from unsafe abortion in Africa.

Every year, more than 4 million African women undergo unsafe abortions; hundreds of thousands of women are injured, often seriously, and at least 30,000 die. The problem of unsafe abortion is more serious in Africa than in most other parts of the world.

During a consultation that began on Monday, 20 March, more than 120 experts and policymakers agreed to work together to ensure that existing evidence on the magnitude and serious consequences of unsafe abortion is used more effectively to drive changes in policies and programs.

They also agreed that there are large gaps in the body of knowledge, with data still lacking for many countries, and laid out an ambitious agenda of new research to be undertaken in the next several years. The consensus statement calls for new scientific evidence to expose the reality of women's experience with unsafe abortion, including the reasons so many women resort to unsafe abortion, the cost to health systems of treating abortion complications and proven, cost-effective ways to prevent unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

The consultation was lead by internationally recognized leaders in women's health: Dr. Eunice Brookman-Amisshah, head of the Ipas Africa Alliance for Women's Reproductive Health and Rights, and former Minister of Health of Ghana; and Dr. Sharon Camp, President of the Guttmacher Institute. Dr. Fred Sai of Ghana, one of the world's most eminent spokesmen for women's reproductive health and former President of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, chaired the meeting.

"By continuing to adhere to archaic colonial laws, by failing to implement international agreements, and by failing to act on growing evidence," according to Dr. Sai, "we have allowed abortion to become the killing field for women in Africa. We know what to do to save women's lives—it's time for us to work together to make that happen."

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