

Every Woman Every Child is an unprecedented global effort that mobilizes and intensifies international and national action to address the major health challenges facing women, children and adolescents.

It envisions a world in which every woman, child and adolescent, everywhere, can not only realize their rights to physical and mental health and wellbeing, but also achieve their full potential, seize opportunities, and participate fully in shaping more inclusive, resilient, prosperous and sustainable societies.

EWEC puts into action the Global Strategy for Women's Children's and Adolescents' Health, fostering its implementation through three pillars:

- Survive (ending preventable deaths),
- Thrive (ensuring health and wellbeing) and
- Transform (expanding enabling environments).

The Global Strategy is fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contributes to their full achievement. It provides a strategic roadmap to achieve health related targets, and recommends multistakeholder collaboration across sectors to scale-up effective interventions to ensure the health and well-being of all women, children and adolescents.

For more information, visit: www.everywomaneverychild.org/

The Global Strategy provides a holistic view, with recommendations going beyond survival and drawing linkages to other areas, including nutrition, water and sanitation and education.

Delivering on the *Global Strategy* will require ambitious commitments from governments, businesses, academia, civil society and all sectors of society. Sustainable financing, strong accountability and national commitment are also critical; development must be transparent and aligned with national priorities.



# Technical Guidance for Prioritizing Adolescent Health

### **Acronyms**

| AA-HA! | Global Framework for Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents                                       | HMIS     | Health Management Information System                                   |
|--------|---|----------|--|
|        |   | HPV      | Human Papillomavirus   |
| ANC    | Antenatal Care  | MICS     | Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey                                      |
| ASRH   | Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive<br>Health  | NCDs     | Non-Communicable Diseases  |
| ART    | Antiretroviral Therapy  | NGO      | Non-Governmental Organization  |
| CRVS   | Civil Registration and Vital Statistics   | RMNCAH   | Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health           |
| CSE    | Comprehensive Sexuality Education   | SDGs     | Sustainable Dovelopment Coals  |
| DHS    | Demographic Health Survey   |          | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| EWEC   | Every Woman Every Child   | UNAIDS   | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/<br>AIDS                         |
| FGM/C  | Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting   | UNFPA    | United Nations Population Fund   |
| GFF    | Global Financing Facility in support of<br>Every Woman Every Child  | UNICEF   | United Nations Children's Fund   |
| GSHS   | Global School-Based Student Health<br>Survey  | UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| Н6     | Partnership between the 6 UN Health<br>Agencies: UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF,<br>UN Women, the World Bank and WHO | WHO      | World Health Organization  |

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dolescent health has become a priority on the global agenda. The Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030)<sup>1</sup>, launched at the Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, has added a focus on adolescents, in view of the uneven progress thus far in addressing their rights and needs. As part of the Every Woman Every Child movement, many governments have made political commitments to prioritize adolescent health together with their overall efforts in improving reproductive, maternal, newborn, child health. The H6 will be mobilizing its collective expertise and technical capacity to ensure adolescent health is addressed in country-led efforts to implement the Global Strategy, and will continue to advocate for evidence-informed reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) programmes at all levels.

Most importantly, many low- and middle-income countries increasingly recognize the pivotal importance of addressing the health and development issues of their adolescent populations to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from now until 2030.

Beyond health itself, investments are needed in other domains crucial for an adolescent to survive, thrive and transform his or her society. In fact, success across the different SDGs - such as improving quality education, achieving gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, promoting inclusive economic growth and decent work, reducing inequality within and among countries — will depend on the level and types of investments made in adolescents and their well-being, and the extent to which adolescents can make the most of the opportunities before them. By 2030, their life trajectory will be shaped by the actions and investments made today. Moreover, their experiences of engagement or of alienation, or their inclusion or further marginalization, can position or derail their efforts in driving the Sustainable Development era.

Given this context, this document can guide country stakeholders in conducting a systematic situation assessment that will enable them to prioritize adolescent health within their national policy processes. The goal is to ensure future investments are guided by available data on adolescents, and importantly, maximally-used to support evidence-informed health interventions that

http://globalstrategy.everywomaneverychild.org/

can be brought to scale in order to reach and fulfill the rights of adolescents, especially those left behind.

## What is the purpose of this guidance document?

The purpose of this guidance document is to support national and sub-national stakeholders to both advocate for increased investments in adolescent health, and to help guide strategic choices and decision-making for such investments to be reflected in relevant national policies, strategies or plans (e.g., RMNCAH plans, adolescent health strategies, etc). This document can further guide a systematic process for ensuring adolescent health priorities are covered across the spectrum of actions required for adolescents to survive, thrive, and and bring about transformative change as envisioned through the Global Strategy, such as, for example, to guide the selection of priorities in the context of the Investment Cases of the Global Financing Facility in support of Every Woman Every Child (GFF). As this document focuses specifically on adolescent health, it can further be used in conjunction with broader tools and resources making investment cases for RMNCAH, including the Operational Framework for the Global Strategy for Women's Children's, and Adolescents' Health.<sup>2</sup> This technical guidance will further be complemented by the forthcoming Global Framework for Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!), which will aim to provide countries with a basis for developing a coherent national plan for the health of adolescents.3

### Who is this guidance document intended for?

This document can be used by a range of stakeholders interested in adolescent health. The primary audience are the national and sub-national level decision makers in different government departments, as well as non-governmental organizations, civil society bodies or youth-led organizations, that work for — or contribute to — the health and development of adolescents. This includes a wide range of sectors including health, education, youth, women's affairs, and social protection. Furthermore, global and regional partners representing bilateral, multilateral, the private sector, development banks, research institutions, and think tanks who are supporting countries in their national-level prioritization processes could further maximize their collective engagement by utilizing this guidance.

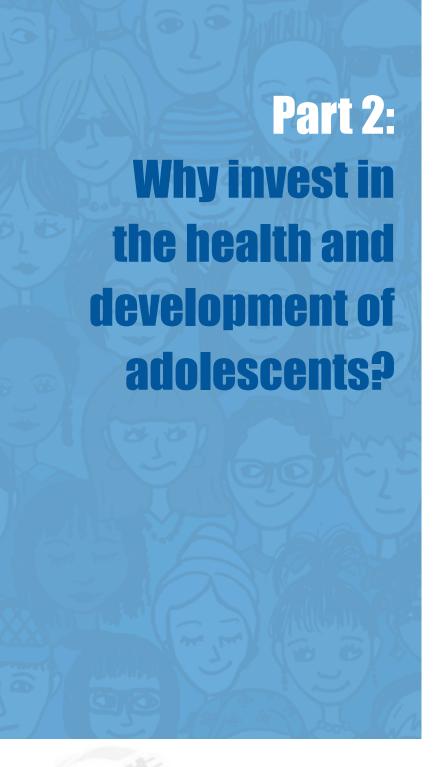
### How is this guidance document organized?

This document includes five main parts:

- Part 1 provides an overview of adolescent health on the global agenda, and explains the purpose and audiences of the guidance document.
- Part 2 briefly describes the rationale and arguments for why increased investments and prioritization in adolescent health and development is needed, as well as an overview of guiding principles.
- Part 3 describes a process by which to make strategic choices in priority areas of adolescent health. In particular, this section outlines key steps for carrying out a needs assessment and prioritization exercise that incorporates: (Step 1) a situation analysis on adolescent health and development, based on available country-level data; and (Step 2) a landscape analysis of existing policies and programmatic efforts underway. Following these steps, key issues and criteria are presented to guide the process for selecting adolescent health priorities (Step 3) and the key interventions to address them (Step 4). Part 3 also includes case studies of countries that illustrate the particular step. These countries have undertaken similar assessments which served as the basis for prioritizing adolescent health at the national level, or have incorporated adolescent health issues within national health plans.
- Part 4 concludes with a brief overview of next steps in tracking progress, including indicators (core and complementary indicators for the Global Strategy).
- Part 5 includes annexes with data sources, resources, and tools for the situation assessment and prioritization exercise. To support further advocacy efforts, a final annex articulates how adolescent and youth issues are critical in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and select targets.

This resource, as well as many others, can be accessed at everywomaneverychild.org

<sup>3</sup> http://www.who.int/maternal\_child\_adolescent/topics/adolescence/framework-accelerated-action/en/



safe and successful passage from adolescence into adulthood is the right of every individual. This right can only be fulfilled if societies make focused investments and provide opportunities to ensure that adolescents progressively develop the knowledge, skills, social and economic assets, and resilience needed for a healthy, productive, and fulfilling life. Moreover, adolescence is a strategic period during the life course to emphasize empowerment and preventive approaches that would enable adolescents to survive, thrive, and transform their societies.

However, decisions made during adolescence, particularly regarding sexual and reproductive health, can have a long-term impact on the young person and on human development in general. Puberty—the biological onset of adolescence-brings not only changes to adolescent brains and bodies, but also new challenges and life transitions: initiating sexual activity, forming their identities, starting relationships, and in some cases, entering into unions and forming families, forced in the majority of cases. For many girls in particular, early adolescence marks the beginning of a life trajectory characterized by a lack of autonomy and choices in these areas, and vulnerabilities to human rights abuses. Girls across the world are often coerced into unwanted sex or marriage, and face high risks of unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV. These challenges can have serious implications on other areas of their health, their education, their welfare, and future opportunities, as well as their countries' overall trajectory toward building inclusive and sustainable societies.

Beyond the specific and unique importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights during the second

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