

COMMENTS ON THE UNFPA DRAFT COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT FOR EL SALVADOR

First regular session 2022

Comments by United States of America	UNFPA country and regional office response to comments
<p><i>Overarching</i></p> <p>We appreciate UNFPA’s recognition of the particular sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence needs of adolescent girls, including the alarming rates of under-15 pregnancies and school dropouts, and welcome the targeted strategies UNFPA has identified to address them.</p>	<p>UNFPA acknowledges with appreciation these comments and thanks the United States for a thorough review of the programme document.</p> <p>UNFPA reiterates its belief that a clear programmatic focus on the sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence needs of adolescent girls, including under-15 adolescent pregnancies, has a significant potential to accelerate the achievement of the three transformative results.</p>
<p><i>Regarding Programme Rationale</i></p> <p>Given the significant increase in maternal mortality in 2020 noted in Item 8, we would appreciate clarification about how the 2026 target maternal mortality ratio (MMR) relates to pre-2020 MMR trends in El Salvador.</p>	<p>UNFPA appreciates the comment made by the United States and wishes to provide contextual elements to understand the trends in maternal mortality reduction in El Salvador prior to the pandemic. Since 2005, El Salvador has implemented a maternal mortality surveillance system, which made it possible to reduce the number of cases of maternal deaths from 71.2 (2005) to 52.8 per 100,000 live births (2015), a trend which continued until 2019.</p> <p>In 2020, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on El Salvador’s health system, the country recorded a significant increase in the number of cases of maternal deaths, reaching a maternal mortality ratio of 41.46 per 100,000 live births - a staggering 72% increase from pre-pandemic levels. In addition, diseases, such as pneumonia and pre-eclampsia, and pregnancy-related health problems, including unsafe abortions and prematurity, contribute to increased maternal mortality. In 2021, maternal mortality cases have continued to rise. In October 2021, the number of maternal deaths had doubled compared to that reported in the same month of 2020.</p>

	<p>Based on the 2020 maternal mortality ratio (41.46 per 100,000 live births), UNFPA seeks to contribute to reducing maternal mortality by 1 percentage point per year, reaching 36 per 100,000 live births by the year 2026. This target is established taking into account the availability, access, use and quality of maternal, perinatal and reproductive health services in the context of the pandemic, as well as trends in maternal mortality reduction seen in the pre-pandemic period.</p> <p>The UNFPA country programme will support the Ministry of Health, contributing to enhance capacities to offer an accelerated response, aimed at groups of population and territories with the highest occurrence of maternal mortality. Likewise, UNFPA will seek to coordinate with other institutions in the health sector, civil society organizations, and communities to achieve the target by 2026.</p>
<p>With regards to Item 8, we appreciate that UNFPA tracks incidents of obstetric violence. We suggest that UNFPA include any strategies for addressing this at the health facility level, beyond training providers in respectful delivery, including those which address the unique needs of adolescent mothers.</p>	<p>UNFPA appreciates, with thanks, the comments of the United States. UNFPA will support the implementation of actions aimed at giving visibility and generating social dialogue with health providers and users about discriminatory attitudes and practices and developing effective strategies to eradicate the occurrence of obstetric violence and inadequate obstetric care.</p> <p>The recent approval of the law ‘Nacer con Cariño’ (Born with affection) promoted by the Office of the First Lady will provide an enabling environment to move forward in this sense.</p> <p>The programme will pay special attention to the quality of obstetric services (prenatal care, delivery, and postpartum), focusing on adolescent mothers as a prioritized population group, training health providers on respectful care during labour and delivery, with a gender and human rights perspective.</p> <p>Furthermore, UNFPA will support the Health Ministry in generating evidence for the identification of the causes and consequences of maternal mortality and obstetric violence and propose strategies for</p>

addressing the issue at national and local levels (for example, gender- and age-discrimination from health providers).

In addition to strengthening the capacities of health workers to eliminate obstetric violence and to generate evidences about obstetric violence, UNFPA will educate women, especially adolescent mothers in rural areas, about their rights and appropriate treatment they should receive from health facilities, as well as the mechanisms to report cases of obstetric violence in the corresponding instances. UNFPA will also support local capacities in civil society organizations to monitor the occurrence of cases of obstetric violence in their municipalities and communities. To monitor quality of services, UNFPA will generate feedback mechanisms from the users to the local health services.