
UN Human Rights Council
34th Session, Item 3 – March 9, 2017

**Panel discussion on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and
human rights**

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Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

We would like to thank the Council for organizing this very important Panel discussion on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity as a human rights priority for all States, including in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the distinguished panelists for their valuable contribution.

Maternal mortality in Israel is relatively rare and in recent years the rate of maternal mortality remained generally low. Progress in medical knowledge, education and technologies and changes in lifestyle and behavior have resulted in mortality rates dropping significantly.

We would like to share with you some measures taken in this regard.

The proportion of pregnant women making use of the Mother and Child Health Services (MCH) as their principal source of maternal care has declined dramatically. The MCH services remain one of the many sources of Mother and Child Health, and many more being operated under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and conform to the service guidelines promoted by the Ministry.

The Ministry of Health has also established a Breastfeeding Committee in order to advise the Head of Public Health Services on the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes in Israel. The promotion of breastfeeding has been included as an objective of the guidebook for the “Healthy Israel 2020” initiative. This guidebook was created by the Ministry to lay out the Israeli policy of disease prevention and health promotion. In addition, new vaccinations were added to the childhood vaccinations schedule.

Furthermore, the Israeli Government has been funding several special projects to improve the health and expand the health-care services provided to special communities. For example, free genetic testing was funded, along with genetic consulting, for any member of a Bedouin population.

We call upon all States to take all measures to fight maternal mortality and morbidity, to empower girls and women, to give them the access to medical facilities and education.

Thank you.