



**Statement during the 60th Session of the United Nations Human Rights
Council**

General Debate under Item 3

Geneva

19 September 2025

Thank you, Mr. President.

The South Centre welcomes the 2025 update to the technical guidance on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity. We support a human rights approach for the full realisation of women and girls' human rights, which is critical for reducing preventable maternal mortality and morbidity. States must fulfil their legal obligations under the right to health to respect, protect, and fulfil these rights.

In this context, we also take note of the report of the Working Group on the Right to Development, as outlined in document A/HRC/60/37. The South Centre emphasizes the centrality of the right to development in achieving all human rights, including the right to health. The ongoing discussions and the commitment to finalizing the draft international covenant on the right to development are crucial steps towards ensuring that development is a right for all, not a privilege for a few, and that it is pursued in a manner that respects, protects, and fulfils human rights.

We are particularly encouraged that the update to the technical guidance extends beyond technical corrections to include a socioeconomic, cultural, and political analysis of the root causes of why women still die during childbirth. This guidance reflects key principles that developing countries have long supported. We note with concern the recent setbacks in global development, including diminished access to healthcare and education, persistent discrimination, and record levels of displacement due to conflict and climate change—all of which

disproportionately affect women and girls and underscore the urgency of this updated guidance.

Firstly, the guidance highlights an intersectional approach to understanding discrimination. It properly recognises that structural racism and discrimination are not minor issues but fundamental factors contributing to maternal mortality. This offers a strong foundation for advocating targeted interventions and challenging systems of oppression.

Secondly, the guidance introduces a “human rights economy” framework. For years, the detrimental impacts of sovereign debt, austerity measures, and healthcare privatisation on women's lives have been overlooked. The current debt crisis crippling many developing countries directly undermines the right to development by diverting essential resources from public services like healthcare and education. This revision properly broadens accountability to cover international financial institutions and corporate entities, emphasising that economic policies and the global financial architecture must be reformed to prioritise human rights. It also underscores the importance of increasing funding, particularly grants, to healthcare budgets and debt relief programmes that support health-focused policies.

Furthermore, we must address how unilateral coercive measures exacerbate these crises. Such measures obstruct access to essential services and undermine progress on Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty, health, gender equality, and justice, despite purported humanitarian exemptions. The lack of effective remedy and redress for affected populations is a grave concern that impedes the right to development.

Finally, we support the enhanced call for independent accountability mechanisms and, importantly, for a reparation fund for victims. This shifts the view of preventable maternal deaths from being accidents to being serious injustices that require systemic solutions.

Mr President, this guidance provides the roadmap. The challenge now is implementation. The South Centre calls on all member states, international financial institutions, and development partners to move beyond commitment to the full and funded realisation of this new, rights-based and justice-oriented guidance, and to foster a global environment where the right to development for all can be fully realised.

Thank you.