

**1. Does your Government or organization currently rely on existing technical guidance related to applying a human rights-based approach to policies and programmes to reduce preventable maternal mortality and morbidity?**

*The new Health Care Act (1326/2010)* obligates the municipalities to organize maternity health services to all pregnant women and their families within their residential area. These services include the follow-up and promotion of the growth and well-being of the fetus and the health of pregnant women. In addition, the services include supporting the parenthood and well-being of the whole family. According to the decree, also the services for women in labour are being organized in central hospitals.

*The decree on maternity and child welfare clinics, school and student health care and preventive oral health care (338/2011)* regulates, inter alia, the health examinations and counseling provided by maternity and child health clinics. The purpose of the decree is to ensure the equal quality of maternity services and to strengthen health promotion, early support to families and the prevention of social exclusion of mothers.

Both the Health Care Act and the decree emphasize a needs-based approach and the aim to enhance the health of the whole family. The early identification of problems and the provision of support to mothers and families with special needs are set out as duties of health professionals. One of the examinations during pregnancy is especially extensive; the well-being of the whole family, the father included, is to be examined.

The first *National Action Programme for the Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health (2007-2011)* has greatly facilitated and focused the relevant activities in Finland. Special emphasis is put to the role of various actors in the guaranteeing of the sexual and reproductive health of women and their partners.

A specialist group established by the National Institute for Health and Welfare (*Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus ja tutkimuskeskus*) is about to update the existing national guidelines (1999) issued to maternity clinics by the year 2012.

**2. Does your Government or organization rely on technical guidance related to applying a human rights-based approach to policies and programmes in other areas of health?**

*Maternity Leave*

According to the Finnish legislation on sickness insurance; *sairausvakuutuslaki*; 1224/2004) and contracts of employment (*työsopimuslaki*; 55/2001) mothers are entitled to the Maternity leave for 105 working days. The Maternity leave begins at the latest 30 weekdays before the calculated time of birth and continues 75 weekdays after that. The main purpose of the Maternity leave is to secure the mother's and the newborn child's health. From these days mothers have a right to get the daily allowance which is in accordance with the Sickness Insurance Act. According to the Finnish law the employer must not allow the mother's working during the time which begins two weeks before the calculated time of birth and continues two weeks after that.

Mothers are entitled to Special maternity leave and also to the daily allowance already from an earlier time if some chemical material which is related to their work, radianse or some contagious disease endangers the health of them or the foetus.