The Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the Note Verbale ref. no. ID/LOH/Res18/12 (GVA-0720) dated 22 November 2011, has the honour to attach herewith the feedback from the Omani authorities with respect to the Resolution 18/2 entitled "Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights" adopted by the Human Rights Council on 28 September 2011.

The Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva
CH-1211 GENEVE 10

OHCHR REGISTRY
- 3 JAN 2012
Recipients: F, A, D, D

Ref: 3304/00/1/2012 Date: 03.01.2012 Page: 1

3a, Ch. de Roi bot.1292 Chambéry - Tel.: 0227589660, Fax: 0227589666
1. Does your government or organization currently rely on existing technical guidance related to applying a human rights-based approach to policies and programs to reduce preventable maternal mortality and morbidity? If so, please share such these tools.

In 1972 his Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed announced: "Health is a right of every citizen" and article 12 of Oman's Basic Law states: "The state cares for public health and for prevention and treatment of diseases and epidemics. It endeavors to provide health care for every citizen".

Oman has acceded the following United Nations Conventions on human rights:
- The International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (2003);
- The Convention on the Rights of Child (1996);

In addition, Oman is committed to the millennium development goals, among which reduction of maternal mortality is an important goal.

Moreover, National women health policy was announced in 2008 which declared: "Improving women health during all stages of her life through provision of preventive, curative health services to ensure high levels of well being and to improve the quality of life and to ensure gender equity" as its main aim. One of the important objectives of this policy is: Provision of reproductive health services aiming at reducing maternal mortality and morbidity.

- A package of reproductive health services are provided in the Ministry of Health Facilities which includes: care of pregnancy and childbirth, postnatal care, family planning, STI and HIV. Other services provided for women are: menopausal health and clinical breast examination.
- Each of these programs has set of essential components including up to date evidence based guidelines and health educational activities.
- To ensure accessibility and availability reproductive health services are provided through the primary health care institutions which are culture sensitive and covers all the country and the services are provided for everyone, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, educational or socio-economic status. All of these facilities are equipped with the materials needed to provide reproductive health services. Services are also made sure to reach to small pockets of people who live in remote areas through the helicopter.
- There are no legal obstacles that prevent women from receiving health care in general and reproductive health services in particular.
- All of these services are free of charge to make them affordable for everyone.
Care of Pregnancy and Childbirth:

- Women are encouraged to book early in pregnancy to be able to start the care as early as possible and to detect the high risk cases. At the booking visit set of investigations are done including voluntary testing for HIV which started since July 2010. This is accompanied with the provision of counseling services and implementation of the strategies of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV recommended by WHO. Confidentiality is ensured in all the time.

- Emergency Obstetric services and skilled birth attendance are provided through both primary and secondary care services. Aiming at strengthening this service, the ministry of health is planning to initiate Advanced Life Support in Obstetric Emergencies (ALSO) training for the health care providers dealing with such situations.

Maternal Mortality Surveillance:

As part of accountability, surveillance system for maternal mortality was established in Oman in 1992 and subsequently a national committee to review maternal mortality cases was formed. The committee review the notified cases and comes up with recommendations to address preventable causes and to improve the service. Recently, an international assistance was sought to review the surveillance system in Oman which concluded with set of recommendations which will be considered by the committee members.

Family Planning:

Family planning services are made available in all the primary care institutions through trained health care providers. Currently, five contraceptive methods are available in the service free of charge. More methods are provided by the private sector. Demand of the service is ensured through regular media campaigns and by continuous health education and counseling services.

2. Does your Government or organization rely on technical guidance related to applying a human right-based approach to policies and programs in other areas of health? If so, please share the tools.

Yes, issues of human rights are considered in policies and programs in other areas of health, for example:

- Health system targets different groups of people (e.g., elderly, people with special needs, infertile couples) with special programs addressing their needs.

- Several workshops aiming at sensitizing policy makers and service providers on gender issues has been carried on in the ministry of health since 2007. Furthermore, management information system within the ministry adopted segregation of the data according to the sex.
- Child abuse surveillance has started in Oman since 2007. This is done through a notification form available in all health facilities. A committee within the ministry is reviewing these forms periodically.
- Currently, the ministry is working on initiating services targeting adolescents.
- Health care is provided free of charge for non-Omani working in governmental organizations. Omani law forces the private sector to cover the health expenses of their employee.