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# Global Abortion Laws and Policies

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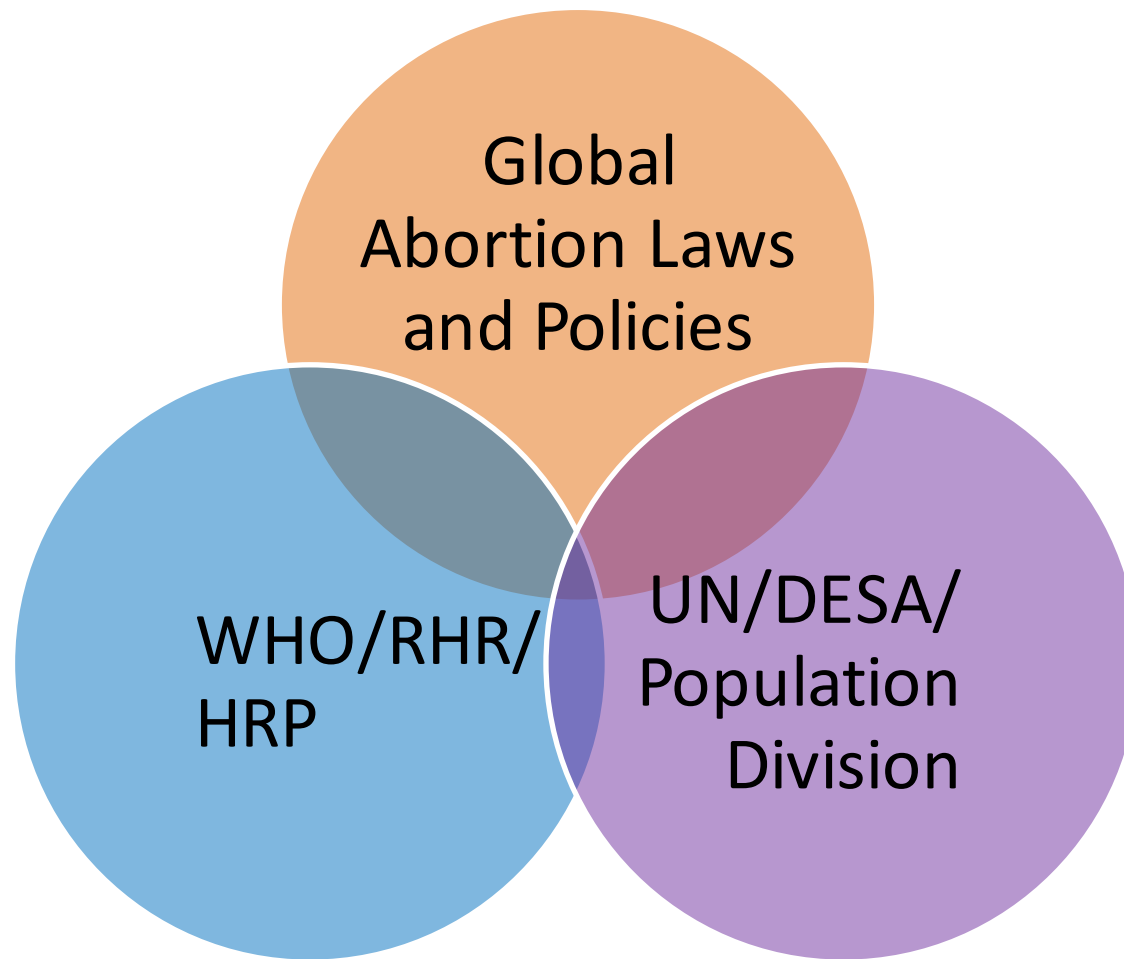


# Outline

Project background and methodology

Abortion laws

Service standards and guidelines

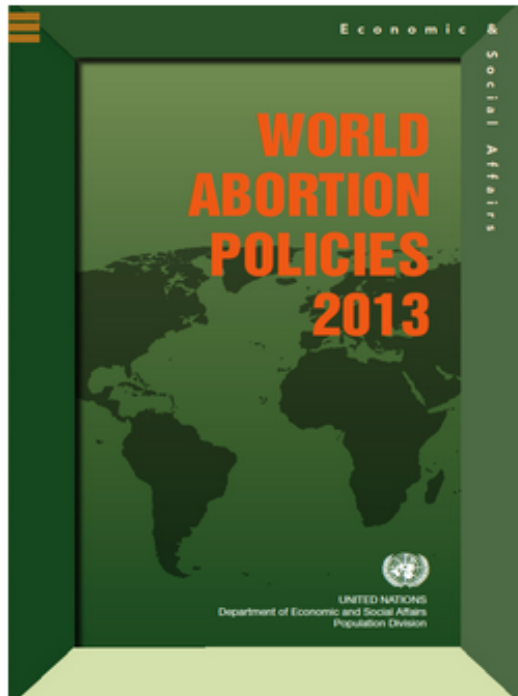


Global  
Abortion Laws  
and Policies

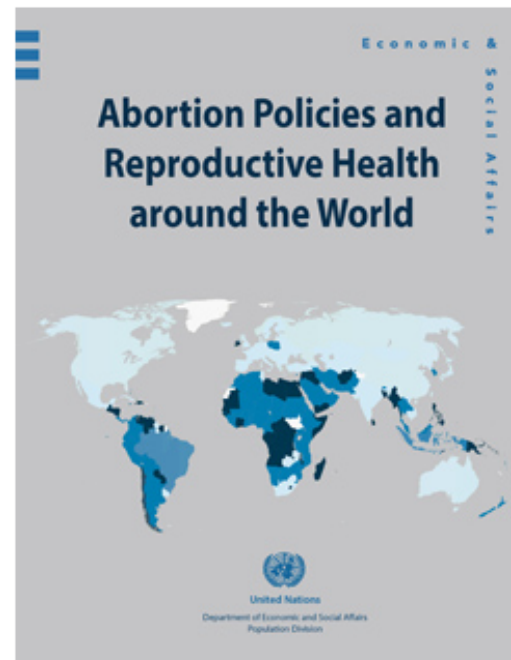
WHO/RHR/  
HRP

UN/DESA/  
Population  
Division

# World abortion policies



The United Nations has been tracking legal grounds for abortion and selected reproductive health policies since 1996.



- |            |                          |                                       |                    |                    |
|------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>A</b>   | Algeria                  | Benin                                 | Chile              | Denmark            |
|            | Albania                  | Bhutan                                | China              | Djibouti           |
|            | Algeria                  | Bolivia                               | Colombia           | Dominica           |
|            | Andorra                  | Bosnia and Herzegovina                | Congo              | Dominican Republic |
|            | Angola                   | Botswana                              | Cook Islands       |                    |
|            | Antigua and Barbuda      | Brazil                                | Costa Rica         | <b>E</b>           |
|            | Argentina                | Brunel                                | Côte d'Ivoire      | Ecuador            |
|            | Armenia                  | Darussalam                            | Cuba               | Egypt              |
|            | Australia                | Bulgaria                              | Cyprus             | El Salvador        |
|            | Austria                  | Burkina Faso                          | Dominican Republic | Equatorial Guinea  |
|            | Azerbaijan               | Burundi                               |                    | Eritrea            |
| <b>B</b>   |                          |                                       |                    | Esania             |
| Bahamas    | <b>C</b>                 | <b>D</b>                              |                    | Ethiopia           |
| Bahrain    | Cambodia                 | Democratic People's Republic of Korea |                    |                    |
| Bangladesh | Cameroon                 | Democratic Republic of the Congo      |                    |                    |
| Barbados   | Canada                   |                                       |                    |                    |
| Belarus    | Cape Verde               |                                       |                    | <b>F</b>           |
| Belgium    | Central African Republic |                                       |                    | Fiji               |
| Belize     | Chad                     |                                       |                    | France             |

# Documenting trends over time

## Changes in the distribution of countries by legal grounds for abortion between 1996 and 2013

Year	To save a woman's life	To preserve a woman's physical health	To preserve a woman's mental health	In case of rape or incest	Because of foetal impairment	For economic or social reasons	On request	Not permitted	Total number of countries
<u>World</u>									
1996	187	120	99	83	80	60	47	5	192
2005	189	127	123	93	85	65	54	4	193
2013	190	132	126	102	102	70	59	6	196

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```
graph LR; A[Legal grounds for abortion] --> B[Related laws]; B --> C[Service standards and guidelines];
```

Legal grounds  
for abortion

Related laws

Service  
standards and  
guidelines

# Global Abortion Policies Project

## Aims

- Transparency of abortion laws/policies
- Accountability for women's health and their human rights

## Key outputs

- Global law and policies database
- Documents repository
- Country profiles
- Regional analyses

## Audience

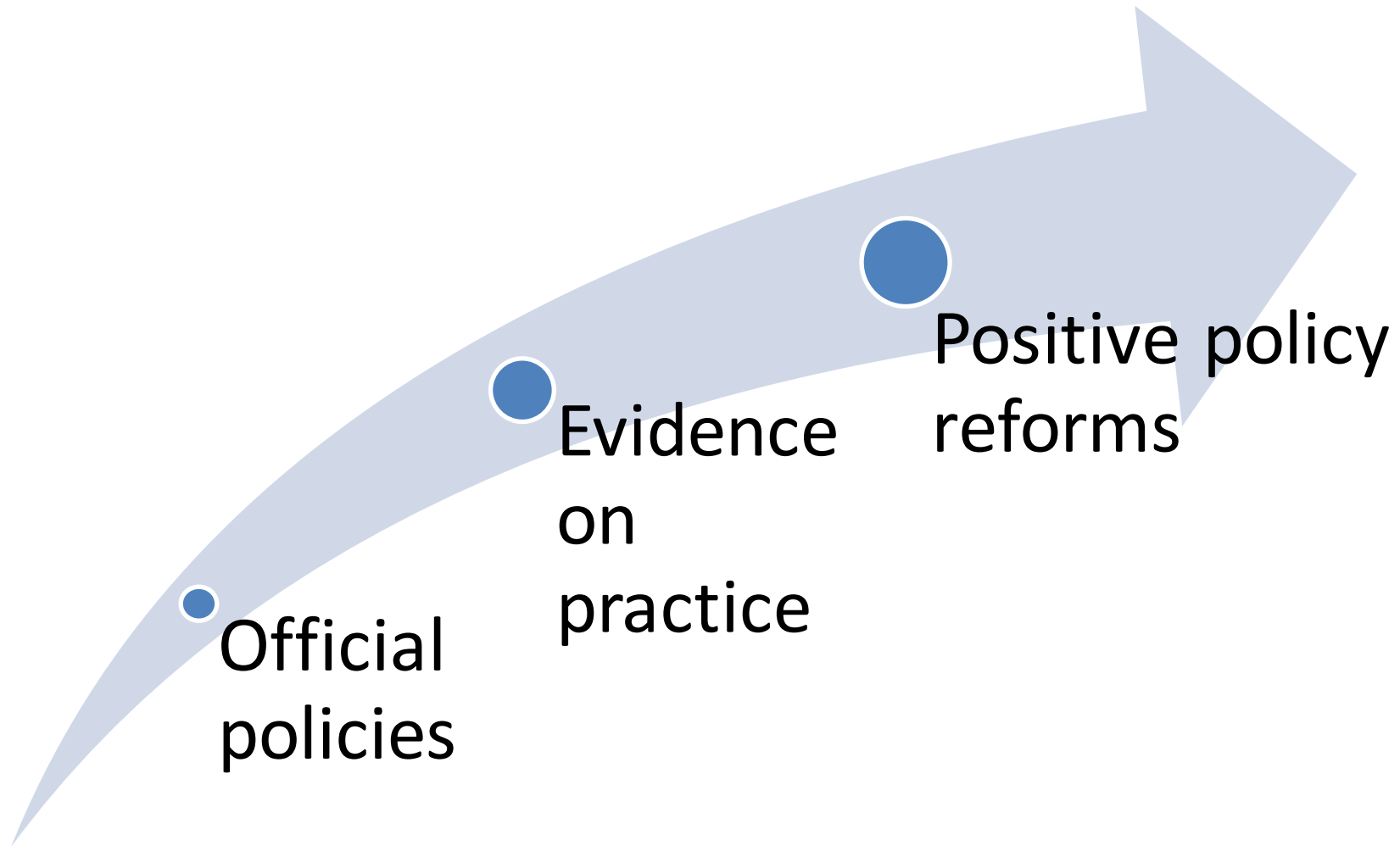
- Policymakers and advisors
- SRHR NGOs
- Human rights bodies
- Researchers

## Updates

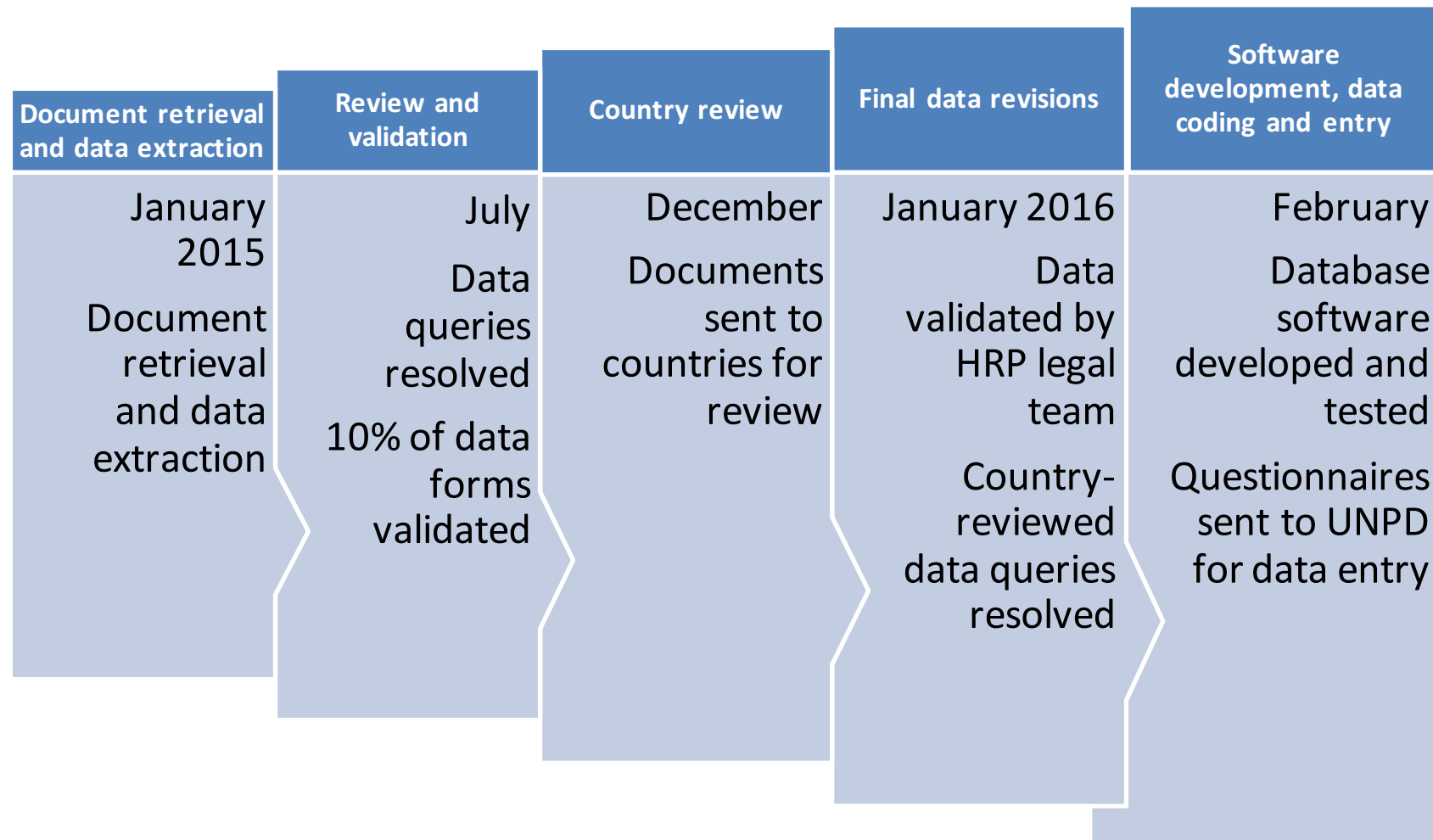
- Real-time
- Systematic country engagement every 5 years



# 'Ideal' evolution of policy strengthening



# Methodology

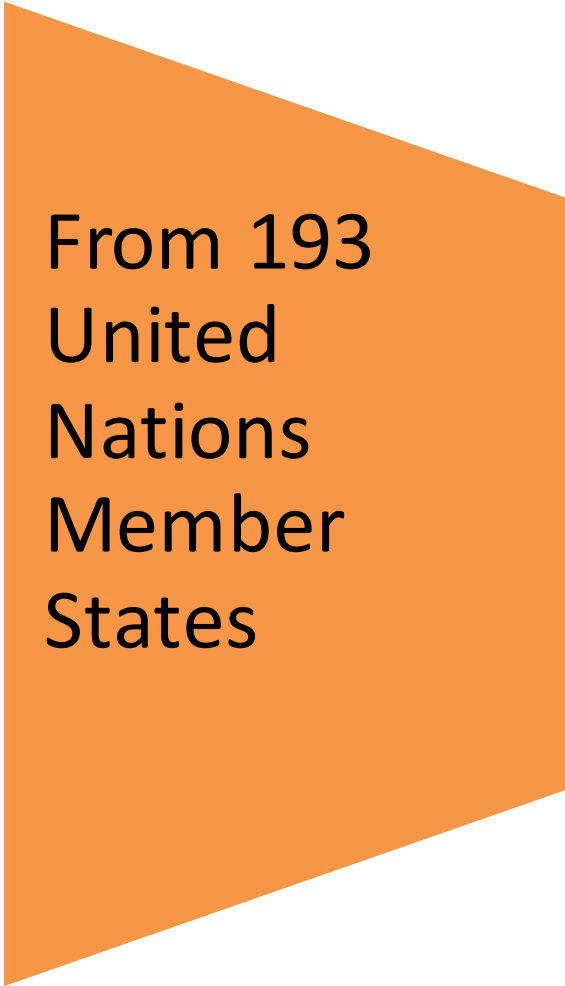


**Launch anticipated in Spring 2017**

# Data sources



~1000 official  
law/policy  
documents



From 193  
United  
Nations  
Member  
States



85 country  
reviews

# The database

## Abortion laws

- Legal grounds
- Gestational limits
- Who can be prosecuted for unlawful abortion

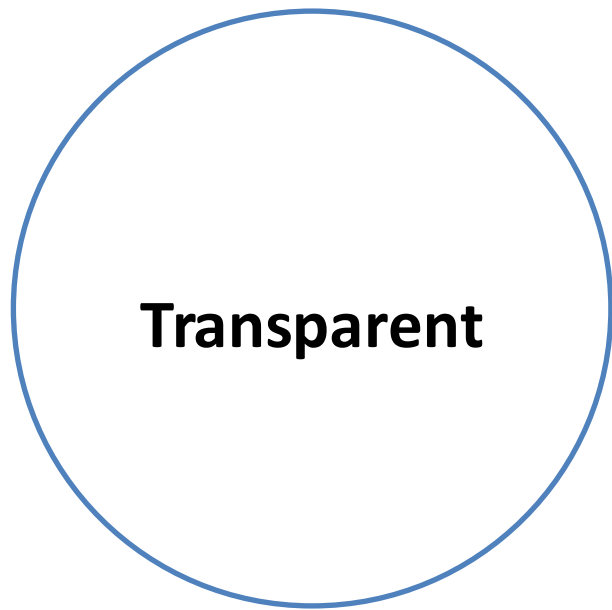
## Service standards and guidelines

- Who, where, how abortion can be provided
- Authorisation requirements
- Mandatory waiting periods
- Counselling requirements
- Screening tests
- Conscientious objection

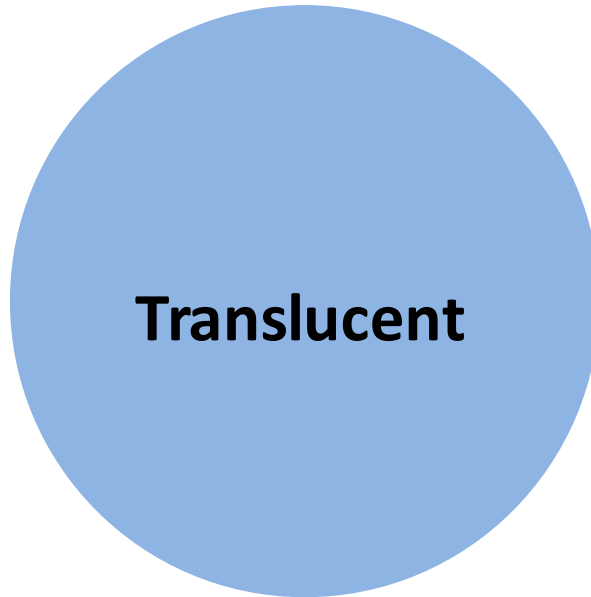
# ABORTION LAWS



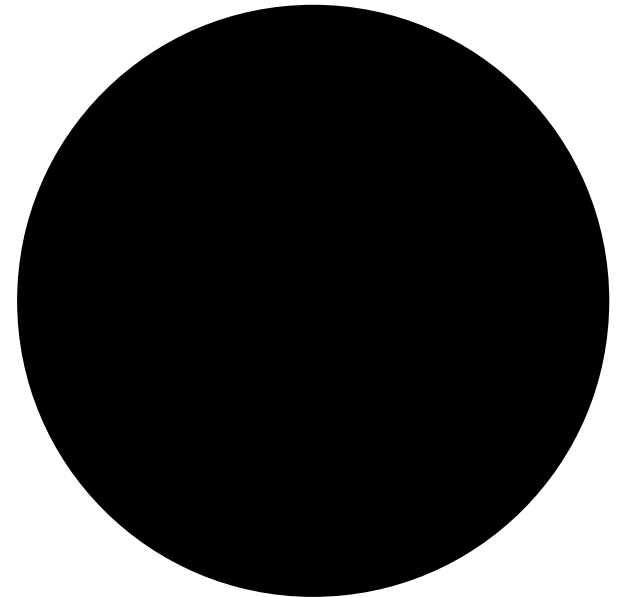
# Transparency of abortion laws



**Transparent**

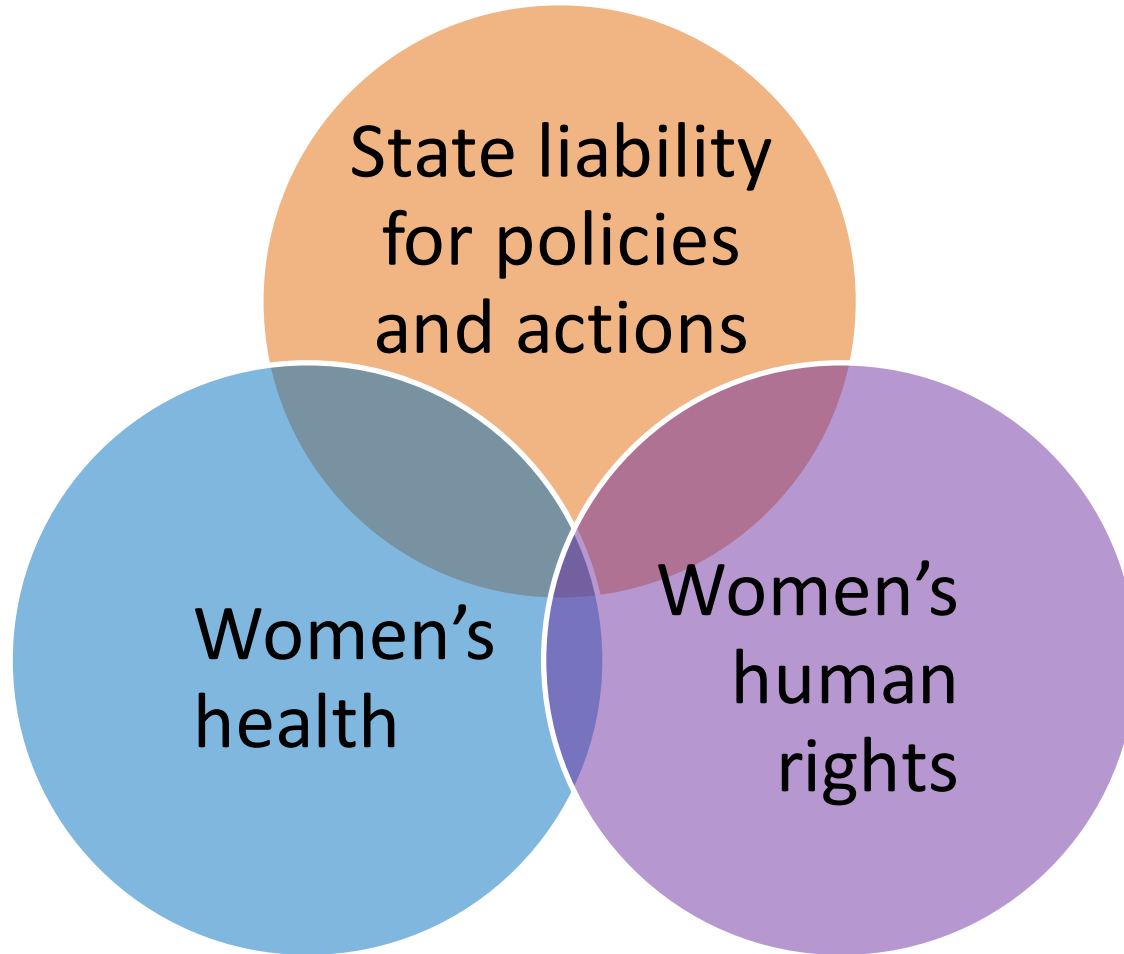


**Translucent**



**Opaque**

# Accountability



# Where abortion laws and policies reside



Health regulations

Separate abortion laws

Embedded in larger acts or codes

Special provisions



# Abortion laws and nuances therein

## Abortion to save a woman's life

- Usually no gestational limit

## Abortion to prevent harm to a woman's health

- Gestational limit sometimes specified
- Health often specified as physical and mental
- Specific health harms often noted

## Abortion for cases of rape and incest

- Gestational limit usually specified
- Specificities may include police reports and court orders

## Abortion for cases of fetal impairment

- Gestational limit usually specified
- Specificities may include particular conditions and severity

# Abortion laws and nuances therein

## Abortion on a woman's request

- Gestational limit usually specified
- Usually without restriction as to reason, but not always

## Abortion for other reasons

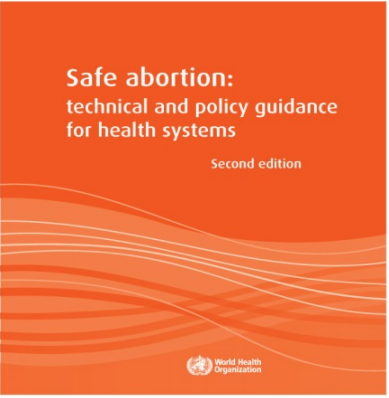
- Gestational limit usually specified
- Other reasons may include: woman's cognitive disability, being a minor, woman's economic and social situation

# Who can be criminally charged?

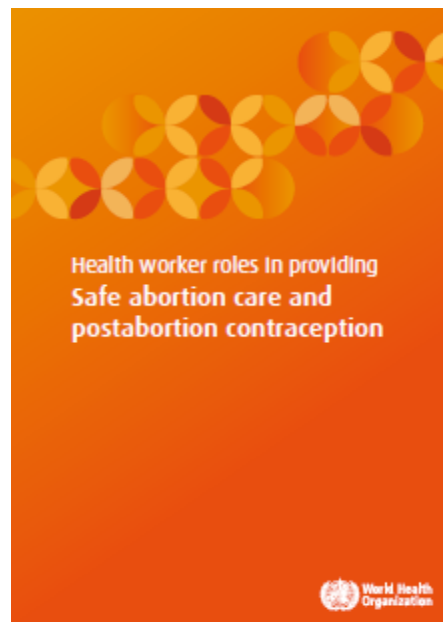
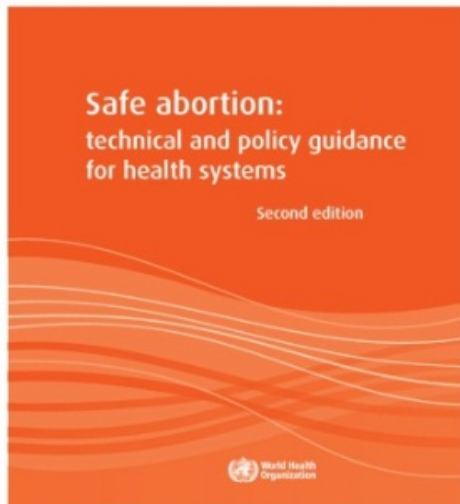
Woman who has the abortion

Person who provides abortion

Other persons who assist the woman



# Service standards and guidelines: Who – What – Where – When – How



# Service-delivery policies

National guidelines	Care provider	Level of care	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Induced abortion</li><li>• Post-abortion care</li><li>• Emergency obstetric care</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specialist</li><li>• GP</li><li>• Non-physicians</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tertiary level</li><li>• Secondary level</li><li>• Primary level</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vacuum aspiration</li><li>• Mifepristone-misoprostol</li><li>• D&amp;E</li><li>• D&amp;C</li></ul>

# Mifepristone and Misoprostol

Essential medicine list

Other official approval

Indications for use

Permitted in pharmacies

# Access requirements

## Third-party authorizations

- Parental
- Spousal
- Multiple physicians
- Committees

## Mandatory waiting periods

- Including number of days, from what point in time, and exceptions

## Mandatory counselling

- Including requirements for biased counselling

## Medically unnecessary tests

- Including HIV or other STI tests



# Conscientious objection

For individuals and facilities

Information and referral requirements

# Insurance coverage

Induced abortion for all women

For particular groups of women

For treatment of complications only

Private health insurance cover



# Next steps

## Finalisation of database

- Complete data coding
- Data entry

## Primary analyses

- Country profiles
- Regional analyses

## Launch

- Go live
- Publications

## Post-launch

- Secondary analyses
- Capacity strengthening
- Ongoing updates

# Acknowledgements

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<http://srhr.org/safeabortion/>

[http://www.who.int/topics/preventing\\_unsafe\\_abortion/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/preventing_unsafe_abortion/en/)

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/>