

Teenage pregnancy deaths a 'global scandal': charity

June 27 2012

British charity Save the Children on Wednesday said it was a "global scandal" that 50,000 teenagers die each year due to pregnancy and childbirth complications.

The charity urged the world to renew its focus on family planning with a summit set to take place in London next month highlighting UN figures showing pregnancy and childbirth as leading causes of death for adolescent girls,

In a report entitled "How family planning saves children's lives", Save the Children also cited official data which revealed that nearly one million babies born to [teenage mothers](#) die each year before their first birthday.

"The issue of children having children -- and dying because their bodies are too immature to deliver the baby -- is a global scandal," said Save the Children's Chief Executive, Justin Forsyth.

"This is a tragedy not just for those girls but also for their children: babies are 60 percent more likely to die if their mother is under 18.

"In the developing world, family planning isn't just a lifestyle choice. Children's lives depend on it," Forsyth concluded.

Childbirth is the leading killer of [adolescent girls](#) in Africa, according to UN figures.

Worldwide, one in five girls give birth before they turn 18, according to the report.

It also highlighted figures which showed that the risk of a 15-year-old ultimately dying in pregnancy or childbirth was five times higher for a girl under the age of 15 than for a woman in her twenties.

The charity called for equal access to family planning for all women; for women's rights to be guaranteed and enshrined in law; and for investment in education and [health workers](#).

If that were achieved, the report claims that 30 percent of [maternal deaths](#) and 20 percent of neo-natal deaths in the [developing world](#) could be prevented.

World leaders will gather in London on July 11 for a [family planning](#) summit hosted by the British government and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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