Country Profile: Mauritania

Region: Western Africa

Last Updated: 09 November 2021

Identified policies and legal sources related to abortion:
- Reproductive Health Act
- General Medical Health Act
- Constitution
- Criminal / Penal Code
- Civil Code
- Ministerial Order / Decree
- Case Law
- Health Regulation / Clinical Guidelines
- EML / Registered List
- Medical Ethics Code
- Document Relating to Funding
- Abortion Specific Law
- Law on Medical Practitioners
- Law on Health Care Services
- Other

Related Documents:

From Reproductive Health Act:
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017

From Criminal / Penal Code:
- Mauritania Penal Code

From EML / Registered List:
- Essential Medicines List 2008
- Misodia Mifedia Registration 2018

From Other:
- Ordinance on the Protection of Children

Concluding Observations:
- CEDAW
- CRC
- HRC

Persons who can be sanctioned:
- A woman or girl can be sanctioned
- Providers can be sanctioned
- A person who assists can be sanctioned

Abortion at the woman's request

No

Legal Ground and Gestational Limit

Economic or social reasons
- No

Related documents:
- Mauritania Penal Code (page 59)
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017 (page 5)

WHO Guidance

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

WHO defines health for member states as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.1.5.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 103)
The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

A woman is entitled to know the status of her pregnancy and to act on this information; health protection or social reasons can be interpreted to include distress of the pregnant woman caused by the diagnosis of fetal impairment. Prenatal tests and other medical diagnostic services cannot legally be refused because the woman may decide to terminate her pregnancy. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.1.4.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 103)

The protection of women from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment requires that those who have become pregnant as the result of coerced or forced sexual acts can lawfully access safe abortion services. Prompt, safe abortion services should be provided on the basis of a woman’s complaint rather than requiring forensic evidence or police examination. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.1.3.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 102)

The protection of women from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment requires that those who have become pregnant as the result of coerced or forced sexual acts can lawfully access safe abortion services. Prompt, safe abortion services should be provided on the basis of a woman’s complaint rather than requiring forensic evidence or police examination. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.1.3.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 102)

The scope of mental health includes psychological distress or mental suffering caused by, for example, coerced or forced sexual acts and diagnosis of severe fetal impairment. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.1.2.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 102)

Physical health is widely understood to include conditions that aggravate pregnancy and those aggravated by pregnancy. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.1.2.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 102)
Additional Requirements to Access Safe Abortion

**Authorization of health professional(s)**

- **Yes**

  Related documents:
  - Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017 (page 5)

**Number and cadre of health-care professional authorizations required**

Specialized medical prescription

- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017 (page 5)

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Authorization in specially licensed facilities only</th>
<th>Judicial authorization for minors</th>
<th>Judicial authorization in cases of rape</th>
<th>Police report required in case of rape</th>
<th>Parental consent required for minors</th>
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</thead>
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<td><strong>Not specified</strong></td>
<td>When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Restrictions on the range of providers or facilities that are authorized to provide abortion reduce the availability of services and their equitable geographic distribution. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.2.4.</td>
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<td>Third-party authorization should not be required for women to obtain abortion services. Third-party authorization may violate the right to privacy and women's access to health care on the basis of equality of men and women. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.2.2.</td>
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</table>
Spousal consent

Not specified
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Related documents:
- Ordinance on the Protection of Children
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017

WHO Guidance
The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Third-party authorization should not be required for women to obtain abortion services. The requirement for authorization by a spouse may violate the right to privacy and women’s access to health care on the basis of equality of men and women. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.2.2.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 105)

Ultrasound images or listen to foetal heartbeat required

Not specified
When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.

Related documents:
- Ordinance on the Protection of Children
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017

WHO Guidance
The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Regulatory, policy and programmatic barriers, one example of which is the requirement for mandatory ultrasound prior to abortion, that hinder access to and timely provision of safe abortion care should be removed. Safe Abortion Guidelines, Executive Summary, Box 7 - Recommendation.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 19)

Compulsory counselling

Not specified
When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.

Related documents:
- Ordinance on the Protection of Children
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017

WHO Guidance
The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Many women have made a decision to have an abortion before seeking care, and this decision should be respected without subjecting a woman to mandatory counselling. Provision of counselling to women who desire it should be voluntary, confidential, non-directive and by a trained person. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 2.1.8.1.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 46)

Compulsory waiting period

Not specified
When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.

Related documents:
- Ordinance on the Protection of Children
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017

WHO Guidance
The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

States should consider eliminating waiting periods that are not medically required, and expanding services to serve all eligible women promptly. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.2.6.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 107)

Mandatory HIV screening test

Not specified
When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.

Related documents:
- Ordinance on the Protection of Children
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017

WHO Guidance
The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Requirements for HIV and other tests that are not clinically indicated are potential service-delivery barriers. Safe Abortion Guidelines, p 88.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 88)
### Other mandatory STI screening tests

**Not specified**

When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.

**Related documents:**
- Ordinance on the Protection of Children
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Requirements for HIV and other tests that are not clinically indicated are potential service-delivery barriers. Safe Abortion Guidelines, p 88.

↓ *Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 88)*

### Prohibition of sex-selective abortion

**Not specified**

When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.

**Related documents:**
- Ordinance on the Protection of Children
- Law 2017 025 relating to reproductive health, 2017

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

In situations where abortion is restricted for sex selection purposes, terminating a pregnancy for this reason is likely to involve an unsafe procedure carrying high risks. Any policies or guidelines on the use of technology in obstetric and fetal medicine should take into account the need to ensure women’s access to safe abortion and other services - efforts to manage or limit sex selection should also not hamper or limit access to safe abortion services. Preventing gender-biased sex selection: an interagency statement, p 10 - Recommendation.

↓ *Source document: Preventing Gender-Biased Sex Selection (page 17)*

### Restrictions on information provided to the public

No data found

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

States should refrain from limiting access to means of maintaining sexual and reproductive health, including censoring, withholding or intentionally misrepresenting health-related information. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.2.7.

↓ *Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 107)*

### Restrictions on methods to detect sex of the foetus

No data found

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

A woman is entitled to know the status of her pregnancy and to act on this information. Prenatal tests and other medical diagnostic services cannot legally be refused because the woman may decide to terminate her pregnancy. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.1.4.

↓ *Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 103)*

### Clinical and Service-delivery Aspects of Abortion Care

**National guidelines for induced abortion**

No data found

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Standards and guidelines should be developed and updated with the intent of eliminating barriers to obtaining the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 3.3. Standards and guidelines should cover: types of abortion service, where and by whom they can be provided; essential equipment, instruments, medications, supplies and facility capabilities; referral mechanisms; respect for women's informed decision-making, autonomy, confidentiality and privacy. Safe Abortion Guidelines, p. 63.

↓ *Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 75)*
**Methods allowed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Approval</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum aspiration</td>
<td>No data found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilatation and evacuation</td>
<td>No data found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination mifepristone-misoprostol</td>
<td>No data found</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misoprostol only</td>
<td>No data found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (where provided)</td>
<td>No data found</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Vacuum aspiration is the recommended technique of surgical abortion for pregnancies of up to 12 to 14 weeks of gestation. The procedure should not be routinely completed by dilatation and sharp curettage (D&C). Safe Abortion Guidelines, Executive Summary, Box 1 - Recommendation.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 123)

Dilatation and evacuation (D&E) and medical methods (mifepristone and misoprostol; misoprostol alone) are both recommended methods for abortion for gestations over 12 to 14 weeks. Safe Abortion Guidelines, Executive Summary, Box 3 - Recommendation.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 123)

The recommended method for medical abortion is mifepristone followed by misoprostol (regimen differs by gestational age). Safe Abortion Guidelines, Executive Summary, Box 2 - Recommendation.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 13)

Where mifepristone is not available, the recommended method for medical abortion is misoprostol (regimen differs by gestational age). Safe Abortion Guidelines, Executive Summary, Box 2 - Recommendation.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 14)

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**Country recognized approval (mifepristone / mife- misoprostol)**

Yes

Related documents:
- Misodia Mifedia Registration 2018 (page 1)

**Pharmacy selling or distribution**

Not specified

When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.

- Misodia Mifedia Registration 2018

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

The combination of mifepristone and misoprostol for medical abortion is included on the WHO model list of essential medicines. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 2.2.5

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 54)

Chemists/pharmacists can help women avoid unintended pregnancy through provision of accurate contraceptive information, pregnancy tests, contraceptive methods and referral to safe abortion services. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 3.3.1.1.

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 13)

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**Country recognized approval (misoprostol)**

Yes, indications not specified

Related documents:
- Misodia Mifedia Registration 2018 (page 1)

**Misoprostol allowed to be sold or distributed by pharmacies or drug stores**

Not specified

When there is no explicit reference to an issue covered in the questionnaire in the relevant document(s), this is noted and no interpretation was made.

- Misodia Mifedia Registration 2018

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

The combination of mifepristone and misoprostol for medical abortion is included on the WHO model list of essential medicines. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 2.2.5

Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 54)
### Where can abortion services be provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary health-care centres</td>
<td>No data found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (district-level) health-care facilities</td>
<td>No data found</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Abortion services should be available at primary-care level, with referral systems in place for all required higher-level care. Safe Abortion Guidelines, Executive Summary, Box 6 - Recommendation.

**Source document:** WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 18)

### National guidelines for post-abortion care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary health-care centres</td>
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**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Standards and guidelines should be developed and updated with the intent of eliminating barriers to obtaining the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 3.3. Standards and guidelines should cover: types of abortion service, where and by whom they can be provided; essential equipment, instruments, medications, supplies and facility capabilities; referral mechanisms; respect for women’s informed decision-making, autonomy, confidentiality and privacy. Safe Abortion Guidelines, p. 63.

**Source document:** WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 75)

### Where can post-abortion care services be provided

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

The facilities and skills required to manage most abortion complications are similar to those needed to care for women who have had a spontaneous abortion (miscarriage). Safe Abortion Guidelines § 2.2.6.

**Source document:** WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 57)

### Contraception included in post-abortion care

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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</table>

**WHO Guidance**

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

All women should receive contraceptive information and be offered counselling for and methods of post-abortion contraception, including emergency contraception, before leaving the health-care facility. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 2.2.1.

**Source document:** WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 62)
### Insurance to offset end user costs

<table>
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<th>Other (if applicable)</th>
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### Who can provide abortion services

<table>
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<th>Nurse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midwife/nurse-midwife</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor (specialty not specified)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist doctor, including OB/GYN</td>
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</table>

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### Extra facility/provider requirements for delivery of abortion services

| Referral linkages to a higher-level facility | No data found |
| Availability of a specialist doctor, including OB/GYN | No data found |
| Minimum number of beds | No data found |

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## Conscientious Objection

### Public sector providers

| No data found |

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### WHO Guidance

The following descriptions and recommendations were extracted from WHO guidance on safe abortion.

Health-care professionals who claim conscientious objection must refer the woman to another willing and trained provider in the same, or another easily accessible health-care facility. Where referral is not possible, the health-care professional who objects, must provide safe abortion to save the woman's life, to prevent serious injury to her health and provide urgent care when women present with complications from an unsafe or illegal abortion. Safe Abortion Guidelines, § 4.2.2.5.

- **Source document**: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 106)
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<td><img src="https://example.com" alt="WHO Guidance" /></td>
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<td><img src="https://example.com" alt="WHO Guidance" /></td>
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<td><img src="https://example.com" alt="Source document: WHO Safe Abortion Guidance (page 106)" /></td>
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**Indicators**

Country specific information related to sexual and reproductive health indications. As data for the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators related to sexual and reproductive health become available, these will be
Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)  
No data

1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable  
No data

1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)  
No data

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio  
766 (2017)

3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel  
No data

3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods  
No data

3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group  
79.2 (2015-2020)

3.8.2 Number of people covered by health insurance or a public health system per 1,000 population  
No data

3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution  
No data

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex  
No data

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and nondiscrimination on the basis of sex  
No data

5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age  
No data

5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence  
No data

5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18  
No data

5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age  
No data

5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care  
No data

5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15-49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education  
No data

5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure  
No data

5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex  
No data

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities

10.3.1 Proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed within the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16.1 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months

16.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation

16.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18 to 29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

16.4 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms

16.5 Proportion of women who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months

16.6 Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services

16.7 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions

16.8 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

16.9 Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months

16.10 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

17.8 Proportion of individuals using the Internet

Additional Reproductive Health Indicators

Percentage of married women with unmet need for family planning

Percentage of births attended by trained health professional

Percentage of women aged 20-24 who gave birth before age 18

Total fertility rate

Legal marital age for women, with parental consent
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal marital age for women, without parental consent</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Inequalities Index (Value)</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Inequalities Index (Rank)</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory paid maternity leave</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population, urban (%)</td>
<td>53.672</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of secondary school completion rate for girls</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender parity in secondary education</td>
<td>1.017</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of women in non-agricultural employment</td>
<td>90.0299988</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of seats in parliament held by women</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio at birth (male to female births)</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>