

WOMEN AND HEALTH

Today's Evidence, Tomorrow's Agenda

Dr Tonya Nyagiro

Director, Department of Gender Women & Health

World Health Organization

May 19, 2010 Geneva



**World Health
Organization**

Structure of the presentation

**Understanding
women's health**

**Women's health
through the life-
course**

**Developing an
agenda for
women's health**

Understanding women's health in the world today

- **Women lead longer lives, but they face many health risks**
- **Widespread inequities between countries and within countries persist**
- **Health systems continue to fail women at key stages in their lives**

Ten leading causes of death in females (0-over 60) by country income group

Ten leading causes of death in females by country income group, 2004

World				Low-income countries			
Rank	Cause	Deaths (000s)	%	Rank	Cause	Deaths (000s)	%
1	Ischaemic heart disease	3371	12.2	1	Lower respiratory infections	1397	11.4
2	Stroke	3051	11.1	2	Ischaemic heart disease	1061	8.7
3	Lower respiratory infections	2014	7.3	3	Diarrhoeal diseases	851	7.0
4	COPD*	1405	5.1	4	Stroke	749	6.1
5	Diarrhoeal diseases	1037	3.8	5	HIV/AIDS	742	6.1
6	HIV/AIDS	1013	3.7	6	Maternal conditions	442	3.6
7	Diabetes mellitus	633	2.3	7	Neonatal infections**	426	3.5
8	Prematurity and low birth weight	567	2.1	8	Prematurity and low birth weight	405	3.3
9	Neonatal infections**	546	2.0	9	Malaria	404	3.3
10	Hypertensive heart disease	530	1.9	10	COPD*	404	3.3

Middle-income countries				High-income countries			
Rank	Cause	Deaths (000s)	%	Rank	Cause	Deaths (000s)	%
1	Stroke	1842	16.4	1	Ischaemic heart disease	650	15.8
2	Ischaemic heart disease	1659	14.8	2	Stroke	459	11.2
3	COPD*	875	7.8	3	Alzheimer and other dementias	195	4.7
4	Lower respiratory infections	451	4.0	4	Lower respiratory infections	165	4.0
5	Hypertensive heart disease	319	2.8	5	Breast cancer	163	4.0
6	Diabetes mellitus	309	2.8	6	Trachea, bronchus and lung cancers	159	3.9
7	HIV/AIDS	264	2.4	7	Colon and rectum cancers	130	3.2
8	Breast cancer	231	2.1	8	COPD*	126	3.1
9	Stomach cancer	201	1.8	9	Diabetes mellitus	123	3.0
10	Trachea, bronchus and lung cancers	191	1.7	10	Hypertensive heart disease	91	2.2

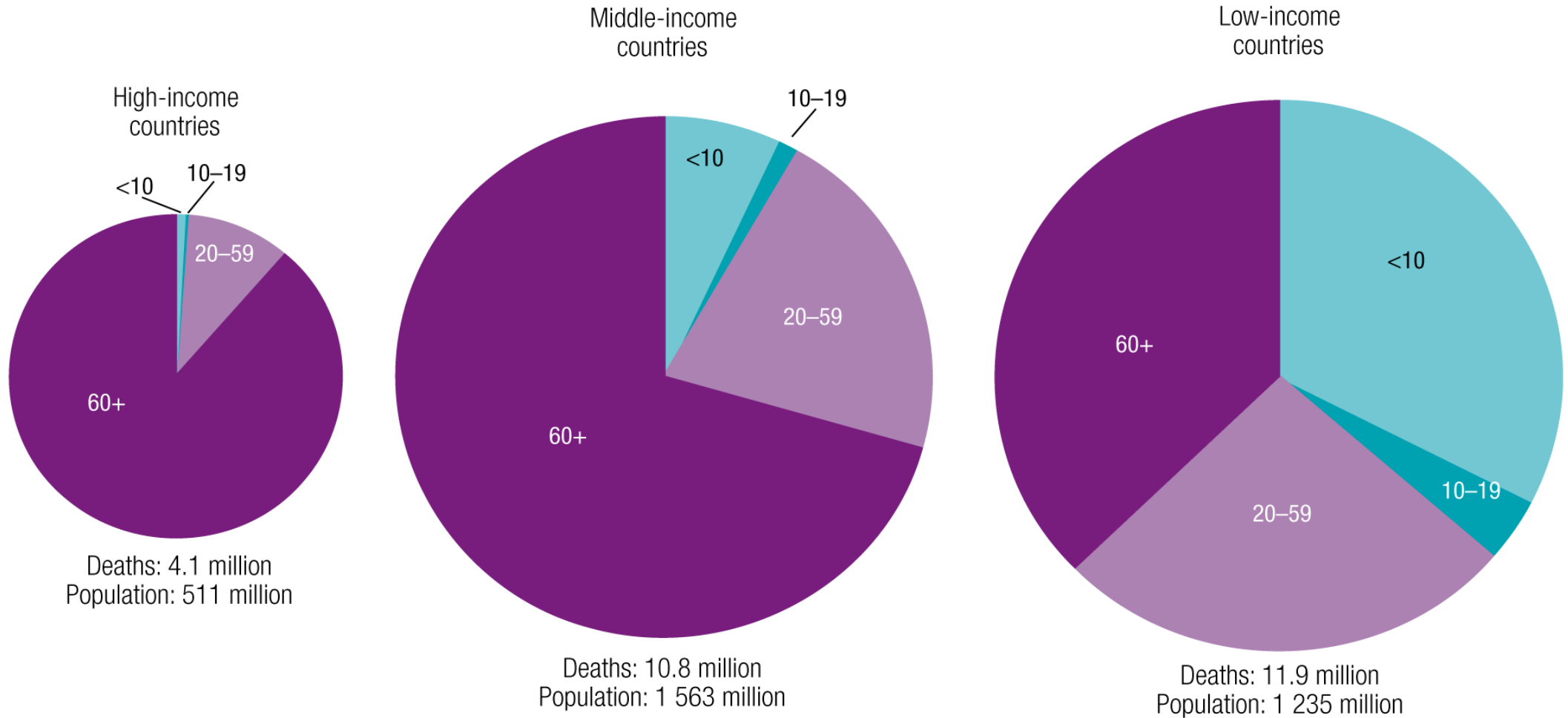
*Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

**Includes severe neonatal infections and other non-infectious causes arising in the perinatal period.

Source: World Health Organization.¹

Women in high income countries live longer and healthier lives

Female deaths by age group and country income group, 2007



Source: World Health Organization.

Structure of the presentation

Understanding
women's health

Women's health
through the life-
course

Developing an
agenda for
women's health

Key Findings

- **A fair start and prevention for all girls and adolescents is critical for the health of women**
- **Sexuality and reproductive health are central to women's lives**
- **Communicable and chronic diseases, injuries and mental health carry a heavy toll Ageing, a story of neglect**
- **Violence against women is widespread**

The girl child (0-9 years)

- **Still too many infants and children are dying**
- **The leading causes of death are pneumonia, diarrhoea and neonatal conditions**
- **Malnutrition is associated with many deaths**
- **Girls start life with a biological advantage but this is over-ridden in some countries**

Adolescent girls (10-19 yrs): a time of good health but also risk

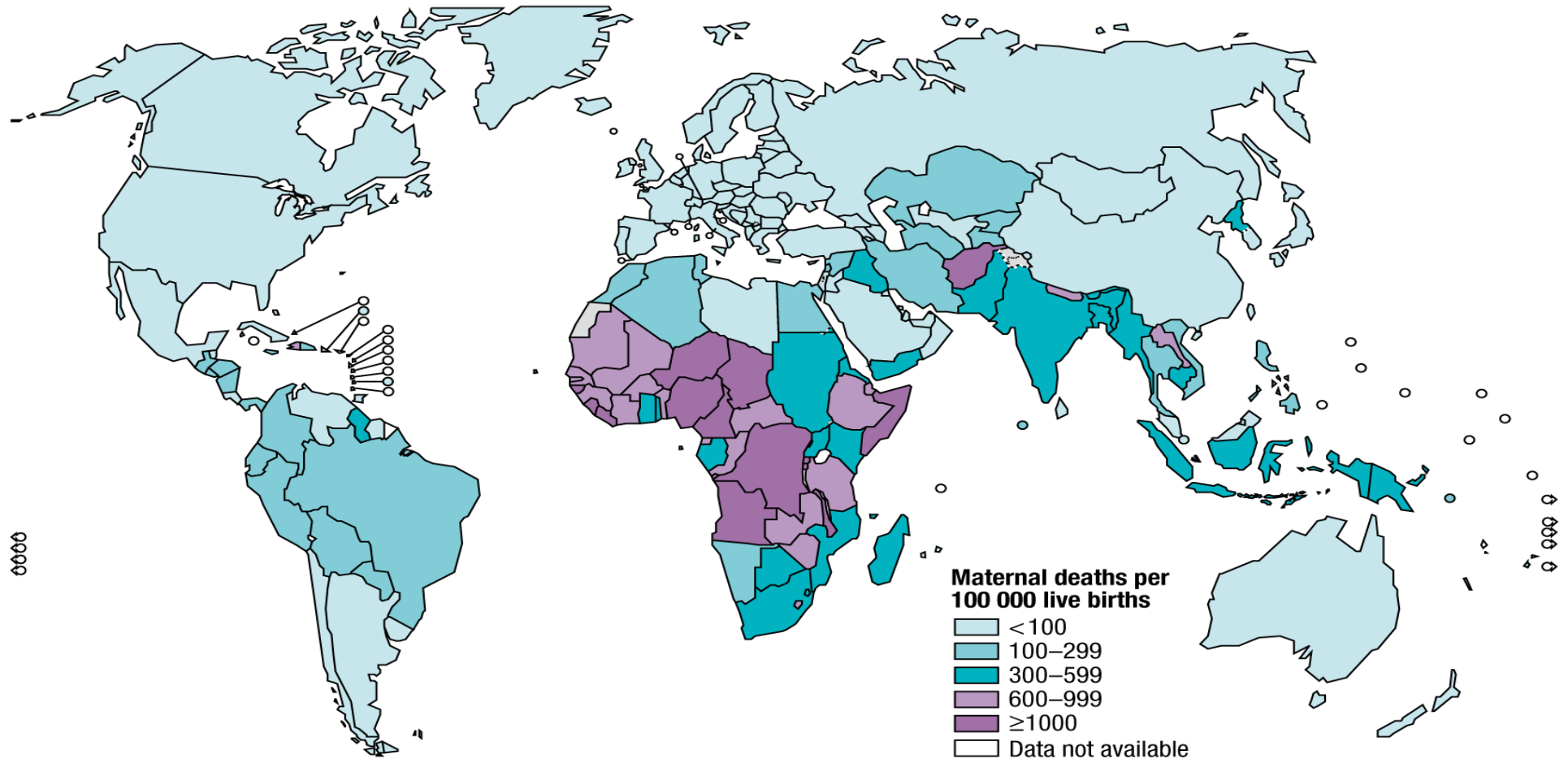
- Too often, societies are failing to provide the support that these girls need
- Unhealthy lifestyles can take hold
- In high and middle income countries, deaths from **road traffic accidents and suicides** predominate but they are common everywhere
- In developing countries, **communicable diseases** remain common and **complications of pregnancy and childbirth** are the leading cause of death among 15-19 yr-olds

Leading causes of death among women of reproductive age (15-44 yrs)

World			
Rank	Cause	Deaths(000s)	%
1	HIV/AIDS	682	19.2
2	Maternal conditions	516	14.6
3	Tuberculosis	228	6.4
4	Self-inflicted injuries	168	4.7
5	Road traffic accidents	132	3.7

99% of maternal deaths are in developing countries

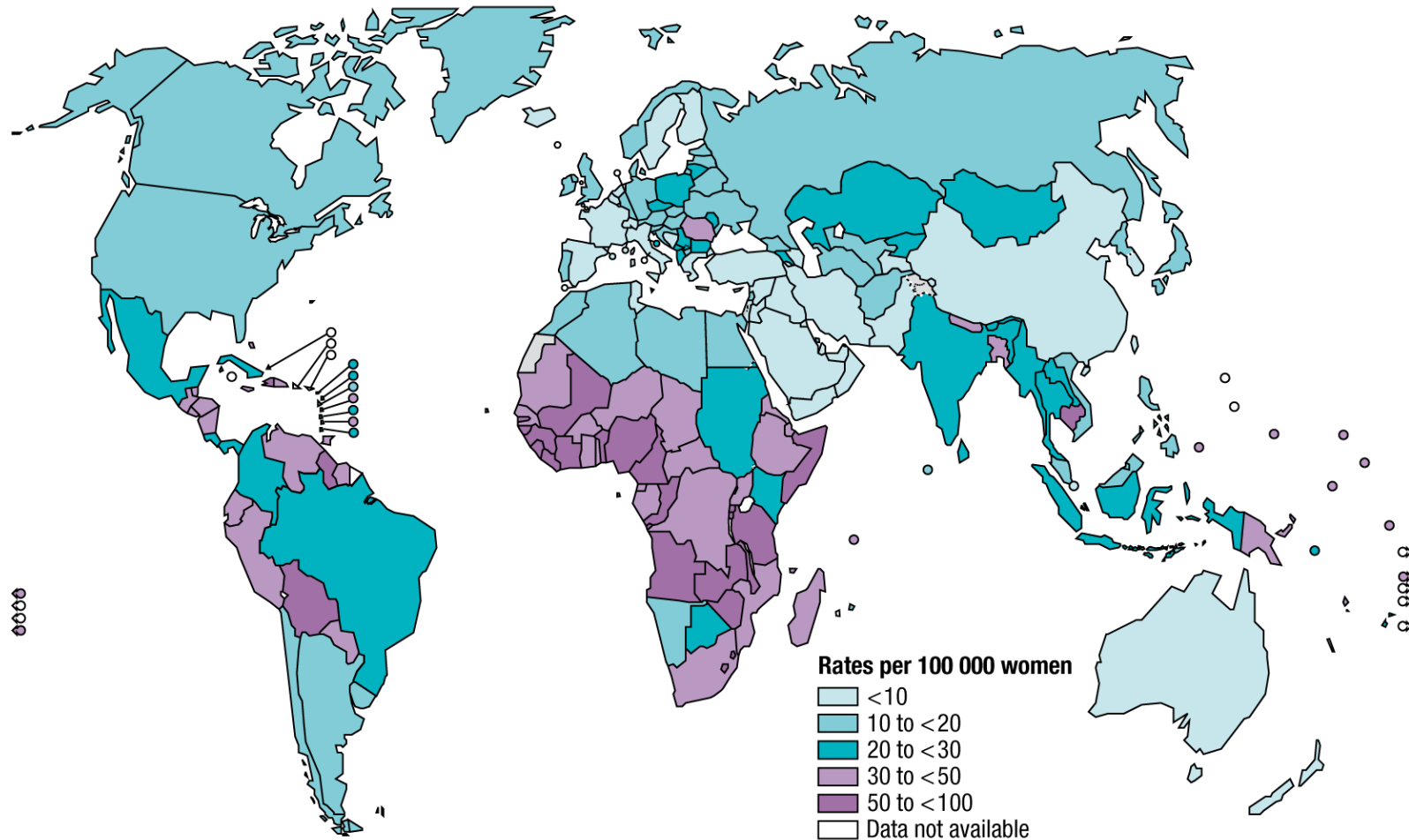
Maternal mortality ratios, 2005



Source: World Health Organization.

Almost 80% of cervical cancer cases in adult women occur in low-income countries

Incidence rates of cervical cancer (age-standardized per 100 000 women, all ages), 2004



Source: World Health Organization.¹

Adult women (20-59 yrs)

- The risk of **premature death** varies enormously, from only 6% in high-income countries, to 42% in the African region
- Infectious diseases, such as **HIV/AIDS** and **tuberculosis** take a great toll, especially in Africa
- Half of all deaths among adult women globally are caused by **non-communicable diseases**
- Mental health problems (**depression, suicide**) loom large
- **Violence against women** is a major risk factor for ill-health

Ageing- a story of neglect

- Many of the health problems faced by women in old age are the result of risk factors experienced when they were younger – **smoking, sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy diets**
- **Disabilities remain unprevented and unmanaged**
- Because many older women have worked all of their lives in the informal sector or in unpaid activities, **health care is inaccessible, unaffordable or both**

Structure of the presentation

**Understanding
women's health**

**Women's health
through the life-
course**

**Developing an
agenda for
women's health**

A shared agenda for women's health

- **Building strong leadership and a coherent institutional response**
- **Making health systems work for women**
- **Leveraging changes in public policy to build healthier societies**
- **Building the knowledge base and monitoring progress**

WHO's delivery on women's health 2010-2011

- **WHO taking the report forward across the organization: push on MDG's 4, 5 and 6**
- **Dissemination and advocacy**
- **Advancing Women's health through policy dialogues at regional level with country implementation**
- **Strategic linkages and partnerships can take forward women's health**