

## 7 Trends in Unmet Need for Married Women

Unmet need has declined in all of the eight<sup>9</sup> countries that have conducted two surveys in the DHS program (Figure 7.1). In two of these countries, Bolivia and Peru, the decline has been considerable over the five years since the previous survey.

Change in unmet need is a function of changes in contraceptive prevalence and the desire to regulate fertility. In countries such as Peru where the proportions wishing to control fertility have already reached a high level, the trend in unmet need will be

downward because of the increase in contraceptive practice. In many sub-Saharan countries, where the increase in the desire to regulate fertility is low but may be growing more rapidly than the use of contraception, unmet need may increase temporarily. This was the case for Ghana and Kenya between the early and the late 1980s but, as shown in Figure 7.1, this lag has been closed in the last five years. Total demand for family planning has increased slightly for all of these countries except Colombia, where it has remained the same.

<sup>9</sup> Indonesia was also included at both times but the whole country was not represented in the DHS-I sample.

Figure 7.1 Trends in unmet need, use of contraception and total demand from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1988-1994

