

**Oral statement by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) at the 44th
Session of the Commission on Population and Development**

The International Planned Parenthood Federation, through its 153 Member Associations in 174 countries, is committed to implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. IPPF recognizes the continuing relevance of the ICPD to health, sustainable development and the MDGs, and welcomes the General Assembly resolution calling for the 2014 UNGASS, and the continued implementation of the PoA. However, we believe it is important not only to increase the period of time for implementation, but, even more importantly, to increase the priority placed on the policies, funding and programmes that are still so urgently needed.

Any new development framework beyond 2015 will also need to prioritize those issues which are at the core of the ICPD PoA, in particular gender equality, and MDG Target 5B: universal access to reproductive health. All people, including young people, have the right to the highest standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health, and the right to control their fertility: to choose the number and spacing of their children. This will not only reduce the deaths of mothers and their children, but will also reduce maternal and child morbidity, unsafe abortion, and its impact on maternal mortality and morbidity and the impact of HIV and AIDS, and will contribute to the health and wellbeing of individuals, their families and communities, and to resilient, sustainable development, equity and human rights.

Today, girls and young women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of sexual and reproductive ill-health. Adolescent girls account for 10 per cent of births, but 23 per cent of the resulting maternal morbidity and in some countries this is far higher. Meeting girls' and young women's unmet need for family planning services and information, and ensuring zero tolerance of sexual violence and coercion are central to ensuring their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and their broader participation in education and employment.

Few development interventions have such cost-effective, far reaching, and profound impacts as empowering women, particularly young women, to take decisions regarding all aspects of their lives, including their sexuality and fertility. These gains accelerate development and equity, and alleviate poverty. When women can choose the number and spacing of their children, they will generally choose more for their children, not more children. Those children are better nourished, healthier and better educated and they themselves are healthier and more able to participate in paid employment. Evidence shows they will then return 90 per cent of their income to their families, so lifting them out of poverty, and contributing to national economies.

In order for young people to understand their sexuality from a positive perspective and to empower them to avoid unwanted and unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, it is vital to *provide both in and out of school youth with comprehensive education on gender equality, sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and secure young people's access to sexual and reproductive health information,*

education, services, counselling and commodities, including male and female condoms, in a manner that respects their rights to privacy and freedom from discrimination. A model of comprehensive sexuality education which includes human rights, HIV prevention, active citizenship, sexuality and gender equality will reduce gender stereotypes, contribute to reducing violence and enable more equal relationships between young men and women so that both have an equal opportunity to realise their full potential.

Research demonstrates that in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries young people want fewer children than their parents but have little or no access to services, information or commodities. This represents a crisis for health, human rights, and development.

Family planning, a key component of reproductive health, prevents at least one in three maternal deaths, and helps governments and communities achieve sustainable, social, environmental and economic development. However, globally 215 million women who are married or in a union, and many more who are not, have an unmet need for family planning, 45 per cent of them in Southern and Central Asia and 22 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa where the percentage of unmet need is highest. Unmet need for family planning is one of the major causes of maternal mortality, together with unsafe abortion, unintended and unwanted adolescent pregnancy, lack of emergency obstetric care and skilled birth attendance. While levels of unmet need remain so high, improvements in maternal health will remain limited, despite increased funding. Today's level of unmet need will multiply as the world's largest generation ever of young people enter their reproductive lives, increasing demand for contraception by 40 per cent by 2050.

For these challenges to be met we must ensure funding for sexual and reproductive health, including family planning services, information, and commodities, and accelerated implementation of the ICPD PoA. This requires all governments to increase efforts to meet their financial commitments.

As we build on the achievements of the ICPD, we must also respond to new challenges related to population dynamics, climate change and sustainable development, including those related to urbanisation, migration and the growing inequality between rich and poor, adults and youth, and the situation of the 75 per cent of the world's poor living in middle income countries.

It is clear that governments alone cannot achieve the goals of the ICPD or the MDGs. Civil society has already achieved remarkable success in advocating for sexual and reproductive health and rights and delivering services, information and education, particularly to those whom governments often cannot reach. It is essential that civil society be supported to work in meaningful partnership with governments and UN agencies, including the recently launched UN Women, and particularly to serve people in the communities where they live and work, as part of strengthened health systems. The reach and expertise of civil society organizations can complement those of governments, so assisting them to achieve their development goals, and deliver their promises and the vision of ICPD.