

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

**21st Special Session of the United Nations
General Assembly for the Review and Appraisal of
the Implementation of the Programme of Action
of the International Conference on
Population and Development**

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TO BE CHECKED AGAINST DELIVERY

IPPF Statement to the Twenty-first Special Session of the UN General Assembly

The International Planned Parenthood Federation was founded in 1952 and now works with 140 national member family planning associations (FPAs) in over 170 countries to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning. IPPF has been fully involved in the five-year review process of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). As in Cairo, more than 40 representatives of Family Planning Associations have been active participants on their government delegations here in New York, as they were also at The Hague International Forum.

Throughout the process, IPPF has championed as a priority the following issues:

- Continue to provide accessible, affordable and appropriate sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, information and education.
- Address aggressively the tragedy of women dying unnecessarily during pregnancy and in childbirth to guarantee safe motherhood.
- Meet the specific sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of young people.
- Make a reality of sexual and reproductive rights for all women, men and young people.

Let me devote a moment to these young people. We assume that most adolescents become healthy and productive adults, but many millions, unfortunately, do not. More than half of new HIV infections occur in young people and one in 20 adolescents worldwide contract a sexually transmitted disease. One-tenth of all births are to teenage girls, posing increased risks to both the far too young mother and child.

For IPPF, increased investment in programmes addressing the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people must be seen ~~as~~**an** investment for the future. They will be the parents and leaders of tomorrow, and the survival of our planet is in their hands. Therefore, IPPF appeals to you, governmental and non-governmental agencies to:

- Adopt policies and legislation which ensure that young people's specific sexual and reproductive health needs are met through appropriate, accessible and affordable high quality services.
- Ensure that these services respect the human rights of young people, as well as gender equity, privacy and confidentiality.

- **Provide** reliable and effective education on all sexual matters in the school curricular, as well as outside schools.
- Honour the commitment to increase funding for sexual health care with sufficient allocations to the special needs of young people.

Let me turn briefly to the silent tragedy of women dying in childbirth which in fact made brave and angry women in India start the IPPF movement. Knowing that the technologies for preventing and managing the causes of maternal deaths has been, and remains, a compelling reason for IPPF's work to address this unacceptable reality. Our efforts in this area are based on the principle that the natural act of childbearing should not deny a woman her right to life.

In this context, better family planning services, with a full range of contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception, play an important role in reducing the incidence of maternal deaths caused by unsafe abortion, as well as avoiding unwanted pregnancies, especially among the young.

IPPF knows that many women are deprived of important and fundamental rights and are subject to discrimination in important areas, such as education, free and voluntary access to reproductive services of all types; they are often victims of gender-based violence, coercive motherhood, and inability to be involved in programs for their own well-being. IPPF and its family planning associations are in the vanguard of efforts to ensure that the rights, inherent and explicitly stated in the Cairo Program of Action, are clarified and made known to all those involved. Because many existing national policies and laws are, we believe, still contrary to these rights, our **Family Planning Associations** are working with other human rights partners to support governments to introduce the necessary changes.

IPPF, with its associations and the active participation of millions of volunteers around the world, is committed to the continued and accelerated implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. This can only be done through partnerships; partnerships between governments, international bodies, civil society organizations and young people, who are vital to this equation. I know that I am in a very privileged position to address you in the name of IPPF and many colleagues and partners worldwide, including the Youth Coalition. As representatives of your governments, I want to share with you that it is IPPF's strong belief that poverty alleviation, population growth in balance with resources, sustainable development, rights issues and global equality are critical issues which must be urgently addressed. We look forward to playing our part in the continued, accelerated and adequately **resourced** implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action – one of the 20th century's major contributions to global thinking on sexual and reproductive health and rights.