

**Statement Delivered to the Commission on Population and Development on its 42nd Session on behalf of the German Foundation for World Population, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and Population Action International.**

Madame Chair and distinguished representatives, thank you for the opportunity to address this important 42nd session of the Commission on Population and Development. I am speaking on behalf of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Population Action International, and the German Foundation for World Population, partners in Project Resource Mobilization and Awareness.

Even with the great investments that have been made in reproductive health for the past thirty years in developing countries, due to shortages of supplies, millions of women, men and young people still fail to receive the contraceptives and information they need in order to space births and avoid unintended pregnancies.

Shortages of critical reproductive health supplies around the world are undermining progress towards achieving the Programme of Action established at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the poverty reduction and reproductive health targets included in the Millennium Development Goals. Without reproductive health supplies, no health or poverty reduction program can be successful. Without supplies, there are no services. In a too familiar and unacceptable scene, a woman walks five kilometres or more to a health clinic to get her contraceptives or condoms from a health practitioner only to find bare shelves in the clinic. She walks home empty handed and her health and future are no longer in her hands, despite her efforts.

Despite increased demand for reproductive health supplies, donor support is fading or stagnating, and many national governments have not prioritized ensuring access. The lack of access to modern family planning is a key driver of the more than 60 million annual unintended pregnancies worldwide and the resulting yearly net increase in global population of 80 million people.<sup>i,ii</sup> Providing modern contraceptives to fill this unmet need would avert an estimated 52 million unintended pregnancies each year, thereby preventing 142,000 pregnancy-related deaths; 505,000 children from losing their mothers, and approximately 20 million unsafe abortions.<sup>iii,iv</sup>

Madame Chair, reproductive health supplies are an essential component of the affirmed ICPD Programme of Action. They are one measurable indicator for programmes that can be used to track concrete progress on internationally agreed upon commitments such as MDG5 including target 5B, and MDGs 6 and, 7. In light of this, we urge the Commission to affirm a resolution that is supportive of the following recommendations:

- Acknowledge that universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and supplies is fundamental to achieving the ICPD Programme of Action and MDG targets; and commit to action to make universal access a reality. Access to reproductive health supplies is a critical component to exercising human rights. Without supplies reproductive rights are not possible.
- Reduce maternal mortality to meet the targets for MDG 5 by ensuring that, regardless of age or marital status, women are able to control their own sexual and reproductive lives; time and space their families; access reproductive health services and supplies during pregnancy, childbirth, and after delivery; and have all their obstetric needs attended to, including those related to complications of pregnancy and unsafe abortion.

- Address reproductive health needs in emergency situations as these settings have the highest rates of maternal and neonatal mortality and often experience intolerable levels of sexual violence, leading to unwanted pregnancies, STIs/ HIV/AIDS infection --leading to death and disability. Comprehensive reproductive health care, including access to reproductive health supplies such as maternal health kits and emergency contraception, can save lives in these settings and is therefore instrumental in achieving MDG 5.
- Support increased donor country, developing country and countries in economic transition financing for reproductive health services and supplies, including in emergency/humanitarian settings, in line with the growing demand. National budgets should have a dedicated budget line to fund the provision of RH supplies and resources and that line must be protected and spent as planned.
- Ensure that health system strengthening initiatives emphasize the need to build efficient and sustainable supply chains for the procurement and distribution of contraceptives and other supplies, and create mechanisms to improve coordination.
- Support comprehensive sexuality education for women, men and young people about sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the provision of accurate, evidence-based information about contraception which dispels myths surrounding family planning.

This statement is endorsed by:

Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASTRA)

Equidad de Genero: Ciudadania Trabajo y Familia

German Foundation for World Population (DSW)

International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF)

Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network (LACWHN)

Population Action International (PAI)

Youth coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (YC)

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<sup>i</sup> UNFPA. (2004). *State of the World's Population 2004: The Cairo Consensus at Ten: Population, Reproductive Health and the Global Effort to End Poverty*. New York, NY: United Nations Population Fund.

<sup>ii</sup> United Nations Population Division. (2007). *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision*. New York, NY: United Nations.

<sup>iii</sup> The Alan Guttmacher Institute/ UNFPA. (2003). *Adding it Up: The Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care*. Washington, DC: The Alan Guttmacher Institute.

<sup>iv</sup> Sedgh, G., et al., *Induced abortion: estimated rates and trends worldwide*. *The Lancet*. **370**(9595): p. 1338-1345.