



Permanent Mission of Germany
to the United Nations

Statement

by

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at the
Permanent Mission of Germany
to the United Nations**

at the

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United Nation Commission for
Population and Development**

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(check against delivery)

Dear Mr. Chair,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In 1994 the **Cairo Programme of Action** stated that “the aim of family-planning programmes must be to enable couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information and means to do so and to ensure informed choices and make available a full range of safe and effective methods.”

Not only that back then the international community committed itself to a stronger promotion of reproductive rights, it also, in the Cairo Programme of Action, stated that “the relationship between education and demographic and social changes is one of interdependence”.

The last decades have seen great **improvement in the reproductive health** of men and women **and in the access to education**. However, ...

- worldwide an estimated 215 million women have no access to reliable family planning methods or to reproductive health information and services.
- Every year, approximately 350.000 women die due to complications in pregnancy and child birth.
- As well, The Education for All - Global Monitoring Report 2011 states that the number of children out of school is falling too slowly. 67 million children are out of school.
- Gender disadvantage in school is costing lives. If the average child mortality rate for sub-Saharan Arica were to fall to the level associated with women who have some secondary education, there would be 1.8 million fewer deaths.
- Young people around the world initiate sexual activity earlier, marry later and are often victims of sexual violence - in particular girls and women. Despite these trends, many are denied access to information and support that could enable them to protect their own sexual and reproductive health in an environment free of fear, coercion or shame.

It is widely known that an increase in the education of women and girls contributes to greater empowerment of women, to a postponement of the age of marriage and to a reduction in the size of families. In short, when mothers are better educated, their families are smaller and their children's survival rate tends to increase. Women with post-primary education are **five times** more likely than illiterate women to know necessary facts about family-planning and HIV and AIDS.

On the other hand uncontrolled **population growth highly affects the educational system**. Access to and quality of education, for example provided through an adequate number of trained teachers has to be ensured in growing cities as well as rural areas. As such, the **link between education and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)** still is, and again becomes, key to sustainable social and economic development.

The current **international political environment** is favorable to support aspects related to sexuality education and family planning. In 2010, the G8 Muskoka Initiative and the launch of the UN Secretary-General's *Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health* have brought the issue of reproductive health and rights as well as the importance of sexuality education to the forefront. In addition, several donors have put these issues high on their agenda again.

Germany is **committed to promote population and education issues** and thereby improve people's living conditions in its partner countries.

Realizing **SRHR** is one **priority focus of German development cooperation** in the area of health and population policy. It is deemed as a necessary prerequisite for achieving international development goals. German development cooperation in health works to promote SRHR **through a human rights based and gender sensitive approach** while also considering the complexity and causality of SRHR with other sectors, such as education.

At the G8 summit in June 2010, the German Chancellor Merkel committed **additional 400 million € ODA over five years for the G8-Muskoka initiative to promote maternal and child health**. This will lead to annual German ODA-contributions of around 380 million €. Implementing the Muskoka-pledge, the German Government will put a strong focus on the promotion of reproductive health and voluntary family planning including sexuality education. **Bilateral financial contributions** in the respective areas **will be doubled**. In total, German Development Contribution to health currently totals more than 700 million € annually.

The German Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development has recently launched the draft of a **new education strategy** which focuses on a **holistic approach** to education and underlines the important role of education for the sustainable development in other sectors such as health, water, energy and others. There is a **clear focus on women and girls** in Germany's new education strategy. German Development Cooperation in the field of education currently totals about 1,2 billion € annually.

In addition, the German Government has taken a number of **initiatives to promote education in the field of sexual and reproductive health:**

- 1.) In 2010, the **German Federal Centre for Health Education** published the **'Standards for Sexuality Education'**. These Standards were developed in **close cooperation with the WHO Regional Office for Europe and a European expert group. The Standards for Sexuality Education not only advocate for the introduction of holistic sexuality education in schools but also give practical help to improve existing programs and curricula.** They provide step-by-step instructions and a detailed matrix to support health and education professionals in their efforts to guarantee children accurate and sensitively presented information about sexuality. The Federal Centre for Health Education currently supports the dissemination and implementation of these guidelines within the WHO Europe region.
- 2.) The German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and its implementing agencies KfW and GIZ, together with Bayer Health Care, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) organize an annual ***International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development***. This year's 9th International Dialogue in October 2011 in Berlin **will focus on SRHR and education**. A group of about 80 international experts will develop an action guide and give recommendations for cooperation programmes with selected partner countries.

These initiatives, building up on the German development cooperation in the priority areas of health and education, **contribute to the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General**. Germany calls upon all partner governments as well as international institutions, the private sector and civil society to support this strategy and to **give high priority to the promotion of education and sexual and reproductive health**.

Thank you for your attention.