## **CONFERENCE MAGAZINE**

12th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development

## **Emerging ideas at the Open Space Session**



The final hours of the conference were devoted to a series of Open Space discussions, intended to encourage a free exchange of ideas on how to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the upcoming negotiations. Delegates were told they could propose any workshop they thought would address the question at hand: **How can we ensure that SRHR, with particular emphasis on young people, is part of the emerging development framework?** The remaining delegates were encouraged to walk from workshop to workshop and settle in the space where they were best able to learn or contribute. Workshops were offered among others on the role of the EU in upcoming negotiations, how to prevent SRHR from becoming a bargaining chip, financing SRHR, and improving communication on SRHR at the regional, national and international level.

## **Open Space**

The Open Space technique allows delegates to participate in the construction of the conference, by encouraging them to organize themselves into groups and lead their own workshops. For many people, being freed from the confines of a predetermined conference schedule releases creativity and enables leadership. It also helps a diverse group of stakeholders connect quickly for an exchange of strategies and solutions.

## **Reflections on Open Space**

Following the Open Space sessions, delegates returned to the main hall to reflect on this method of addressing SRHR issues and to close the conference. One delegate said she was positively surprised by the experience. "I was doubtful – everyone here is a specialist in a specific area. But we share many commonalities. There was enough openness to have really rich discussions and address crucial issues."

"It's good to have stakeholders, whether they are government, NGOs, or others, to get the whole perspective. For me, that was extremely worthwhile," added another.