



ICPD and Beyond Investing in Health and Rights

A summary report from the 12th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development

November 5th and 6th 2014,
Berlin, Germany

The 12th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development closed in Berlin on November 6th, with delegates renewing their urgent call for the inclusion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in the emerging post-2015 development agenda.

The international event was jointly hosted by Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), KfW Development Bank in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Bayer HealthCare. This meeting brought together stakeholders from government, NGOs, multilateral organizations and the private sector under the banner 'ICPD and Beyond: Investing

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in Health and Rights'. It was a unique opportunity to reinforce partnerships and strengthen collective strategies as processes shaping the future development framework accelerate.

The outcomes of this meeting are reflected in the

BERLIN CALL TO ACTION

This summary of recommendations frames SRHR for all as an essential component which must not be neglected as the world negotiates its strategies and goals for generating sustainable development.

During the two-day meeting, delegates discussed divisive issues such as comprehensive sexual education, gender equality and the high rate of maternal mortality in areas where SRHR continues to be neglected. While debate continues on how to address these issues, delegates agreed that investing in the health and rights of young people – especially girls – would have a significant impact on the state of the world in the 21st century.

Addressing the needs of young people

According to Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the needs of young people still aren't getting enough attention. In his keynote speech, he said investing in the health and rights of young people – especially girls – would have a significant impact on the state of the world in the 21st century.

He asked delegates to imagine the life of a ten year old girl. "Her future is totally, inextricably linked to the future of the world," he said. "She is going to be the one to provide solutions for climate change, for agriculture, food security, she is going to provide solutions for health care, the very things that eluded us in the past – but we need to empower her."

At the center of this meeting was the plight of the 225 million women and girls who do not have access to modern family planning methods, in spite of their wish to use these. This results in 80 million unwanted pregnancies and 42 million abortions each year – 20 million of these taking place under unsafe conditions.

The first day of the conference was devoted to an examination of efforts to make SRHR a global priority during the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014 Review, which recently came to end. Delegates agreed that most countries support improving access to sexual and reproductive health services, but that a small group of countries are blocking progress on the issue of rights. Some countries have interpreted the term 'rights' as solely related to gender identity and sexual orientation, when in fact a broad spectrum of indivisible human rights are being addressed.

On the second day of the conference delegates discussed which strategies to employ to keep SRHR on the post-2015 development agenda. One issue that was seen as a challenge was the fact that during negotiations at the United Nations countries' official representatives do not always adequately present their countries' positions on SRHR-related issues. Possible reasons which delegates identified during the workshop included poor communication, coordination and lack of accountability within countries' missions.

There was also broad discussion about how to define and protect rights. "We fight for the final R in SRHR because "rights" accrues services to people. It saves lives, in the the short term, our main priority should be to protect the 17 goals that have been identified," said one delegate.

Further information: <http://12th.dialogue-population-development.info/>

