

Putting People at the Heart of Development.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Post-2015 Era

28 November 2014, Espace Jacquemotte (BTC), Brussels

Background

In 1994, 179 governments reached a remarkable consensus at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. With the adoption of the subsequent ICPD Programme of Action, governments agreed for the first time upon a comprehensive definition of sexual and reproductive health for both individuals and couples. Key issues from the ICPD Programme of Action were embedded in the Millennium Development Goals and in 2007 a specific target on reproductive health was added to MDG 5. This paved the way for the worldwide promotion of sexual and reproductive rights as human rights.

The review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, 20 years later, highlighted that though significant progress has been made, many challenges remain. Maternal mortality stays unacceptably high, access to family planning is far from universal and sexual and gender-based violence is still endemic. Adolescents and youth in particular remain exposed to high risks of unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, STIs and HIV. Social and cultural norms and values still hamper access to accurate and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information. Stigma, discrimination and even criminalization of key populations such as sex workers and sexual and gender minorities, prevent them from accessing reproductive health services.

At the brink of the 'Post-2015 Era' the relevance of the ICPD Programme of Action is increasingly evident. This seminar will provide an excellent opportunity for exchanging experiences, insights and ideas regarding the shortcomings of the past, the strategies to close the gaps that prevent people from the full enjoyment of their right to sexual and reproductive health and the links between SRHR and sustainable development.

Objective

Taking the 20th anniversary of the ICPD Programme of Action and the ICPD review as a starting point, the 2014 Be-cause health seminar aims to build upon lessons learnt and to identify opportunities for the sustainable and effective integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights in (Belgian) development cooperation as well as exploring its future place in global health.

Structure of the seminar

The seminar will bring together over 200 stakeholders involved in development cooperation from all over the world, including field actors, health experts, human rights activists, policy makers, program managers, scholars, technical assistants, NGO representatives and community actors.

The seminar will advance our understanding of a people-centred, rights based and multi-sectoral approach to sexual and reproductive health from a practical angle. Lectures by international experts will be combined with recent research findings, field experiences, good practices and/or failures of working on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Global South.

Keynote speakers Prof. Dr. Gita Sen (Harvard School of Public Health and Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, member of the ICPD High Level Task Force) and Prof. Dr. Marleen Temmerman (Reproductive Health Research Department, WHO) will set the scene, followed by parallel sessions in the morning and in the afternoon on selected topics (see attached programme). The afternoon will start off with a lecture by David Woodward (economist and consultant for UNCTAD, previously WHO) on health and sustainable development post-2015, followed by a panel discussion on the relevance of health and SRHR for sustainable development post-2015, with Marge Berer (Editor Reproductive Health Matters), Prof. Dr. Dries Lesage (Institute for International Studies, Ghent University and Federal Council for Sustainable Development) and Prof. Dr. Gita Sen.

Language

Simultaneous translation English – French will be provided during the plenary sessions and during at least one of the parallel sessions in the morning and the afternoon (see programme).

Registration is now open until 17 November.