

News from the Project RMA

RH Supplies Advocacy Workshop and ECLAC ICPD+15 Review Meeting in Santiago, Chile

On October 5th-6th, prior to the ECLAC Latin American regional review of the ICPD+15 in Santiago de Chile, representatives of 25 women's rights and SRHR organisations from about 15 countries in the region, gathered to improve their skills in RH supplies advocacy and to work on a joint advocacy strategy. The workshop for the group of experienced advocates focused on knowledge-building on RH supplies and the impact of universally accessible supplies on achieving international development goals, such as the ICPD goals. The workshop mainly concentrated on clarifying concepts and definitions and introducing PRMA's work on RH supplies. IPPF and MEXFAM presented activities in Mexico and Nicaragua and DSW presented the key findings of its regional mapping. Subsequently, resources, such as the RH supplies advocacy toolkit and the RHInterchange, and opportunities, such as RHSC membership and international development goals review meetings, to address these issues were presented and discussed.

As a short-term opportunity, the ECLAC ICPD+15 review meeting in Santiago (October 7th - 8th) was identified and the need to include 'universal access to RH services and supplies' in the outcome document expressed. Facilitators gave an overview on the ICPD+15 process so far, including the CPD, the Panama regional NGO meeting, and the global NGO forum in Berlin. Workshop participants were offered the opportunity to attend the regional ICPD review meeting and speak out on the identified issues.

At many instances during the following two-day seminar at the ECLAC, they seized the opportunity to comment on presentations and raise questions. Moreover, one of the facilitators of the PRMA supplies advocacy workshop was asked to give a recommendation in the conclusions session 'Cairo+15 and beyond' on what should guide the next steps to achieve the ICPD goals. Her recommendations, and the repeated emphasis on the importance of universal access to RH by other RH supplies workshop participants, especially in the unequal region of Latin America and the Caribbean, lead to the inclusion of a paragraph on universal access to supplies as a priority in the outcome document.

For further information on the workshop please visit the [Access to RH Supplies](#) blog or contact [Sabine Weber at DSW](#). To receive the LAC regional supplies mapping please contact [Martin Kuehn at DSW](#).



Sexual and Reproductive Health Advocacy and Research: Best Practices and Partnerships Meeting

A meeting of researchers and advocates, hosted by Project RMA partners International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) and Population Action International (PAI), will directly follow the 'International Conference on Family Planning: Research and Best Practices' on November 15th -18th in Kampala, Uganda. The International Conference on Family Planning presents us with an incredible opportunity to learn from the latest research findings in family planning, their policy implications, and to network with a group of renowned family planning experts from throughout the world.

The Project RMA meeting 'Sexual and Reproductive Health Advocacy and Research: Best Practices and Partnerships Meeting' on November 19th will continue the momentum by focusing on ensuring access to reproductive health supplies, and by allowing researchers and advocates to strategize together and share best practices for developing and communicating evidence-based messages. The forthcoming events around the fifteenth anniversary of the ICPD and the tenth anniversary of the MDGs call for a partnership between advocates and researchers to raise the political priority of achieving the ICPD goal of universal access to reproductive health and reproductive health services, including family planning, and RH supplies. The Project RMA meeting will provide a welcome opportunity to foster dialogue between the research and advocacy communities, and promote a synergistic and complementary approach to working together to achieve our common goals.

For further information please contact [Mercedes Mas de Xaxas](#) or [Holly Greb](#) at PAI.

Relaunch of 'Leading Voices in Securing Reproductive Health Supplies'

The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition advocacy toolkit and guide 'Leading Voices in Securing Reproductive Health Supplies' has been re-launched. The guide and toolkit is a practical, evidence-based tool, designed to raise awareness and foster policy change for increased commitment to reproductive health supplies. For the re-launch it has been divided into a How-To Guide and a Toolkit section and an [introduction to the RHInterchange](#) has been added.

The How-to Guide - Advocacy for Ensuring Reproductive Health Supplies: [A Planning Guide](#) is a brief review of key concepts and points to consider when preparing to launch an advocacy initiative.

The first section of the Toolkit - [Advocacy Messages](#) to Support Reproductive Health Supplies Initiatives, describes five global scenarios that depict different contexts in which you may find yourself while working on increasing access to RH supplies.

The second section of the Toolkit - Advocacy Tools for Ensuring Reproductive Health Supplies: [Overview, Templates, and Examples](#), includes descriptions of and links to examples or templates for five types of advocacy tools: PowerPoint presentations,

policy briefs, fact sheets, talking points/briefing notes, and press releases and media advisories.

We received a lot of input from workshop participants and users of the and toolkit and guide and used it to make it even more user friendly. This resulted in an easier navigation, which makes all sections accessible from every page and accesibility of all scenarios and all tools from every page. The usability in low bandwidth settings has been improved by creating a less resource consuming design. Furthermore a search function has been added.

To see the [online version](#) or download the [PDF-Version](#) of the guide and toolkit please visit the [RHSC website](#).

For more information or if you like to provide feedback please contact [Martin Kuehn at DSW](#).



Supplies news Trial of Contraceptive Jabs for Men in Scotland

A new contraceptive that promises to make long-term birth control more acceptable to men is to be tested in Scotland. Previous attempts at popularising the male 'pill' have foundered because they have involved weekly injections. However, the new combination of hormones means that the jabs now only have to be administered once every two months. The jab combines testosterone and progesterone, the latter makes it possible to use less testosterone and also helps make the effects last longer than previous versions.

Professor Richard Anderson, from Edinburgh University's reproductive and developmental sciences division, said a previous study in Scotland with the weekly male jab had shown that such a method worked to stop men's sperm production to very good contraceptive levels and was fully reversible. 'What we are doing now is a substantial refinement of that, using the same theoretical approach of hormone injections that temporarily stop men producing sperm. The idea is to check that it really is a good contraceptive.'

Tests have shown that the injection reduces a man's sperm count down from above 20 million sperm per millilitre to zero in most men. Such a result would provide better contraceptive protection than condoms, and a similar success rate to the female pill.

Anderson said it was too early to talk about side-effects, but no serious problems were expected. Other hormone related treatments, such as the pill and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) have been linked to certain cancers.

Source: [The Scotsman](#)

Practical Guide to Integrating Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS into Grant Proposals to the Global Fund

Population Action International released '[A Practical Guide](#) to Integrating Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS into Grant Proposals to the Global Fund'.

The document links to a range of resources and is designed to help Country Coordinating Mechanisms, civil society organizations and others developing proposals for the Global Fund.

To view the report please visit the [PAI website](#).

Making Aid Effectiveness Work for Family Planning and Reproductive Health

A new working paper, entitled 'Making Aid Effectiveness Work for Family Planning and Reproductive Health', and released by Population Action International (PAI), analyzes principles of aid effectiveness from a family planning and reproductive health perspective. It also describes how the Paris Declaration has changed the ways of managing and delivering aid, highlights entry points and obstacles for champions working to improve funding and policies, and makes recommendations for civil society organizations, governments and donors.

To download the paper please visit the [PAI website](#).

Policy Brief: Administering Injectables

Family Health International ([FHI](#)) released a policy brief entitled 'Conclusions from a Technical Consultation: Community-Based Health Workers Can Safely and Effectively Administer Injectable Contraceptives'.

The policy brief summarizes conclusions from a recent consultation convened in Geneva by the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), the U.S. Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)), and FHI.

To view the document please visit the [FHI website](#).

Young Political Leaders Visit Uganda

A delegation of nine European Young Decision Makers from Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Russia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom in leadership positions within various youth political parties and representing politically active young Europeans participated in a study tour to Uganda August 1st to 8th.

The aim of the trip was to study the unmet needs in reproductive health supplies and services in Uganda and the impact it has on people living in Uganda. The delegation visited a hospital, reproductive health clinics and AIDS projects and met and discussed SRHR issues with districts health officers, representatives of the Uganda AIDS Commission, Members of the Parliament, young politicians from Uganda, as well as with UN Agencies, European donors, NGOs operating in the country and finally the Minister of Health.

The tour was organised by the Danish Family Planning Association ([Sex & Samfund](#)), and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development ([EPF](#)), within the framework of [Countdown 2015](#).

Read the full report at the [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition's website](#).



Agreement to Address Unmet Need

[Marie Stopes International](#) (MSI) and [United Nations Population Fund](#) (UNFPA) have signed an agreement to expand access to contraception in underserved communities in Africa and Asia. Under the agreement, UNFPA will provide USD 2.5 million worth of family planning supplies to MSI programmes around the world. The supplies will be used in MSI programmes in a number of countries including Sierra Leone, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, Nepal and Tanzania.

To read the full article please click [here](#).

Acceptability study of the DVD2

Family Health International ([FHI](#)) has developed a new product that makes it easier for women to insert medications and lubricants into the vagina. Known as DVD2, the device is an oval piece of white, non-woven fabric with a string attached to one end to facilitate removal. The soft, pliable material can easily deliver gels, liquids, and creams.

In an upcoming acceptability trial in South Africa, women will be asked to assess both the general comfort and the ease of insertion and removal of the device. In the trial, DVD2 will be treated with a vaginal lubricant said to be sperm-friendly. If researchers conclude that the device is acceptable to women, future clinical trials will go on to evaluate whether DVD2 is safe and effective when used with a microbicide to protect against HIV. It could also be used with an anti-fungal cream, a spermicide, or other medication. FHI will conduct this study with the Reproductive Health and HIV Research Unit (RHRU) in Durban, South Africa.

For more information please contact Muhammad Aslam Panhwar at [Peace Foundation Pakistan](#).

Female Condom Distribution in Southern Africa

IRIN/PlusNews has compiled a list illustrating female condom distribution in Southern African countries. The authors state that 15 years after the female condom has been introduced, it is still largely marginalized and inaccessible. The list provides information on distribution of the female condom in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. While access remains low in most listed countries, the government and partners in Zimbabwe have distributed over five million female condoms.

To access the list please visit [the IRIN/PlusNews website](#).

Lack of Quality of Condoms Distributed in East Africa

Huge quantities of condoms are imported to Africa as part of national prevention campaigns, but over the years several brands have been found to be faulty, hampering prevention efforts and highlighting the need for better quality control. IRIN/PlusNews published a summary that describes a lack of quality of condoms imported to East African countries.

In 2004 in Uganda, consumers complained that a widely used government-subsidised brand of condoms (Engabu) had a 'bad odour'. Tests by the National Drug Authority showed that the condoms did not meet safety standards and recalled them, causing a scandal and a national condom shortage. All condoms imported into Uganda have since had to undergo thorough pre- and post-shipment quality testing. Although the government relaunched the Engabu brand in 2006, it was received with scepticism and in 2007 the National Medical Stores announced that 40 million Engabu condoms were likely to expire in stores because of low demand.

To read more stories on Nairobi, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, and Kenya, please visit [the IRIN/PlusNews website](#).

New Data Providers for the RHInterchange

In the month of August, the [RHInterchange](#) welcomed two new data providers: Population Services International, which is providing information on their global contraceptive shipments, and the Medical Stores Department in Tanzania, which is submitting information on Ministry of Health-funded contraceptive procurements. The RHI also recently welcomed new users from Sudan, the United States, Ghana, Australia, and India, as well as returning visitors from Thailand, Uganda, Nepal, Ethiopia, and Sierra Leone, among other countries. Moreover, [DKT Ethiopia](#) as the first country-based social marketing organization is now providing data directly to the RHI.

Program managers, researchers, and advocates interested in data on shipments of contraceptives to countries around the world are invited to register for the [RHInterchange](#).

Source: [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition](#)

IPAS Launches new Subsidiary on Reproductive Health Technologies

[WomanCare Global LLC](#), a new non-profit subsidiary of Ipas was launched on September 24th to support a new approach to increase women's access to a wider range of reproductive health technologies.

WomanCare Global has been created to expand the availability and use of high-quality women's reproductive health technologies around the world. The new company will focus on reaching women most in need with safe and effective abortion and contraceptive products, with special attention to new and underutilized technologies. In addition to increasing access, WomanCare Global will work to reduce the costs of essential technologies, ensuring low pricing for the public sector and affordable prices for the commercial sector.

To read the full press release please click [here](#).

Source: [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition](#)



Unwanted Pregnancies and Climate Change

Unwanted pregnancies in poor countries have led to higher demand for land and water, resources already taxed by climate change, according to research to be published by the World Health Organization.

Runaway population growth in countries such as [Ethiopia](#) and [Rwanda](#) with little supply of contraception devices is exacerbating drought and straining fresh water supplies, said [Leo Bryant](#), lead author of the study. Of 40 nations reviewed, 37 said rapid population growth worsened environmental damage.

Climate change has been blamed by scientists for increasing droughts, pushing up sea levels and causing floods from heavy rainfall in countries around the world. The impacts can be worse in developing nations where food and water already are in short supply and there is little funding to help communities adapt.

Read the full article at Bloomberg.com

Second South Caucasus Youth Reproductive Health and Rights Forum in Batumi, Georgia

On September 12th - 13th, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) and UNFPA Georgia organised the 'Second South Caucasus Youth Reproductive Health and Rights Forum', in Batumi, Georgia.

More than 70 participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and other European countries, including Government representatives, Parliamentarians, international organisations, civil society representatives and young people gathered in Batumi to present the achievements in improving the situation of the reproductive health (RH) of young people and their access to services as a result of the three year European Commission (EC)/UNFPA RH Initiative for Youth in South Caucasus, a partnership of UNFPA and EPF, supported by the EC.

During the project period, 78 youth friendly RH and medical information centres opened across the region, and more than 2900 health care professionals received trainings on youth friendly RH services. Moreover, new legislative acts on RH, family planning, and healthy and harmonious education are in the process of development in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

For more information please contact [Marina Davidashvili at EPF](#)

Forum on HIV, Human Rights and Men Who Have Sex with Men

The 'Forum on HIV, Human Rights and Men Who Have Sex with Men' took place on September 16th in Washington D.C. and was organized by UNAIDS in collaboration with the HIV Policy Working Group on Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) and Other Sexual Minorities, and in cooperation with Congressman Howard Berman and Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

The Forum was held to raise awareness to the human rights issues that affect MSM and other sexual minorities, as well as the policy and structural barriers that prevent MSM and other sexual minorities from accessing HIV services, including prevention, treatment, care and support.

The meeting also facilitated a conversation on how US policy makers and AIDS organizations could support PEPFAR countries in national AIDS responses that are relevant to men who have sex with men.

To read the full report please visit the [UNAIDS website](#).

Focus on ... Global NGO Forum Demands Concrete Action On Cairo Commitments

At the '[Global Partners in Action](#)' forum, activists for women's health and rights demanded 'concrete, practical and fully funded actions' by governments to fulfill their 15 years of promises about investing in equality, human rights and social and economic development, especially for women and girls.

In the [Berlin Call to Action](#), more than 400 delegates from 131 countries urged the international community to meet the 2015 deadline for achieving the [Programme of Action](#) of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

'As urgent as the ICPD agenda was in 1994, it is even more so today,' said the declaration, which the non-governmental organization (NGO) delegates hammered out in a session after three days of talks. 'We demand that all governments fulfill the commitments made to their own people and the international community at Cairo in 1994.'

The ICPD created 'a visionary global consensus' among 179 governments that overturned existing demographics-based approaches to achieving sustainable development, reducing poverty and slowing population growth in favor of policies based on meeting the needs of individuals for human rights and sexual and reproductive health care. Reaffirmed in many United Nations and international meetings ever since, including the 2000 [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs), the Cairo Consensus pledged investments that in too many cases have not been made.

'With five years left,' the Berlin Call to Action states, 'we call on local, national and international decision-makers to join with non-governmental organizations to establish and implement concrete, practical and fully-funded actions for ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights.'

The NGOs pledged cooperation with policymakers and urged immediate national, government and international action to:

- Guarantee that sexual and reproductive rights, as human rights, are fully recognized and fulfilled, through legal reforms and new family policies;
- Invest in comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, supplies and services as a priority in health systems strengthening, by increasing access for all (especially in emergency settings) to family planning and skilled maternal and newborn health care, and to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services, and by addressing unsafe abortion as a public health and human rights issue
- Ensure the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents and young people, by removing barriers to their access to information and services and empowering them to make policies and informed decisions about their own lives;
- Create and implement formal mechanisms for meaningful civil society participation in programs, policy and budget decisions, monitoring and evaluation, by protecting advocates as human rights defenders, involving young people, marginalized groups and NGOs in policy dialogue and guaranteeing them autonomy; and
- Ensure that donor contributions and national budgets and policies meet the needs of all people for sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially during times of economic stress.

The NGOs also asked decision-makers to adopt principles of equity and equality, inclusiveness and transparency, accountability and sustainability, and processes free from fundamentalist doctrines that restrict human rights.

'Human beings cannot live in dignity without the full implementation of the ICPD Program of Action,' the statement said. 'It is a matter of human rights, democracy and equality for all.'

Theme of the Global Partners in Action: NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development was 'Invest in Health, Rights and the Future.' It was co-hosted by the Government of Germany's Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and UNFPA, the UN Population Fund, with additional support from the MacArthur Foundation.

For additional information and the full text of the Berlin Call to Action please visit the [Global NGO Forum website](#).



Look out for International Conference on Family Planning: Research and Best Practices

The Bill and Melinda [Gates Institute](#) for Population and Reproductive Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Makerere University's School of Public Health, and the [Implementing Best Practices Initiative](#) along with other international and national partners, will organize an international conference on family planning research and best practices on November 15th to 18th in Kampala, Uganda.

November 16th and 17th will focus on research and best practices in family planning, and November 18th will focus on knowledge to action. It is anticipated that the conference program will include an opening plenary, multiple concurrent oral sessions, special panel presentations, poster sessions, lunchtime roundtables, a policymaker forum (tentative), and an exhibit area.

Journalists are welcome to report on the event. Pre and post-conference meetings and skill-building workshops are encouraged. A program will be produced which will include all abstracts accepted for oral or poster presentation, and all materials, including the abstracts and presentations, will be accessible on the [FP conference 2009 website](#).

New Implants Prequalified by WHO

The Jadelle hormonal implant manufactured by Bayer Schering Pharma is the newest reproductive health product to be prequalified by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Jadelle implant joins the two oral contraceptive pills prequalified by WHO earlier this year on the list of prequalified reproductive health medicines. For the latest list of prequalified reproductive health products, please click [here](#).

Source: [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition](#)

Uganda Improves Management of RH Supplies

Recent weeks have seen many changes in Uganda's National Medical Stores (NMS). For the first time in three years, NMS delivered medicines to the two National Referral Hospitals. Additionally, the Ugandan Parliament expanded the mandate of the NMS. Finally, the NMS is improving its infrastructure and efficiency through support from DANIDA and USAID.

The National Referral Hospitals stopped buying drugs from NMS because of shortages and stock-outs. Now, the NMS is not only able to supply the hospitals with their full order, but is also delivering drugs embossed with the official government stamp, making it harder for these drugs to reach the black market. In 2008, stock levels at NMS were at 40 percent, now 80 percent of essential drugs are available in appropriate quantities, with 100 percent availability predicted before the end of 2009.

Parliament approved a larger budget for NMS, new policies for financing procurement, and increased the ratio of drugs NMS supplies to public health centers. Through this new policy, the Ministry of Finance will deliver funds directly to NMS, allowing NMS to cut out middlemen and pay suppliers directly. Beginning in October, NMS will supply 70 percent of drugs for public health centers, with the remaining 30 percent to be supplied by districts.

A modern medical storage facility is being commissioned, with support from the Dutch government through DANIDA; this facility will be the largest medical stores in East and Central Africa. New delivery trucks are being ordered and shift work is being implemented in the NMS to ensure continual preparation for storage and delivery. Additionally, with the support of USAID, a new management information system and gravity racks have been installed.

The benefits of these developments include improved management of stocks and faster processing and delivery times for government health facilities. However, NMS will face challenges in coping with its larger mandate, timely ordering of supplies, and working with health centers to ensure the security of delivered stocks.

To read the original article please click [here](#).

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Project RMA is a joint effort of Population Action International (PAI), the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) to increase political and financial support for reproductive health supplies at the global, regional and national levels. Project RMA works closely with the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition and its' Resource Mobilization and Awareness Working Group.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the editors [Caroline Jane Kent](#) and [Martin Kuehn](#) at DSW.