

News from the Project RMA RH Supplies Advocacy on District Level in Tanzania

UMATI, the IPPF member association in Tanzania, has taken its RH supplies advocacy to the district level with great success. Meetings with district leaders in Songea, Moshi, Magu and Morogoro revealed that decision makers were not always aware of the developmental benefits of family planning, or the link between maternal health and RH supplies. UMATI and partners distributed briefing sheets illustrating the importance of family planning and RH supplies, convincing leaders of the important links. As a result commitments were made to ensure that the 2009-10 comprehensive Council Health Plans would contain budgetary allocations for RH supplies.

UMATI will ensure these promises are kept. In Moshi, Magu and Morogoro UMATI was invited to attend review sessions of the 2008/09 health budgetary plans and planning sessions of the 2009/10 health budgetary planning. This will give access to budgetary information, which was previously not made available to wider civil society. At the meetings they can ensure that allocations are made, that there is an increase on the previous year, and that they are adequate. Ensuring that all who choose to use family planning will have access to the RH supplies they need.

For more information please contact [Sarah Shaw](#) of IPPF.



FPI explores RH Supplies Situation in Pacific

During 2008, Family Planning International undertook an exploration of the reproductive health (RH) supplies situation in the Pacific, gathering qualitative information, particularly from end-users of supplies. This information would complement the official quantitative data already available in the Pacific, as well as provide stories to highlight the impact poor supplies has on people. In addition, Family Planning International facilitated advocacy workshops using some of the '[Leading Voices in Securing Reproductive Health Supplies](#)' advocacy toolkit to help expand the capacity of local organisations and individuals to carry out advocacy work on RH supplies at the country level.

Family Planning International found that there has been good progress towards addressing RH issues in the Pacific. However, there is still much more that needs to be improved. Despite large efforts, people are still reporting that they are not receiving consistent, suitable, quality RH supplies, information, and services.

Several reasons have been identified for this situation: poor communication between and within countries, a lack of donor coordination and communication, political will,

workforce development and training and of systems in place or of use of systems that were in place. Along with these, the general socio-cultural context of many Pacific Island Countries impedes access to SRH information and services. Despite the evidence, such as high rates of unintended teenage pregnancies, there is still societal denial that young people engage in sexual activity outside of marriage remain unable to control their SRH, with men often making the choices for them about contraception use, and the timing and spacing of children.

Whilst conducting the advocacy workshops, it became apparent that there is a need for greater support for civil society to be able to voice its concerns to governments around RH supply issues, and a recognition that civil society is a valuable and important stakeholder in building a healthy society.

Family Planning International will now disseminate the findings of this work and will continue to advocate with our partners on these issues.

For more information get in touch with [Abby Leota](#) of FPI.



Supplies news

Pope Says Condoms Worsen HIV Problem

In his first explicit statement on the issue in his four years as Pope, Pope Benedict XVI argued that the distribution of condoms does not resolve the problem of HIV/AIDS and stated that 'on the contrary, it increases the problem.' What was needed is a 'spiritual and human awakening' and 'friendship for those who suffer.' Furthermore according to the Pope the Roman Catholic Church was at the forefront of the battle against AIDS. The statements were made on his first pilgrimage as Pontiff to Africa.

Several organizations and individuals criticized the pope for his statement. For example Prof Quentin Sattentau, Professor of Immunology at Britain's Oxford University said 'My reaction is that this represents a major step backwards in terms of global health education, is entirely counter-productive, and is likely to lead to increases in HIV infection in Africa and elsewhere.'

Rev. JP Mokgethi-Heath, Acting Executive Director of International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or personally Affected by HIV and AIDS ([INERELA+](#)) said: 'Abstinence and mutual fidelity are highly effective means of reducing sexual exposure to HIV, but they must be promoted within a comprehensive prevention strategy that includes all effective methods. Condoms are an essential part of this overall strategy.'

Kevin Moody, International Coordinator and CEO of Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS ([GNP+](#)) concurred: 'Condoms are an essential tool in promoting, attaining, and maintaining the sexual and reproductive health of everyone, including

people living with HIV. Over a quarter of a century into the epidemic, it is sad that we are still debating whether or not condoms should be part of the prevention effort.'

Jon O' Brien president of [Catholics for Choice](#) stated that according to a recent poll support for condom use among Catholics in Ghana, Ireland, Mexico, the Philippines and the United States was overwhelming and that Catholics all over the world unequivocally state that using condoms is pro-life and disagree with the Vatican's ban on condoms.

Because of criticism a transcript of the pope's comments on the [Vatican's website](#) altered the comment to suggest that condoms 'risked' aggravating the problem.

In answer to the Pope's statements the [Spanish Ministry of Health](#) donated one million condoms on March 18th that will be distributed by NGOs in African countries.

Source: [Associated Press](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#), [Ministerio di Sanidad y Consumo](#), [Catholics for Choice](#), GNP+ and INERELA+Press release.

RHInterchange (RHI) Update

The [RHI](#) team is pleased to announce the addition of procurement information from [Marie Stopes international](#) (MSI), going back to 2005. The RHI reports that since 2005, MSI has procured and shipped almost US\$5.5 million worth of products to 22 countries around the world. MSI joins [IPPF](#), the [US Agency for International Development](#) (USAID), [UNFPA](#), [Crown Agents](#), [Cycle Technologies](#), and the [Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal](#) as providers of data to the RHI.

Source: [Supply Insider Feb 2009](#).



Obama Reverses Bush Ban on Contraceptive Supplies to MSI

[The United States Agency for International Development](#) (USAID) reversed a Bush Administration policy to block African governments from providing US-funded

contraceptive commodities to [Marie Stopes International](#) (MSI), one of the world's leading family planning organisations, on March 19th 2009.

The Bush decision disrupted MSI operations in six of the affected countries - Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe - including some where MSI delivers nearly a third of all family planning services nationally. The move both astonished public health experts and outraged advocates for women's rights, who accused the Bush government of playing politics with women's lives.

The Bush policy, issued in September 2008, falsely claimed the action was necessary because MSI was an implementing partner to the [United Nations Population Fund](#) (UNFPA) in China, which the Bush Administration accused of 'coercive abortion and involuntary sterilisations.'

For more information, please contact [Diana Thomas](#) of MSI.

Source: [Marie Stopes International](#).

Restoring Funding to UNFPA

The Center for Reproductive Rights applauds the U.S. State Department's release of \$50 million in funds to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which supports programs around the world to advance women's reproductive health. This action follows President Obama announcing in January his commitment to restore U.S. financial support of the Fund.

Every year, Congress has appropriated funds to UNFPA, but in 2002 the State Department refused to distribute the money, claiming erroneously that the Fund was involved in promoting coercive abortions and sterilizations in China. For the seven consecutive years since, the Bush administration blocked funding for UNFPA, amounting to approximately \$235 million in lost U.S. support.

Restoration of these funds will help address the problem that more than 200 million women in low- and middle-income countries have an unmet need for effective contraceptives.

Source: <http://reproductiverights.org>.

Australian Funded Condoms 'Wasted' In Papua New Guinea

More than two million condoms paid for with Australian aid money have been left to expire in AIDS-ravaged Papua New Guinea (PNG). According to [Australian Associated Press](#) (AAP) the PNG government's National AIDS Council Secretariat left the stockpile, worth 190,000 Australian dollars sitting in a warehouse for more than 18 months. The condoms are now past their expiry date and cannot be distributed in the country with the highest incidence of HIV in the Pacific Region.

The Secretariat has just appointed a new board, which aims to reform its activities and look into serious allegations of mismanagement.

'While any wastage of resources is unfortunate, sufficient supplies of condoms are available in PNG,' an [AusAID](#) spokesman said. Australia has promised 100 million Australian dollars to help PNG battle AIDS under a five-year program that began in January 2007. It is estimated that two per cent of PNG's population is infected with HIV/AIDS, affecting between 40,000 to 60,000 people.

Source: [Australian Associated Press Pty Limited](#) (AAP).

RH Supplies on the Prequalification Agenda

On February 3rd 2009, Steve Kinzett from the [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition](#) (RHSC) attended the 4th Consultative Stakeholder Meeting on UN Prequalification of Diagnostics, Medicines and Vaccines, held at WHO headquarters in Geneva. Though RH supplies make up only a small part of the prequalification program, the meeting did highlight a number of issues of interest:

1. To date, no hormonal methods have been prequalified through the WHO system. At least eleven are under evaluation, with results expected later this year.
2. Although the prequalification of diagnostics is largely limited to products relating to HIV, there is the possibility of RH-related products emerging down the line (e.g., rapid tests for syphilis and, possibly, pregnancy).
3. Further funding for the prequalification process is needed, especially for RH supplies.

For more information on prequalification please visit the [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition's Website](#).

Source: [SupplyInsider February 2009](#).

FC2 Female Condom Obtained FDA-Approval

After an advisory committee at the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) voted unanimously to grant pre-market approval to the FC2 female condom (see [SupplyNews #9](#)) on December 11th 2008, the Female Health Company (FHC) on March 11th announced FDA-approval for the company's FC2 Female Condom (FC2). FHC's lower-cost second generation female condom will now be available for purchase and distribution in the United States. FDA approval will also enable the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to procure FC2 for distribution to global HIV/AIDS programs.

The FDA's approval states that the FC2 Female Condom is indicated for preventing pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Source: prnewswire.com.



Female Condom Shortage in Kenya

A shortage of free female condoms in public hospitals in Kenya's Coast Province was reported by IRIN Plus News on March 9th 2009.

Female condoms available in private hospitals and pharmacies in the province cost five times as much as a male condom and are thus too expensive for most women.

According to the National AIDS Control Council, the government imported more than 200,000 female condoms in 2007 but only 10,000 were used, whereas 2008 an estimated 144 million male condoms were used.

The UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS Kenya country progress report for 2008 described the uptake of female condoms as a failure, and noted that nothing had been done to turn the situation around. The report recommended that the female condom should be more aggressively promoted.

Source: IRIN Plus News.

Focus on ... Greenstar Pakistan Stock Out

GreenStar, a Pakistan affiliate of PSI Europe, has been running out of commodities due to changes to development cooperation funding. Traditional bilateral donors to Pakistan have stopped funding GreenStar projects and channelled their funding through budget support instead. GreenStar hasn't been successful in accessing any governmental Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) funding so far, and it is expected that this situation may arise in other countries as well. As budget support continues to replace project funding, little provision is being provided in SWAp budgets to allow for the continuation of project budgets.

The [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition](#) (RHSC) asks if running out of commodities due to changes to donor aid is increasingly common. RHSC wants to know if donors are de-funding reproductive health supplies and if RH supplies are getting lost as donors change methods of aid delivery. RHSC is looking for case studies where the transition from project- to programme-based funding has posed a threat to the continued availability of contraceptive commodities or other basic RH supplies at

country level. RHSC is also looking for examples of country-level-efforts by donors, governments or other agencies that have successfully mitigated threats and made new funding approaches work better.

If you can provide any example please mail it to [Steve Kinzett](#). You can also write a post in the [ReProductive Aid community space](#).

As the example of Green Star shows, transitions to a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) may be difficult. Switching from project funding for commodity procurement to government procurement may lead to delays.

Under a SWAp a single government-led sector plan end expenditure program is supported by development partners involved in that sector. All sector participants work to adopt common technical goals; and to harmonize monitoring and evaluation, reporting, and procurement systems. Donors commit to supporting the sector plan and its elements. Using donor coordination mechanisms, they work for open communication and transparency.

The SWAp approach assumes that funds can be used more efficiently and have greater long term impact if host countries provide leadership and assistance is aligned with a common set of goals and sector priorities.

The approach emphasizes importance of developing capacity or country leadership in planning, budgeting, and implementing sectoral policies. Generally, it consists of 5 elements: host country leadership, donor coordination, sector wide policy, expenditure framework and harmonization.

Possible funding mechanisms are project funding, basket funding and budget funding (Ortiz et al 2008).

Ortiz et al 2008: Ortiz, Christine, Nadia Olson, Mark McEuen, Paul Dowling. 2008. Primer: Ensuring Reproductive Health Commodity Security within a Sector Wide Approach. Arlington, Va: USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, task Order 1.



Look out for Stop Stock-outs

[Health Action International \(HAI\) Africa](#) and [OXFAM](#) and their national partners in Kenya (CIN, KETAM, KEHPCA, EPN), Madagascar (SISAL), Malawi (MHEN), Uganda (AGHA, HEPS, NAFOPHANU), Zambia (NZP+, TALC) and Zimbabwe (CWGH) announce the launch of the [Stop Stock-Outs campaign](#).

Stock-outs disproportionately affect the poor, and this is exacerbated in rural areas where stock-outs are the worst. To compound these problems, stock-outs force people in already dire circumstances to buy medicines at much higher prices from the private sector. Due to these excessively high prices, patients are frequently forced to go without medicines needed to treat serious conditions that are otherwise treatable or preventable. Too often, stock-outs unnecessarily leave patients facing serious illness or death.

The 'Stop the Stock-outs' campaign is calling on governments and health departments to end stock-outs now and upon international allies and civil society actors to assist them.

For more information on the campaign please visit [the Stop The Stock-outs website](#).

Civil Society Meeting Preceding Global Fund Donors Meeting

Donors of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria ([GFATM](#)), the most important institution to finance programs against the three poverty pandemics will meet in Caceres by the end of March to try to cover the gap of \$ 5,000 billions USD.

Civil Society will meet two days before, on March 28th and 29th 2009, in the same place for a formative and mobilization conference to prepare a common position, share visions and reflect on how we could face the Fund's financial gap, its weaknesses and the future challenges to fight the three diseases.

The conference is organised by [TenemosSida](#), [GlobalSida](#), [Action for Global Health Spain](#), [European Alliance against Malaria](#), [Spanish Federation of Family Planning](#), [Ayuda en Accion](#), [Cruz Roja](#), [Planeta Salud](#), [CESIDA](#), [Intermon Oxfam](#), GIE with the Support of [AECID](#), [AEXCID](#), [Diputacion de Caceres](#)

Source: [Action for Global Health](#). For more information please contact [Gonzalo Mazuela](#).

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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

Project

Resource Mobilisation and Awareness

(RMA)



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.