

News from the Project RMA

ASTRA Report on Legal Commitments to Gender Equality and SRHR Issues

The [Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#) (ASTRA) newest report 'Legal commitments to gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) issues in Albania, Macedonia, Georgia, Poland, and Ukraine' was prepared by the ASTRA Network Secretariat under the auspices of [Project Resource Mobilization and Awareness](#) (RMA). The report provides data on the status regarding the implementation of international agreements into the national legal systems in five Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, and identifies the legal challenges faced by reproductive health programs in CEE. It's main goal is to call for renewed attention to reproductive health (RH) supplies to avoid putting the health of millions of women at risk and strengthen national level advocacy on RH supplies in five partner countries in the CEE.

To read the report please click [here](#)



Training of Trainers on RHS Advocacy

On June 8th - 11th, subsequent to the [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition](#) (RHSC) Membership Meeting meeting, about 25 experienced RH advocates met in London for an intensive, participatory Training of Trainers on advocacy and the [RHSC Advocacy Toolkit](#). Participants increased their understanding of the processes, opportunities, and strategies to advocate for and re-position reproductive health supplies as a major contributor to improved health and well being. Participants identified RH supplies advocacy objectives of relevance to their country contexts and learnt about tailoring and delivering effective messages to different target audiences. Participants acquired the skills necessary to be able to conduct capacity building trainings on RH supplies advocacy to other advocates. Outcomes include planned advocacy trainings in Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, and Bali.

For more information, contact [Caroline Jane Kent](#) at DSW.

PAI's Dr. Karen Hardee on BBC

PAI's Dr. Karen Hardee spoke to BBC Radio's Network Africa about PAI's new report, ['Reproductive Health Supplies in Six Countries: Themes and Entry Points in Policies, Systems and Funding.'](#)

The report identifies the challenges faced by reproductive health programs in Bangladesh, Ghana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Tanzania and Uganda and calls for renewed attention to reproductive health (RH) supplies to avoid putting the health of millions of women at risk.

'Generally there are supportive policies for reproductive health and family planning, but that's not following through to implementation.' Karen Hardee pointed out.

The show was broadcast throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

[Click here to listen to the interview.](#)

For more information please visit [PAI's website](#).



Supplies news

G8 Parliamentarians' Conference Urges G8 Leaders not to Reduce ODA Levels in Light of the Economic Crisis and to Deliver on Commitments in Women's and Girl's Health

Two weeks before the G8 Summit in L' Aquila, Italy, more than 100 Parliamentarians, representatives and experts of International Organisations and civil society organisations participated in the fifth annual G8 Parliamentarians' Conference, entitled 'Strategic Investments in Times of Crisis - The Rewards of Making Women's Health a Priority', in Rome from June 22nd to 23rd 2009.

The conference was hosted by the Italian Parliamentary Working Group on Global Health and Women's Rights and organised by [GCAP Italy](#), [Action Aid](#), [the Italian Association for Women in Development](#) (AIDOS), the [German Foundation for World Population](#) (DSW) and [the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development](#) (EPF) in co-operation with [Action Canada for Population and Development](#) (ACPD), the [Asian Population and Development Association](#) (APDA) and [Interact Worldwide](#).

The Conference provided an unique opportunity for the Parliamentarians present to interact and strategise on meeting G8 commitments with fellow devoted Parliamentarians from around the world, as well as Government representatives and international organisations such as [UNFPA](#), [WHO](#), [IPPF](#), [Population Council](#) and the [International Women's Health Coalition](#) (IWHC).

Parliamentarians agreed that now is the time to act through strong, well focused and effective programs, that donor as well as recipient governments alike have a shared responsibility for reaching the MDGs with donor governments to create clear objectives, timelines and resources and for the recipient countries to put in place effective measures that will ensure the transparent and effective use of development aid.

The parliamentarians concluded with a very strong and forward-looking statement, entitled the 'Parliamentary Appeal to G8 Heads of State and Government' which will be delivered to the G8 Heads of State and Government. The declaration amongst others calls upon the G8 Heads of State not to reduce ODA levels in light of the economic crisis and to reaffirm existing commitments to fund US\$ 60 Billion through Official Development Assistance for addressing the health-related needs in development countries over five years including support for health systems strengthening and efforts to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and malaria based on concrete action plans and clear timetables, to invest in maternal and infant health as being the most cost-effective way to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and to promote gender equality by enacting development policies which protect young girls and their rights, educate young girls and boys, empower women and involve men in becoming active participants in the above.

To read the final appeal click [here](#).

Source: [GCAP Italy](#), [Action Aid](#), [AIDOS](#), [DSW](#) and [EPF](#), [ACPD](#), [APDA](#) and [Interact Worldwide](#).



Money Counts - Budgets as Monitoring Tools for Government Commitment to Fight Maternal Mortality

A report entitled 'The Missing Link: Applied Budget Work as a Tool to Hold Governments Accountable for Maternal Mortality Reduction Commitments.' has been published recently by the [International Initiative on Maternal Mortality and Human Rights](#) (IIMMHR).

The report, co-authored by the [International Budget Partnership](#), explores the relevance of civil society budget analysis and advocacy and its potential as a tool to hold governments accountable for their maternal mortality reduction commitments.

It provides three examples of civil society groups engaged with budget analysis and advocacy:

- [Fundar, Center for Analysis and Research in Mexico](#)
- [Women's Dignity in Tanzania](#)
- [Center for Budget and Governance Accountability in India](#)

Using these examples, the report shows the connection between the lack of real progress in reducing maternal mortality, and the failure of governments to make maternal health a budgetary priority.

The report can be downloaded at the [IIMMHR website](#).

RHInterchange Update

The [RHInterchange](#) has a number of new data providers, including:

- The [Nepal Ministry of Health](#) and Population/Logistics Management Division
- The Global Fund Procurement and Supply Chain Management Consortium (Kenya)
- [DKT/Ethiopia](#), a social marketing organization
- [The Uganda National Medical Stores](#) on behalf of the Uganda Ministry of Health
- [Marie Stopes International](#), on its procurements on behalf of its clinics around the world

Among other improvements, [UNFPA](#) has updated all information from 2004 to present with the actual rather than average total landed cost of orders.

Improved instructions for navigating the site and using its features are now online.

Graphs from the Geographic Summary as well as Value Summary reports can be created. These graphs can be saved as a jpg file or pdf and can be used in presentations and reports.

For more information please contact [Jane Feinberg](#) at RHI.



RAISE Study on Funding for Reproductive Health in Conflict Affected Countries

A study by the [RAISE Initiative](#), the [London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine](#), and [King's College London](#) shows an inequity in disbursement of reproductive health (RH) official development assistance (ODA) between conflict-affected countries and non-affected countries, as well as between different reproductive health issues such as family planning and HIV/AIDS. The study demonstrates a decline in funding for activities on RH that are not related to HIV/AIDS in conflict-affected countries.

The authors call upon multilateral agencies, donors, and host governments to ensure RH needs in conflict settings to:

- Address the full range of RH needs (which includes access to RH supplies) in humanitarian policies and needs assessments;
- Ensure that all RH areas are adequately funded and that HIV/AIDS related ODA is not provided at the expense of other RH activities;
- To monitor and evaluate RH ODA expenditure in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of aid and
- To support additional research to determine funding requirements in conflict-affected countries.

The study can be accessed [here](#).

Source: [Study summary by RAISE](#)



African Health Experts Discuss Family Planning

During a meeting in June health experts discussed a plan of action that seeks to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services across Africa. Health ministers of the African Union are expected to adopt the plan at a meeting taking place September 21th-22th 2009.

One problem that has been discussed is declined donor funding. According to the [United Nations Economic and Social Council](#) (ECOSOC) donor funding for family planning declined considerably from 1995 to 2004.

Another problem is a lack of information. According to Josephine Kibaru, head of reproductive health (RH) at [Kenya's Ministry of Health](#), in the rural areas rumours about the intra-uterine device moving up to the brain is spreading from one woman to the whole village.

Source: [Inter Press Service](#).

UN Conference to Address Lack of Access to Family Planning in Developing Countries

[UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund](#), convened 30 leading family planning policy experts from June 30th to July 2nd to review innovative programs that have succeeded in increasing access to contraceptives and other reproductive health services among poor and hard-to-reach people. It considers the reasons why funding for such programs has stagnated since 1995, even as population pressures have continued to increase.

Worldwide, an estimated 200 million women would like to delay or prevent a pregnancy but are not using effective contraception. In the poorest countries,

fewer than one in ten women are using such methods. Meanwhile, demand for contraceptives is expected to grow by 40 percent in the next 15 years.

The meeting, entitled '[Reducing Inequities: Ensuring Universal Access to Family Planning](#),' will issue a Call to Action, directed towards governments and funders and outlining the steps needed to achieve universal access to family planning.

UNFPA officials note that the populations of many African countries are expected to more than double within the next few decades, bringing greater poverty and inequity and declining health and environmental conditions, if current trends continue.

Source and more information: www.PLANetWIRE.org.

A Less-Expensive Implant Option

Primarily because of their high cost contraceptive implants have been utilized less than other methods since they have been introduced more than 25 years ago.

Sino-implant (II), a subdermal contraceptive implant manufactured in China by Shanghai Dahua Pharmaceutical is available for at least 60 percent less than other contraceptive implants procured by international donors and NGOs. In the first four months of 2009, 90,600 units of Sino-implant (II) were ordered by donors, at an average price of US\$8, representing a cost savings of US\$1.4 million.

Sino-implant (II) has been approved by drug regulatory authorities in Kenya and Sierra Leone in 2008 under the trade name Zarin and will be distributed by [Pharm Access Africa Limited](#) (PAAL). PAAL is seeking approval of Zarin in nine African countries while [Marie Stopes International](#) (MSI), [DKT International](#), Progyne, and Profamilia are moving forward with registrations in other countries.

Source and more information: [USAID Repositioning in Action E-Bulletin](#)

Factsheet from the Youth Coalition

[The Youth Coalition](#) has released a [Factsheet on Young People and Universal Access to Reproductive Health](#).

The Factsheet addresses access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) as a human right and emphasises the importance of addressing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people.

Furthermore the factsheet discusses the indicators for Millenium Development Target 5.B (to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015), regarding their importance especially for adolescents and presents other central aspects of universal access for young people. These are access to youth friendly SRH services, comprehensive sexuality education, access to safe abortion care, integration of HIV, STI and RH services, harmful practices and gender-based violence as well as meaningful youth participation.

The fact sheet can be downloaded from the [Youth Coalition Website](#).

Focus on ...

The Human Rights Council Recognises Maternal Mortality as a Pressing Human Rights Concern

During its eleventh regular session, on June 17th in Geneva, the [Human Rights Council](#) adopted a landmark resolution on 'Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights.'

In this resolution, governments acknowledge that maternal mortality and morbidity is a human rights issue and commit to enhance their efforts at the national and international level to protect the lives of women and girls worldwide. The resolution was led by Colombia and New Zealand and co sponsored by over 70 UN member states.

Globally, maternal mortality is the leading cause of death among women and of girls of reproductive age. Annually about 550,000 women and girls die every day from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. While it is difficult to measure pregnancy-related injuries and disabilities, estimates vary from 16 to 50 million annually, and include conditions such as haemorrhage, infection, brain seizures, hypertension, anaemia and obstetric fistulae.

Yet, it has taken fifteen years since the adoption of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, fourteen years since the Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action, and nine years since the Millennium Development Goals - all significant United Nations' consensus documents recognising the need to increase efforts promoting the health and rights of women and girls - for the UN's main political human rights body to take this important step. Globally, governments have failed to meet the commitments made and targets set in these documents.

Through the Human Rights Council resolution, governments recognise that the elimination of maternal mortality and morbidity requires the effective promotion and protection of women and girls' human rights, sexual and reproductive health.

Furthermore, the resolution stresses that a human rights based approach makes efforts against maternal mortality and morbidity more effective and sustainable. The resolution commissions a study by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to examine the human rights dimensions of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity, and how the Council can contribute to addressing this problem.

'By supporting this resolution, governments have affirmed the right of women and girls to receive care before, during, and after pregnancy and childbirth, and to survive these experiences without illness or disability,' said Sandeep Prasad, Human Rights Advisor with Action Canada for Population and Development, who has been actively engaged in promoting the issue of maternal mortality at the Human Rights Council.

'We are hopeful that this will be the start of the Human Rights Council taking an active role in the global effort to eliminate all preventable maternal deaths and injuries.'

To get a PDF-Version of the resolution please click [here](#).

Source: [Action Canada for Population and Development](#) Press Release

For more information, please contact [Sandeep Prasad](#) at the ACPD and Sexual Rights Initiative, [Neha Sood](#) at the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights or [Ximena Andion](#) at the Center for Reproductive Rights.

Look out for Registration open for EuroNGOs Conference and AGM

Registration for this year's [EuroNGOs](#) conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been opened. The conference, hosted by [Papardes Zieds](#) - Latvia's Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health, with the title 'Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Times of Economic Crisis', takes place September 7th 2009 in Riga, Latvia. It is followed by EuroNGOs AGM on September 8th 2009.

Looking ahead and beyond the 'final' landmark dates of both ICPD at 15 and the MDGs in 2015, the EuroNGOs platform will use the outcomes of the '[Global Partners in Action: NGO Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development](#)', that takes place September 2nd to 4th in Berlin, Germany, as a ground of discussion to develop an action plan for the years ahead.

For more information, a preliminary program and to register to the conference and AGM, please visit the [EuroNGOs website](#).

5th Asia-Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights

The 5th Asia-Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights will be held in Beijing, China, from October 17-20th 2009. This year's theme is 'Working for Universal Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights: Building on the ICPD PoA and the MDGs.'

The deadline for submitting application for capacity building workshops and satellite sessions is July 31 2009.

Details and applications can be found on the [conference's website](#).

Please direct inquiries to the [5th APCRSR Secretariat](#).

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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.