

News from the Project RMA

Conducting Advocacy for RH Supplies: Regional Training in South East Asia

In conjunction with new RMA working group co-chair Sandra Jordan of USAID, Project RMA conducted a session on advocacy for reproductive health (RH) supplies, including an introduction to the [Advocacy Toolkit and Guide](#) for members and guests of the Asia Pacific Alliance (APA). This training took place on October 7th as part of the APA General Meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

APA is also a sub grantee within the global level Project RMA activities and has been working on the RH Supply issue for the last three years.

For more information, please contact [Sabine Weber](#) at DSW. Photo credit Suzanne Ehlers/PAI.



Unmet Need in Bangladesh

"Where have all the condoms gone?" This is the question the ProjectRMA members Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) is trying to answer. The World Bank is the major source of funding for male condoms in Bangladesh. From 2003 to 2010 the Bank and co-financiers will have provided US\$6 billion for the Health and Population sector-wide programme. A large proportion of this money is earmarked for RH supplies. Despite this substantial investment there is still high unmet need in Bangladesh. The current supply is 4.5 million condoms against the average monthly demand of nine million condoms.

FPAB have investigated and found that corruption at various levels, bureaucracy, inaccurate forecasting and lack of inter agency coordination all contribute to the shortages.

Project RMA activities in Bangladesh are focused on achieving a reliable and adequate supply of RH commodities. Consequently, ProjectRMA works with government and department heads and is trying to re-invigorate the RH supply coordination committee, established in 2004 to focus on the donor coordination, forecasting and corruption issues.

Efforts in Bangladesh are part of Project RMA's country-level advocacy work, which is being led by IPPF. Contact [Sarah Shaw](#) of IPPF for more information.

Supplies news

Global Fund in Rwanda Agrees to Finance Contraceptives

In a significant step for both contraceptive security and HIV prevention in Rwanda, local Global Fund stakeholders have decided to fund contraceptives by providing a three-year commitment worth more than US\$2.4 million from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Round 7 Funds.

Global Fund financing has been used in the past to finance condoms in a number of countries, but Rwanda is believed to be the first country to fund contraceptives as part of its efforts to fight HIV and AIDS. The commitment from Rwanda is for funding of around US\$800,000 a year for three years starting in 2008. The funds will be channelled through the Ministry of Health in Rwanda, and the decision on which contraceptives to procure will be made locally based on program needs. The contraceptives financed will be distributed as part of the national family planning program and will be integrated with HIV services; they will not be limited to specific HIV programs.

This action is the fruit of advocacy at both the international level and the national level in Rwanda. Internationally, reproductive health advocates, including ProjectRMA have long argued for this type of support. Beginning in 2006, the Global Fund in Geneva has issued clear recommendations that countries put a priority on integrating reproductive health and HIV services. Specifically, the Global Fund is open to countries including contraceptive financing in their procurement and supply management plans.

Project RMA supports broad-based effort to include reproductive health supplies within the Global Fund's processes. Among these efforts has been a sign-on letter to the Fund's Portfolio Committee chairperson, urging the inclusion of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS linkages in the Round Seven Guidelines in October 2007.

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Source: Dowling, Paul. 2008. Policy Update: Global Fund in Rwanda Agrees to Finance Contraceptives. Arlington, Va.: [USAID I DELIVER PROJECT](#), Task Order 1.

EuroNGOs and other International NGOs Condemn US Government's Ban on Contraceptives to Africa

On October 8th, the European NGOs for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Population and Development (EuroNGOs) together with other international NGOs including Population Action International (PAI) issued a statement condemning a recent decision by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to pressure six African governments (Malawi, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda) to discontinue the provision of U.S.-funded contraceptive commodities to Marie Stopes International partners.

The EuroNGOs' statement warns that this decision is likely to "endanger the lives of thousands of women" in said countries. "Lack of access to reproductive health supplies may result in unintended pregnancies and could force women into unsafe abortion and increase the rate of maternal mortality and morbidity."

MSI chief executive Dana Hovig said the decision will "seriously disrupt" essential maternal healthcare and family planning services. More than half of MSI's services globally are directed to rural areas and underserved communities. Life-saving contraceptive supplies (including condoms) that have already been procured in these countries may now likely go to waste without the infrastructure of MSI to distribute them where they are needed.

The [EuroNGOs statement](#) urges governments to challenge the decision, share objections with the U.S. government, and support the affected countries in rejecting this USAID pressure.

[Maries Stopes International](#) (MSI) is one of the world's leading family planning organisations.

Global Financial Crisis Puts Success of MDGs At Risk UN Head Says

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he is concerned about the effects that the current global financial crisis will have on impoverished nations and efforts to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which include targets to achieve universal access to reproductive health and curb the spread of diseases like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

According to Ban, next month's Financing for Development Conference (organized by the World Trade Organization in Doha, Qatar) "provides us an important opportunity to review developments and the ensure that the current financial difficulties do not undermine commitments already undertaken to provide more aid and other financial resources for the achievement" of the MDGs. In addition, because the global financial crisis could add pressure to donor organisations, the World Bank estimates that as many as 100 million people are at risk of poverty because of higher food and energy prices.

Source: Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Reports, 14 October 2008 and [IPPF](#).

Stagnant Donor Support for Support for Contraceptives

According to a new analysis by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, donor contributions for contraceptives and condoms for HIV prevention amounted to \$223 million in 2007, a mere 5 per cent increase over the 2006 total of \$212 million.

This is despite a growing unmet need for such supplies, as more couples use modern methods of contraception and world population continues to increase. Contained in **Donor Support for Contraceptives and Condoms for STI/HIV Prevention 2007**, the analysis shows that funding for these supplies has virtually stagnated since 2001, when it peaked at \$224 million.

According to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals report for 2007, globally some 200 million women have an unmet need for effective family planning. Furthermore, the number of contraceptive users is projected to rise by over 25 per

cent between 2000 and 2015. Without concerted national and international efforts, warns the analysis, millions will not be able to exercise their reproductive health choices.

The analysis shows a six-fold increase in donor investments in the female condom, from nearly \$2 million in 2001 to almost \$13 million in 2007. In addition, 85 per cent of donor support in 2007 was allocated to three types of supplies: male condoms, oral contraceptives and injectables.

The annual Donor Support for Contraceptives analysis contains a summary and analysis of a UNFPA-managed database that has tracked more than 21,000 procurement records of contraceptives, condoms for HIV prevention and other types of related reproductive health supplies since 1990.

Download the report "[Donor Support for Contraceptives and Condoms for STI/HIV Prevention 2007.](#)"

World Contraception Day

The second World Contraception Day (WCD), an international initiative supported by Bayer Schering Pharma AG aimed at raising awareness for contraception and sexual and reproductive health issues, took place on September 26th, 2009.

To mark this day, the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) together with Bayer Schering Pharma organised an event in Berlin to highlight the problem of teenage pregnancies worldwide with a special focus on Sub-saharan Africa. Ms. Mercy Mkaluma Maghanga, founder of a DSW youth club and peer educator in Kenya, appealed to the attending parliamentarians, government officials, NGO representatives, private donors, and the media to pay more attention to unwanted pregnancies among young people in Kenya.

Similarly DSW conducted WCD events in Kenya and Uganda, including a girl's football match after which information and consultation about family planning and contraception methods were offered.

Source: [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition site](#) and [DSW](#).



Focus on .

Advocacy in countries with high unmet need for family planning

Successful advocates know their country's reproductive health (RH) context and which types of messages are going to be most successful in their respective environments. When it comes to developing effective advocacy communication around securing RH Supplies the advocacy toolkit and guide "Leading Voices in Securing Reproductive Health Supplies" can help you hone your strategy to cater to specific scenarios.

In most cases, countries with **high unmet need for family planning (FP)** are also poor and resource-constrained. Political leaders often do not understand that FP is a strong complement to other efforts to reduce poverty or spur development.

A key element of contraceptive security is ensuring that resources are available for purchasing commodities or ensuring the delivery of high-quality services. Effective advocacy should work toward obtaining those resources via allocation of government revenues or donor contributions.

In settings where greater political and financial commitment for family planning is needed, advocacy messages should focus on the following points:

Family planning (FP)/reproductive health (RH) saves lives.FP/RH contributes to meeting the following MDGs and with reduced cost: poverty reduction, education, maternal and infant mortality, and clean water and sanitation.FP/RH is a sound economic investment and should be included in poverty-reduction strategies. Get more [helpful tips and useful resources for family planning/RH Supplies advocacy](#).

Look out for

Expanding Access to Contraception: The Role of the Commercial Sector in Providing Long-Acting and Permanent Methods of Contraception, 2008

Strengthening the role of the commercial sector in contraceptive provision is an important strategy for reducing costs to donors and to local governments. Attention has focused on increasing the commercial market for short-acting methods of contraception like pills and condoms; less attention has been paid to commercial sector provision of long-acting and permanent methods (LAPMs): IUDs, implants, and female and male sterilization.

This brief, based on a Private Sector Partnerships-One technical report, [The Commercial Sector's Role in Providing Long-Acting and Permanent Methods](#), provides data on the use and source of LAPMs. Such data are useful in designing and evaluating interventions to increase the commercial sector's role.

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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 [Sabine Weber](#) at DSW.