

News from the Project RMA

New Sub Grantees

We are pleased to announce this year's small grant recipients. These are regional and global NGO networks, committed to placing RH supplies high on the agendas of the ICPD plus 15 process at regional and global levels.

Recipients include the [Asia Pacific Alliance](#), the [ASTRA](#) Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, the [Youth Coalition](#), the East African Reproductive Health Network, [Marie Stopes International](#) (MSI), the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network ([LACWHN](#)), and the [Inter-American Parliamentary Group](#) on Population and Development. Their advocacy efforts will include targeting national delegations to ICPD plus 15 review meetings, promoting the importance of RH supplies among parliamentarians, and developing regional strategies to increase access to RH supplies.

Please contact [Jess Bernstein](#) of PAI for more information.

Turning Commitment into Access for RH Supplies □ RH Supplies Advocacy Meeting

In co-operation with [Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana](#) (PPAG), ProjectRMA hosted a Reproductive Health Supplies Advocacy meeting on November 19th - 21st in Accra, Ghana. At this strategic gathering entitled 'Global Policy Frameworks: Turning Commitment into Access for RH Supplies', civil society advocates and key stakeholders from around the world spoke about advocacy opportunities presented by regional and global policy frameworks, such as the Millennium Development Goals plus 10 and the International Conference on Population and Development plus 15 (ICPD), and how to turn commitment into access for RH Supplies. Participants shared strategies and plans, and joined forces with each other in their shared goals at the national, regional and global levels. Moreover, the meeting included a training session on the [Advocacy Guide and Toolkit](#) and the [RHInterchange](#). The last day of the meeting also offered the participants the opportunity of a site visit to learn about the situation of RH Supplies in Ghana in the Central Medical Store and a PPAG clinic.

Supplies news

France Joins the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition

On November 4, Mr. Alain Joyandet, Secretary of State for International Co-operation and Francophonie, signed an accord confirming France's membership in the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition. In a high-profile ceremony held at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Mr. Joyandet joined Coalition Director, John Skibiak, in highlighting the importance of France's participation in the Coalition, its commitment to furthering the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 5, and

its contribution to improving the sexual and reproductive health of women in low- and middle-income countries.

France is the 74th member of the Coalition and the seventh country, along with the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain and Denmark. For more information on the Coalition and how you can become a member please visit the [Coalition web site](#).



Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs Responds to MPs Parliamentary Questions

After the news about the US Government's Ban on providing Contraceptives to Marie Stopes International (MSI) in 6 African countries, the Dutch NGO World Population Foundation (WPF) prepared parliamentary questions on the issue, which were put forward by three MPs from the Labour Party, the Socialist Party and the Christian democrats. The questions and responses were as follows (translated from Dutch into English by WPF):

1. Are you aware of USAID's announcement to discontinue the provision of US-funded contraceptives to Marie Stopes International (MSI), an important organisation in the area of family planning?

Yes.

2. Do you share the opinion that, specifically in the fight against AIDS, prevention is crucial and that this decision can lead to an increase in unplanned pregnancies and unsafe abortions, and increased risk due to complications for women in developing countries?

I share your opinion that we can only win the fight against HIV/AIDS if more efforts are put into prevention. This means, among other things, a much greater effort in relation to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Furthermore, I am of the opinion that greater efforts in relation to SRHR will lead to a decrease in unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infections, and to a decrease in the number of children that are born HIV positive. The health risks for women in developing countries can be reduced with intensified efforts in relation to SRHR and health care. On our side there is great concern that this intervention of USAID will have the opposite effect.

3. Are you prepared - as an influential player in the fight against AIDS both content-wise as well as financially - to underline the importance of prevention and the use of contraceptives towards USAID and to ask USAID to reconsider their decision? If not, why not?

The Netherlands is an influential player in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including HIV and AIDS, both regarding content, as well as financially. I am prepared to emphasise the importance of the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and

sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infections. The availability and the use of contraceptives, condoms in particular, is therefore indispensable. The USAID ban on the provision of contraceptives to MSI is causing problems specifically for the users (male and female) in the rural areas, and for poorer women and young people.

The Dutch ambassador in Washington D.C. has planned a meeting in the near future with the USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore. She will express the concerns of the Netherlands about the USAID ban on providing contraceptives to MSI in at least six African countries. Like-minded European countries have also expressed their concerns about this with the American authorities.

At the same time I have undertaken steps to increase Dutch support to UNFPA for SRHR commodities, including contraceptives. Also, in 2009 the collaboration with MSI will be renewed and (financially) updated.

ENDS

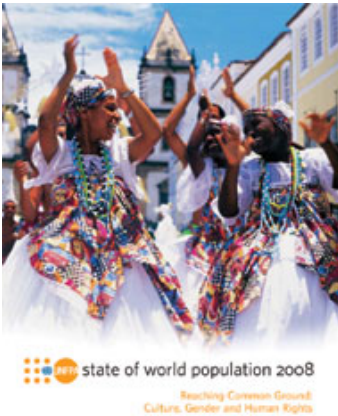
For more details, please contact [Yvonne Bogaarts](#), Head Advocacy Department, [World Population Foundation](#).

UNFPA Launches State of the World Population 2008

UNFPA launched its annual flagship publication '[The State of World Population 2008: Reaching Common Ground: Culture, Gender and Human Rights](#)' in more than 100 countries around the world in early November.

The report, which coincides with the 60th anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, calls for culturally sensitive approaches to development to promote human rights in general and women's rights in particular. At the main launch in London UNFPA's Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid showcased how UNFPA is partnering with forces of positive cultural change to protect human rights and improve human well-being:

Speaking about female genital mutilation or cutting, Ms. Obaid explained that UNFPA was working with community leaders to keep the celebratory aspects of the tradition and remove the harmful aspect of cutting. But cultural sensitivity and engagement do not mean acceptance of harmful traditional practices, or a free pass for human rights abuses - far from it, she added. 'In this report, we dismiss the assumption that culture is only an obstacle to the realization of human rights. Culture is not a wall to tear down. It is a window to see through, a door to open to make greater progress for human rights,' Ms. Obaid concluded.



Faith-Based Organizations Create Global Network

More than 75 religious leaders and representatives of Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith-based organisations formed a global interfaith network to strengthen co-operation against the global urgencies of maternal death, AIDS and poverty.

The interfaith network was formed in Istanbul at the conclusion of a two-day Global Forum of Faith-based Organisations, convened by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, which has partnerships with over 400 different faith-based organisations in more than 100 countries. The Interfaith Network on Population and Development was established after leaders of faith and of faith-based groups agreed on the principles of the network, which will also address violence against women and issues related to youth and migration. The leaders came from Africa, the Arab region, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Source: [UNFPA](#).

Focus on .

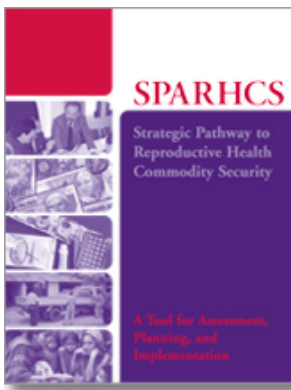
The Strategic Pathway to Reproductive Health Commodity Security (SPARHCS)

The SPARHCS Tool is designed to help countries develop and implement strategies to secure essential supplies for family planning and reproductive health (RH) programmes. It provides a framework for bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to achieve reproductive health commodity security (RHCS) at sub-national, national or regional level. SPARHCS can be customised to meet local needs and resources. It can be used for contraceptives alone, for contraceptives and condoms for HIV/STI prevention, or for a broader set of RH supplies.

To date, SPARHCS has been used in 50 countries, all reflecting different stages of RHCS experience, donor support and health sector reform. In addition of being used at the national level, SPARHCS is appropriate for use at the regional (e.g. West Africa) and sub-national levels.

The 'SPARHCS process' seeks to measurably strengthen RHCS through attention to each phase of the cycle of RHCS activities - from awareness raising to monitoring the effectiveness of a strategic plan for RHCS. The tool can frame activities at each phase and guide strategic planning. Typically, the tool has been used for RHCS assessments of family planning or broader RH supply programmes. Such assessments (or joint diagnoses) often catalyze a comprehensive approach to improving RHCS.

Access the SPARHCS Tool [here](#).



Look out for Where is the Financial Support for Reproductive Health Supplies?

'Funding for Reproductive Health Supplies: An Analysis of Official Development Assistance from European Donors.'

This report analyses data from the European Union (EU) institutions and seven European national governments - Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK - related to funding for SRHR, and for reproductive health supplies specifically. It creates a baseline for monitoring progress in increasing the level of funding and donor transparency and accountability with regard to reproductive health supplies (RHS) funding.

According to the data, the European Commission and the seven countries analysed are performing better than most with regard to SRHR funding globally. Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK are strong performers when it comes to SRHR funding, while others, such as France, are improving, and Germany has provided strong support for family planning supplies (e.g. condoms and contraception). However, it is extremely difficult to identify funding support specifically for RHS, as funding streams in these countries and organizations are complex, highly varied and often confusing.

Hence, Countdown 2015 Europe urges European donors to be more transparent and publish what they fund, so that monitoring of RHS funding can lead to aid better spent.

The report is now available on the [Countdown 2015 Europe web site](#).

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The SupplyNews is produced by DSW www.dsw-online.de as part of its resource mobilisation and awareness raising activities in Project RMA. The content does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Project RMA, the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC), or any of its' individual members. Third-party documents and their links to external sites are provided as a service to subscribers to the SupplyNews. Their inclusion implies no endorsement of their content by the Project RMA or any of its' individual partners.

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.