

News from the Project RMA

Distributing Supplies to Hard to Reach Populations

Parliamentarians in Uganda have taken their advocacy for reproductive health (RH) supplies one step further, by distributing RH supplies to hard to reach populations. The Network of African Women Members of Parliament (NAWMP), Ugandan Chapter, have been working very closely with Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU). Together they are advocating for increased financial and political support for RH supplies nationally and in ten districts.

On a recent visit to Islands of Kalangala the MPs met with District level leaders to discuss the importance of including RH supplies in district level policies and budgets. The MPs used the visit as an opportunity to go into the community and talk about RH with community members and to distribute condoms to those who need them the most.

The MPs also met with the Commander in Chief of Land Forces and the Medical team of the Uganda People's Defence Force in Bombo Barracks to discuss reproductive health and family planning. The armed forces pledged to put RH on the agenda and include it in budgetary discussions.

NAWMP and RHU work closely with district leaders to raise awareness of the importance of RH supplies as an effective health and development intervention.

Please contact [Sarah Shaw](#) of [IPPF](#) for further information.

Supplies in Central and Eastern Europe

[ASTRA](#) - The Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights released a report entitled 'Report on Reproductive Health (RH) Supplies in ASTRA Countries' as a first step in their long-term strategy of improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the region.

Main findings of the report include that most governments do not fully recognize RH supplies as an important component of public health and human rights. Furthermore the health systems of the countries fail to provide access to safe family planning methods, safe pregnancy supplies, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment supplies. Health insurances either do not exist or they provide only a very limited supply. A low level use of contraceptives due to high costs, high abortion rates, and an unequal distribution of RH services and supplies in rural and urban areas are further findings. NGOs try to fill the gap by offering education and family planning (FP) services and contraceptives, but they face restrictions regarding channels of distribution of contraceptives other than condoms.

Recommendations include the provision of FP services, the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education and the launch of HIV/AIDS awareness raising campaigns.

A PDF-version of the report can be downloaded at [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition website](#).



Supplies news

Survey on Comprehensive Condom Programming

The Advocacy and Resource Mobilization (ARM) Working Group of the [UNAIDS](#) Interagency Task Team on Comprehensive Condom Programming (CCP) is carrying out an online mini-survey developed by [UNFPA](#). The survey aims to highlight significant gaps in support to CCP and to stimulate stronger political commitment and expanded human, financial, and technical resources. The survey is also designed to measure the level of condom programming support given to low to middle income countries by international agencies. More precisely it is being conducted to find out which agencies provide which services in which countries.

Comprehensive Condom Programming (CCP) aims to make male and female condoms accessible to every sexually active person at risk of contracting HIV and to ensure knowledge about the correct use. The CCP approach involves an integrated mix of leadership, coordination, demand and supply.

For more information visit [UNFPA's website](#)



UNICEF's Report Highlights Maternal Mortality

According to a [UNICEF](#) report, entitled 'The State of the World's Children 2009', women in least developed countries (LDCs) are 300 times more likely to die in childbirth or from pregnancy complications than women in industrialized countries. While the average probability for maternal death in LDCs is 1 in 24, the probability faced by women in industrialized countries is only 1 in 8,000. The highest lifetime risk of maternal mortality is 1 in 7 in Niger while the lowest risk exists in Ireland with 1 in 47,600. In developing countries having a child is still one of the most serious health

risks for women and for every maternal death another 20 women suffer illnesses or injury.

UNICEF recommends that essential services be provided through dynamic health systems that integrate a continuum of home, community, outreach and facility-based care instead of separate initiatives.

The report was picked up by mainstream media reaching a wide audience.

The report can be found [on UNICEF's Website](#).



FDA Votes to Grant Pre-Market Approval to FC2 Female Condom

On December 11th, 2008 an advisory committee at the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) voted unanimously to grant pre-market approval to the FC2 female condom. This approval is important and great news as besides inefficient supply channels and supply chain management or cost-rising tariffs, inadequate quality of contraceptives may impede an adequate supply.

In 2001 the [WHO](#) set up the Prequalification Programme. The program aims at facilitating access to medicines that meet unified standards of quality, safety and efficacy for the benefit of those in need. The [World Bank](#), [UNICEF](#), [UNAIDS](#) and [UNFPA](#) support this programme.

It backs the improvement in manufacturing capacity through evaluation and inspection activities, by building national capacity for sustainable manufacturing and monitoring of quality medicines. The list of prequalified medicinal products for RH produced by the Programme is used principally by United Nations agencies but can be used by any agency involved in bulk purchasing of medicines.

The voting for pre-market approval is an important step to obtaining FDA-Approval.

Please check [the Coalition's website](#) for further information.

Further Sources: [Reuters](#), [WHO](#)

New Fact Sheet on RH and Commodities Provides an Overview

A fact sheet entitled 'reproductive health and commodities' released by [Oesterreichische Gesellschaft fuer Familienplanung](#) (OeGF) provides an overview

of access to RH supplies and commodities in developing countries. It states that 22% of women in developing countries do not have access to contraception. Especially underprivileged girls and women do not have access to contraceptives and contraceptives continue to be less available to the poor and those living in rural areas. As the acceptance of contraception increases, a wider range of available contraceptives is necessary.

67 million women rely on ineffective birth control methods and 137 million women do not use contraceptives at all although they do not want children. 85% of them become pregnant in one year. OeGF calls for additional high quality and affordable services, improved planning, implementation and evaluation services, more financial and technical resources, enhanced coordination of donor communities and advocacy for the reproductive rights of women and girls.

Please click here to download the [fact sheet](#).

Uganda's National Medical Stores Says no to ARV Donations

In Uganda the distribution of life-prolonging antiretroviral (ARV) does not work properly and half the people who need ARV do not have access to them.

Uganda's government's main supplier, [National Medical Stores](#) (NMS), voiced concerns that more drugs than acceptable are expiring and procurement is uncoordinated. As a consequence NMS will cut out drug donations, until they fulfil a gap recognized by NMS. NMS also calls for donor countries to coordinate procurement with the NMS through the Ministry of Health.

The supply systems shall be upgraded by distributing items whose expiry date is within three month to big health facilities free of charge and sharing information between dispensing sites to avoid running or overstocking of single sites.

The plan was criticized by activists as still a big number of people, especially those in rural areas, do not receive treatment and the situation might worsen if donations are no longer accepted.

Source: [IRIN](#)

Focus on ...

250 NGOs Thank President Obama for Repealing Global Gag Rule

US President Barack Obama repealed the Global Gag Rule, a ban stopping US funds reaching international family planning groups that perform abortions in cases other than a threat to the woman's life; rape or incest; provide counselling and referral for abortion or lobby to make abortion legal or more available in their country. Obama, who signed the repeal on January 23rd, 2009, said family planning issues should not be politicized.

A letter, initiated by [IPAS](#) and signed by more than 250 NGOs, was sent to President Obama, thanking him 'for ending this restrictive policy, which has contributed to the

deaths and injuries of countless women and girls and undermined the democratic participation of non-governmental organizations in many countries.' Furthermore the President is asked to significantly increase U.S. Funding for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, including family planning and maternal health .

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

Source: [DW-World](#), [Associated press](#)

Look out for Conference 'Cairo and the Millennium Development Goals - Convergences and divergences'

[The Belgian Platform for Population and Development](#) in collaboration with platform [Be-cause health](#) invites to the international conference 'Cairo and the Millennium Development Goals - Convergences and divergences' taking place on February 17th and 18th 2009 at the Egmont Palace in Brussels. The conference is supported by [DGOS/DGCD](#) and [UNFPA](#).

The theme of the conference fits in the framework of the 42nd session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) of the United Nations, which in 2009 will deal with the theme of 'The contribution of the Programme of Action of the [International Conference on Population and Development](#) (ICPD)' to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The goal of the conference is to analyse the evolution of the ICPD and the MDG's (Millennium Development Goals) and the common challenges.

Attendance to the conference is free, but registration is requested.

For further information please visit [platformpopdev.be](#).

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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

Project

Resource Mobilisation and Awareness (RMA)



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.