

Remarks for Beth Schlachter – AS DRAFTED

Global membership meeting of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition

Session 2: “The State of the Coalition and the FP2020 Global Partnership”

October 13, 2016

Thank you everyone, it’s a real honor to be here with you this morning.

In my line of work, I am fortunate to see the power of collaboration every day. I see it when experts from different development sectors combine their skills to solve a common problem. I see it when colleagues from different organizations pool their institutional knowledge for the greater good. I see it when leaders at the top of the global hierarchy listen to the voices of colleagues working at every level. Collaboration is how we solve the hardest problems in the world. It’s how real, lasting change finally happens. It’s what all of us here today stand for, and indeed what the entire FP2020 initiative is all about.

It has been four years since the world’s leaders convened in London to take a declarative stance on family planning. Together, they made a daring promise: to provide voluntary, rights-based family planning to 120 million additional women and girls in the world’s poorest countries by the year 2020.

Though as we all know, this goal is so much more than just a number. Achieving this goal is a critical milestone to ensuring

universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights by 2030, as laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Women and girls — each with a face, a name, a story and dreams — have the right to define their needs and make decisions about their own sexual and reproductive health, both within and beyond the clinic walls.

Expanding access to contraception has never been just about health — it means fundamentally changing the status of women and girls in society by respecting their bodies, minds, aspirations and lives. And this translates into women becoming agents of their own change and ensuring their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

The London Summit proved catalytic in many ways, it built on decades of work done in family planning by stalwart organizations like UNFPA and USAID, it ushered in renewed interest in and funding for family planning and elicited global commitments to provide more women with access to the services and programs they want and need.

Here we are, at the midpoint between the London Summit and the year 2020. This is a pivotal opportunity to reflect on what's working well, identify ways to adjust efforts for greater impact, share insights on actionable interventions to accelerate progress, hold ourselves accountable to our commitments, and ultimately develop a vision for how we move beyond 2020.

We've made huge strides since 2012 -- more women and girls than ever before now have access to family planning information, services, and supplies that are grounded in principles of rights and empowerment. We are hoping that progress over the last 12 months may see us get close to, or even surpass, the 300 million mark – which would be such a significant number of current FP users across the 69 countries. Stay tuned for the launch of the annual progress report on 1st November to learn more...

The RHSC and all of you make critical contributions to this success – through the strength and intelligence you have shown in the partnerships formed and the coalitions built to transform the lives of millions of women and girls. We have an amazing community, full of strong partnerships, ambitious commitments, and members who are aligned to bring their full weight to leveraging resources together.

Thanks to the family planning's community of dedicated individuals, organizations, and governments, we are magnifying our collective ability to make a lasting impact in the lives of millions of girls and women.

Our work makes a difference in this world. There are tens of millions of additional women and girls now using contraception, significantly more than would have been predicted under the historical trend. Many countries are seeing accelerated progress in providing services to women and reducing unmet need. But while our progress is significant, our results across the 69 countries don't measure up to our ambition. This year's soon to be released progress report will reveal that while we are reaching

more women than ever before, we are still off-track for our overall goal of reaching 120 million additional women and girls by 2020.

The good news is that we have learned lessons that can help point the way forward. Now we need to pick up the pace. This means building on the momentum we've created and taking it further: scaling up successful interventions, dedicating additional and sustainable country and donor resources, and working to advance quality of care to embrace a rights framework that ensures women's voices are heard and heeded.

The richness of the data now available enables us to peel back the layers and study the situation on a country-by-country basis. What emerges is a strikingly varied landscape of progress. A number of countries have registered immense gains in contraceptive use; other countries are just starting to experience gains; and some countries have seen slow growth or appear stalled. The data process is guiding advocacy as well, with the evidence it provides strengthening the reasoning provided by civil society to persuade governments to do the right thing, at the right time.

This knowledge is part of the toolkit we take into the second half of the initiative. We also bring with us a deeper understanding of how family planning services reach, or fail to reach, specific sub-populations of women and girls. The evidence base is growing for a wide range of issues and interventions, including youth-oriented approaches, method mix diversity, the impact of rights-based programming, postpartum family planning and other high impact practices, and implementation costing. The resulting insights can

help us shape more effective programs, investments, and policies to reach women and girls with the services they need.

With four years remaining to reach our 2020 goal, the FP2020 platform has been optimized to help countries and partners absorb the lessons learned and accelerate progress. The partnership continues to expand, our governance structure has been reorganized to provide increased country support, and a new youth seat on the Reference Group reflects the additional emphasis on the inclusion of young people throughout the partnership. Further efforts to strengthen accountability and improve resource allocation also have the potential to yield important gains.

As a unique collaborative platform, FP2020 sits at a nexus point of global, regional, and national efforts to expand family planning. The global partnership has grown tremendously since 2012 – nearly 40 countries and more than 90 partners have joined FP2020. Together we foster a culture of dialogue, innovation, and accountability that spans sectors and bridges geographical divides.

This is one of the ways that partnership is flourishing in our community, and more opportunities have arisen as we align with country-driven goals. Our broad platform provides multi-sectoral support and cooperation as countries pursue their family planning objectives, building on their own existing plans and processes. *These must be country driven and country owned to be successful, and we're committed to making this happen.*

We have a new Country Support Team, which is building on the achievements of the former Country Engagement Working Group and the collaboration of partners at the global and national levels. This team facilitates technical support in all thematic areas of family planning programming: demand creation; service delivery and access; contraceptive security; policy and enabling environment; financing; and stewardship, management, and accountability.

Ideas for increased impact organically come through this collaboration and allow us to be more agile and responsive to country needs.

The London Summit emphasized an approach that called for using human rights principles as the foundation of all family planning activities, including those focused on generating demand, meeting unmet need, and improving quality of care. The promise of rights-based family planning programming has led global and country actors to interrogate their programs and practices to ensure that the rights of the client are upheld and that the principles of agency, access, availability of contraceptives, and quality of care are rigorously observed.

Strong involvement from our partners is facilitating targeted and direct technical support as countries develop, implement, and monitor their rights-based family planning strategies. Human rights remain at the epicenter of everything we do, and we continue to work with our country and global partners to define, operationalize, monitor, and measure the impact of rights-based family planning.

We're also working to mainstream youth participation at the country and global levels and ensure that young people's needs and perspectives are reflected in family planning programs, policies and practices. Today's youth population is the largest in history: 1.8 billion individuals between the ages of 10 and 24, more than a billion of whom live in FP2020's 69 focus countries. Many have an urgent need for contraceptive information and services, yet they are too often hindered by discrimination, stigma, poverty, and a lack of basic knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Reaching this age group with high-quality services that are tailored to their needs *and to help them act on advancing their needs* must be an essential priority for the entire family planning sector. Ultimately, countries must examine their policies and settings, develop a process of evaluation and reevaluation that genuinely reflects a youth perspective, and implement evidence-based programs that work.

With all of this in mind, let's circle back to why we are here today: to address critical issues surrounding contraceptive security.

The supply chain that moves family planning products into the hands of the women who want and need them is a lifeline that needs to be protected and strengthened and is critical to achieving the 2020 goal. Women need—and have the right to—a full range of quality reproductive health supplies available on the shelves in the clinics, pharmacies, and hospitals, or in the hands of community health workers where they live.

But too often those shelves and hands remain empty. We're working with the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition to better understand why.

The Coalition was a driving force and one of the first commitment makers at the 2012 London Summit on Family Planning. It continues to be an integral partner in the FP2020 movement. John co-led our Market Dynamics Working Group and was a very involved member of our Reference Group. Now, we are partnering to understand the implications of the new Global Contraceptive Commodity Gap Analysis report, which we'll hear much more about over the course of this meeting. Furthermore the Coordinated Supply Planning group, a work stream of RHSC's System Strengthening Working Group, has proven to be an important collaboration for us, with country-generated information on medium-term commodity financing gaps allowing clear dialogue with countries for seeking solutions to these issues.

Both FP2020 and the Coalition bring together multilateral and bilateral organizations, private foundations, governments, civil society, and the private sector into collaborative relationships where partners explore the potential of doing more together than they could accomplish alone.

Through this partnership, the family planning sector is working together.

Today FP2020 and the Coalition must continue to focus on the synergies and cooperation between our groups. The one cannot

work without the other. Our stakeholders are the same and our goals are the same: to give women worldwide the opportunity to plan their families and their futures.

Look around the room. Our partnership represents an unprecedented global commitment to the rights, health, and empowerment of millions of women and girls. The path to 2020 and beyond is undeniably steep, but with the tools and knowledge at our disposal, we're poised to quicken the pace.

Remember, our work doesn't end in 2020. We must look ahead to the future of this family planning movement. What will happen after FP2020 ends? We've created these partnerships and processes and invested tremendously in resources, time and effort – where do we want all of this to go?

We must decide together what framework will be the most helpful for us to leverage our collective powers and resolve the unmet need for contraception worldwide. We all need to take an active role to help create a ripple effect that will carry us forward beyond 2020 — towards 2030 and the attainment of universal access to contraception as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

I am confident in the potential of our partnership and our platform, and I'm excited to see where the boundless power of collaboration will take us. I know that when our work here is done, we will leave behind a healthy sector that is poised for the future.

Thank you.