



Global Partners in Action: NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development

ICPD@15 International Conference on
Population and Development

Berlin, Germany | 2-4 September, 2009

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The Road to ICPD@15: A Chronology

1869: John Stuart Mill publishes *The Subjection of Women*, detailing for the first time the global oppression of women and calling for reforms. This is considered the founding document of the worldwide women's rights movement and guides its arguments until the First World War. Mill argued:

that the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.

1948: United Nations approves the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which spells out for the first time a global agreement that every woman, man and child has certain rights merely because they are human beings. No exceptions for cultural norms, national traditions, family matters or religious teachings. No exceptions for gender, skin color, ethnicity, religious or political views, or nationality. No exceptions.

1968: First International Conference on Human Rights, Tehran: "Parents have a basic human right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and a right to adequate education and information to do so."

1969: UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund is created.

1974: First World Population Conference, Bucharest: launches the first World Population Year and puts population issues on the international agenda.

1975: First World Conference on Women, Mexico City: Declares that the right to family planning is essential for equality between men and women. Calls for a Women's Convention to promote equal rights for women worldwide. Sets goals: full gender equality and elimination of gender discrimination, integration and full participation of women in development, and greater involvement of women in strengthening world peace.

1976: UNIFEM, the UN Development Fund for Women is created.

1976-85: UN International Decade for Women: a product of the 1975 conference, it leads to the establishment of UNIFEM, the UN Development Fund for Women. Two thirds of UN member states have since adopted some sort of national "plan" for women.

1979: UN adopts the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It commits signing countries and states to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women" in every area of life, including a guarantee to women of the "right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights."

1980: Second World Conference on Women, Copenhagen: Lists three priorities: equal access to education, to employment opportunities and to adequate health care.

1984: International Conference on Population, Mexico City: Adds individuals to the Teheran description of family planning rights, asserting that unmarried individuals also have rights to reproductive health services. Documents dangers of unsafe abortion; recognizes a global unmet need for contraceptive services. In the United States, the Reagan administration announces a "global gag rule" barring U.S. funding for non-U.S. groups advocating or counseling on legal abortion. Other countries join the debate on abortion access.

1987: Safe Motherhood Conference, Nairobi: The enormous toll of women dying in pregnancy and childbirth worldwide – more than one per minute – leads the World Health Organization, the World Bank

and UNFPA, the UN Population Fund, to spearhead research and advocacy in the Safe Motherhood Initiative to promote investment in saving women's lives. For 20 years it makes reduction of maternal mortality a major health goal for governments worldwide.

1989: UN Approves Convention on the Rights of the Child: It recognizes "...the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health," and commits signing states to developing "...preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services."

1992: UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro: the Earth Summit recognized women's vital role in sustainable development and environmental management.

1993: World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna: Declares that women's rights are human rights; condemns violence against women as a human rights abuse; and affirms "a woman's right to the widest range of family planning services." Leads to the naming of a special UN rapporteur to monitor abuses of women's rights worldwide. It also "recognizes the importance of the enjoyment by women of the highest standard of physical and mental health throughout their life span" (Article 41).

1993: Population Summit of the World's Scientific Academies, New Delhi: Explores in detail the interrelated issues of population growth, resource consumption, socio-economic development and environmental protection. A statement signed by 58 academies declares that success in dealing with social, economic, and environmental problems depends on achieving a stable world population.

1994, Sept. 5-13: International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo: Rejects demographic targets in favor of action to meet the needs of individuals for universal education and sexual and reproductive health care and rights as the best road to sustainable development. Leaders of 179 countries agree on a 20-year Programme of Action—"the Cairo Consensus"—that calls for investments in women of \$21.7 billion per year by 2015. An NGO Forum airs grassroots groups' ideas on the same issues.

1995: Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing: The Declaration and the Platform for Action place women at the center of any successful policy for economic and social development. The documents affirm adolescents' rights and list 12 critical areas of concern for achieving equality, development and peace, setting targets and steps to meet the goals. The UN General Assembly later endorses both documents.

1995: World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen: Commits participating countries to work towards providing official development assistance equal to 0.7 percent of gross national income.

1998: Vienna + 5, Rome: The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court recognizes that rape and sexual violence are among the most serious of war crimes.

1999: ICPD + 5, The Hague: An official UN meeting assesses global progress on the ICPD Programme of Action and reaffirms the Cairo Consensus. Issues recommendations to help meet the 2015 deadline. It finds new efforts worldwide to improve women's rights, education and health care, with family planning use and services up. But funding lags and HIV/AIDS has become a global pandemic. A UN General Assembly Special Session calls upon all countries to fulfill their commitments to specific investments in those areas.

2000: Beijing + 5, New York: Reaffirms principles of both the Cairo Programme of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action. Calls for more male involvement in promoting women's rights and sexual and reproductive health; re-states importance of integrating a gender perspective into the HIV/AIDS response.

2000: Millennium Development Summit, Declaration, and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): World leaders agree on eight MDGs that focus on halving global poverty by 2015 and sum up the objectives of recent UN conferences, including gender equality and women's empowerment. Each goal sets specific targets, such as a three-quarters reduction in maternal deaths and a two-thirds reduction in child deaths.

2001: UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS, New York: A Declaration of Commitment, by far the most comprehensive effort to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic, sets many policy recommendations on gender and women's vulnerability. Stresses the urgent need of adolescents worldwide, especially girls and women, for sexual and reproductive health education and services.

2002: World Children's Summit, New York: calls for essential and emergency obstetric care before, during and after pregnancy and delivery as the best way to save the lives of women and children worldwide.

2002: World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg: Focuses on economic and financial approaches to development rather than on population and rights-based policies.

2004: ICPD + 10: At several meetings, the international community discusses backlash but reaffirms the ICPD Programme of Action, including many countries that objected to sexual and reproductive rights in 1994. The NGO Countdown 2015 International Roundtable draws more than 700 participants to London to assess progress and express disappointment at the slow pace of policy change and investment in women.

2005: Beijing +10: UN Commission on the Status of Women finds that the Platform for Action sparked major improvements for women in some places although reaction has worsened conditions in others. Promises of funding and policy change are not being kept. The regional Mexico City Consensus meeting urges governments to implement legislation "guaranteeing the responsible exercise of sexual and reproductive rights and non-discriminatory access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health..."

2006: UN General Assembly, New York: At the recommendation of the Secretary-General, notes another target for MDG 5 (improve maternal health): achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015. Proposes new indicators for measuring progress: adolescent birth rate, antenatal care coverage, unmet need for family planning, and contraceptive prevalence rate. These are adopted in 2007.

2006: African Union Meeting, Mozambique: African Union leaders agree on the Maputo Plan of Action, which commits them to move toward universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services across the continent by 2015.

2007: Women Deliver Conference, London: Nearly 2,000 parliamentarians, activists and women's advocates from 107 countries meet to reinvigorate global political will to invest in women as the best way to improve maternal health, reduce child mortality and promote economic development.

2009: ICPD@15:

- > **Sept. 1-4: Global Partners in Action NGO Forum, Berlin:** Offers a chance to reflect on the successes and challenges of the past 15 years, to look forward to the years remaining to fulfill the commitments made at Cairo; and to create a new global conversation on investing in health, rights and the future.
- > **Oct. 12: United Nations General Assembly Special Session** to commemorate ICPD @ 15
- > **Oct. 26-27, Addis Ababa: 4th International Parliamentarians' Conference on ICPD Implementation**

2010: United Nations, New York: MDG +10 Summit on global progress toward implementing the Millennium Development Goals

2015: Deadline to attain the ICPD Programme of Action goals and the Millennium Development Goals