

Parliamentary Appeal

Global Summit of Parliamentarians ahead of the G8 and G20 Summits

We need a Decade of Family Planning: the vital factor for Global Development and Women's Reproductive Health and Rights

London, 11th May 2013

1. We, Parliamentarians from across Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe gathered in London on 9th and 10th May 2013. During the two days we underlined again that women's and adolescent's sexual and reproductive health and rights affect not only their own wellbeing and destinies; they also direct the future of families, societies and humanity and are a key driver of social and economic development.
2. We reaffirm the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and other international commitments made at relevant summits and conferences in the area of human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. We seek a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every woman's and adolescent's potential is fulfilled. We seek a world where women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities, where they are empowered to realise their reproductive choices and have the means to enact these choices.
3. It is unacceptable for us that today an estimated 222 million women globally still lack access to reliable, high quality family planning services, information and supplies,¹ that of the 210 million pregnancies occurring each year, nearly 33 million are unintended and that these lead to approximately 21.6 million unsafe abortions, causing some 47,000 deaths annually – most of which can be prevented.² Addressing the unmet need for family planning would avert 54 million unintended pregnancies and result in 26 million fewer abortions; this would also prevent 79,000 maternal deaths and 1.1 million infant deaths³.
4. We highlight that family planning and reproductive health interventions are the most cost-effective investments to promote national sustainable development, because women and girls are better able to access education, engage in productive employment and actively participate in the economic, cultural, social and political life of their community.

¹ Singh, S and Darroch, J. E. Adding It Up: Costs and Benefits of Contraceptive Services—Estimates for 2012. Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA. June 2012. Page 1.

² WHO, Unsafe Abortion—Global and Regional Estimates of the Incidence of Unsafe Abortion and Associated Mortality in 2008, 6th ed, 2011.

³ Singh, S and Darroch, J. E. Adding It Up: Costs and Benefits of Contraceptive Services—Estimates for 2012. Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA. June 2012.

5. Therefore, we underline that sexual and reproductive health and rights including family planning are a key component of **social and economic development**.

6. Bearing these factors in mind we hereby recognise that:

6.1. Sexual and reproductive health and rights including family planning are central to social, economic, environmental and sustainable development:

Access to family planning extends life expectancy for both mothers and children, increases incentives to invest in schooling, skills development, and other forms of human capital, creates opportunities for participation in labour markets, and results in higher incomes and levels of asset accumulation. Thus, it has a positive impact on their physical wellbeing and on the overall prosperity of families, communities and societies.

Access to family planning ensures that the challenges of population dynamics including urbanization, migration, ageing as well as population growth are addressed so that sustainable development challenges such as climate change, food and water security can be resolved. Therefore, investment in family planning programs is a critical part of sustainable development.

6.2. Sexual and reproductive health and rights including family planning is cost-effective:

In times of financial austerity governments must invest development funding carefully, ensuring that the impact each dollar achieves must be as great as possible based on the principle of good governance. Guttmacher Institute estimations show that for each dollar spent to move from the current levels of modern method use to the full-needs-met scenario would save 1.40\$ or 40% in the costs of maternal and newborn healthcare⁴.

6.3. Sexual and reproductive health and rights including family planning is a Human Right, guaranteeing human dignity:

Every adult, adolescent and young person everywhere, regardless of sex, social status, income, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or place of residence has the right to decide, freely and responsibly, how many children to have, when and with whom to have them. Being denied this right constitutes a violation of their human rights. To this end, women must have access to a full range of modern contraceptive methods to ensure appropriate choice. In addition, it is important to recognize that men and boys are pivotal in realizing women's right to family planning and their own rights as well.

We are deeply concerned, however, that young people's family planning needs are being largely neglected, and that as a result the largest generation of young people in history is unable to fully exercise their reproductive rights, to access comprehensive sexuality education, to prevent unintended pregnancies, to mitigate the risks of

⁴ Singh, S and Darroch, J. E. Adding It Up: Costs and Benefits of Contraceptive Services—Estimates for 2012. Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA. June 2012 p. 16.

school dropout, and to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

We are also concerned that while rape is being used as a weapon of war and in post-conflict situations, women may not have access to a full range of medical services.

Recognizing the clearly established causal relationship between the availability of family planning services and rising incomes per capita, we call upon the Heads of State and Government gathering at the upcoming G8/G20 meeting in Northern Ireland to recognize family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights as fundamental to the realisation of gender equality and all other rights as well as to the achievement of sustainable, social and economic development.

We demand that G8/G20 leaders place family planning in the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights at the core of the post-2015 development agenda.

We, Parliamentarians stress the urgency of this matter. We cannot waste more time because wasting time costs lives.