

EveryONE ALWAYS EveryWHERE

The European SRHR Community's
position on the post-2015 agenda

This position paper - prepared by the European NGOs for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Population and Development (EuroNGOs), Countdown 2015 Europe, the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN), and the ASTRA Network, the Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights - **embodies the voice of over 87 European SRHR NGOs, across 42 European countries, united by the common goal to advocate for the inclusion of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights in the post-2015 framework.**

BACKGROUND

This paper details the common position of the European sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) community on the post-2015 development agenda. It sets out reasons as to why sexual and reproductive health and rights should be included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and presents **recommendations on high priority goal areas, targets and indicators**, bearing in mind that sexual and reproductive health and rights was omitted from the MDGs, with universal access to reproductive health being added as MDG target 5B as late as the year 2007.

The paper represents a basis for engagement with European Member States in the context of the Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs ahead of the beginning of the intergovernmental negotiations at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly starting in late 2014.

SRHR: THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT

In 1994 the ICPD Programme of Action defined sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.ⁱ The following year the Beijing Platform for Action included a paragraph on the rights of women to “*have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.*”ⁱⁱ

The two conferences form the basis for **the progression towards sexual and reproductive health and rights, which is a more encompassing concept and addresses wider range of issues including sexual violence.**

Since then, ‘sexual and reproductive health and rights’ have gained increased recognition. In particular, in 2013 they have been included in the EU Council Conclusions on the Overarching Post 2015 Agendaⁱⁱⁱ; in the outcomes of the Regional Conferences of the ICPD Operational Review, including the Chair’s Summary of the UNECE Regional Conference on Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st Century, (paras 12, 16, 34)^{iv}, the Montevideo Consensus (para 33)^v, the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development (paras 76 and 80)^{vi}, and the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa beyond 2014 (para 35)^{vii}; in 2014 in the ICPD Global Review Report^{viii} as well as in the UN Secretary General’s Reports to the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development^{ix} and to the 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women^x.

SRHR: A CORE ELEMENT OF A *TRULY* SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

At the General Assembly Special Event on the MDGs in September 2013, Governments resolved that “*the post-2015 development agenda should reinforce the international community’s commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development.*”^{xi} They underscored the central imperative of poverty eradication and reaffirmed commitment to the Millennium Declaration thus recognizing the inter-linkages between poverty eradication and promotion of sustainable development. Furthermore they agreed that the post-2015 framework “*should also promote (...) gender equality and human rights for all*”^{xii} which are pre-requisites to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are key components of the measures that must be taken to respect and protect human rights, empower women and young people, particularly adolescent girls, and eliminate inequalities. Sexual and reproductive health and rights should be an essential part of the response to the global challenges we face for they cut across the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable development and contribute to accelerate progress under each of the current MDGs^{xiii}.

SRHR IN THE OWG DISCUSSIONS

To date sexual and reproductive health and rights have been included in deliberations in both the stock-taking and negotiating phases of the OWG sessions.

A substantial number of countries across regions strongly called for the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the framework of health (OWG 4), population dynamics (OWG 4) and human rights (OWG 6). In February 2014, over 50 countries expressed their belief that respecting, protecting and fulfilling sexual and reproductive health and rights is an essential element to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment (OWG 8).

In OWG 10, under the cluster on gender equality and women’s empowerment, education, employment and decent work for all, health and population dynamics, more than **20 countries from Latin America and Caribbean and from Europe spoke in favour of the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the SDGs.** Other delegations reiterated their commitments towards the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action and the MDGs and expressed their support for some components of SRHR such as reproductive health, reproductive rights, and maternal health.

OUR CALL: SRHR A CRUCIAL COMPONENT OF THE POST-2015 GOALS

We, representatives of the European SRHR community, express our full support for the statement delivered by 51 countries during the 8th session of the OWG, and their request to position sexual and reproductive health and rights for all as a critical pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)^{xiv}. ***We call for a concerted effort by the like-minded countries, and in particular our European governments, to ensure the full inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the post-2015 development agenda through:***

01

A STAND-ALONE GOAL ON “GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS” AND THE INTEGRATION OF THESE ISSUES THROUGH TARGETS AND INDICATORS INTO ALL GOALS OF THE FRAMEWORK^{xv}

We support the consensus within the OWG around gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s rights, in particular related to gender-based violence. We believe that gender equality needs to be fully recognized as both a human right and as a crucial means for achieving sustainable development. To this end we support the inclusion of **the following specific targets** in a stand-alone goal on gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s rights:

- **Protect and fulfill women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights^{xvi};**
- **End all forms of discrimination against women and girls^{xvii};**
- **End all forms of violence against women and girls^{xviii}, including female genital mutilation/cutting and other harmful practices^{xix};**
- **End child, early and forced marriage^{xx};**
- **Ensure the rights of people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity.**

Examples of possible indicators include:

% of female deaths of reproductive age 15-49 years of age due to violence (UN Women); Total and age-specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by a current or former intimate partner, ever, and in the last year (UN Women); % of victims and survivors of gender based violence with access to essential services, including appropriate medical, legal and psychosocial services (UNFPA); Proportion of national budgets allocated to programmes earmarked for the prevention of violence against women (UN Women); Rates of female genital mutilation and other traditional harmful practices (UN Women; UNFPA); Number of girls and boys married before

the age of 16 (UNICEF); Existence of national laws against discrimination and stigma based on sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression in employment, education, health care or housing *and* mechanisms to monitor law enforcement in place; Existence of national laws to eliminate early and forced marriage *and* mechanisms to monitor law enforcement in place.

02

A TARGET UNDER THE HEALTH GOAL ON “UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)”

We believe that achieving sexual and reproductive health and rights for all is central to eliminate extreme poverty and ensure positive impacts on the growth of society, the environment, and social cohesion. Such a **target** would enshrine two indivisible elements which are key components of the measures that must be taken to accelerate progress on the most off track MDGs: ***universal access to quality sexual and reproductive health, information, education, commodities and services throughout the life-cycle; and the promotion, respect, protection and fulfillment of sexual and reproductive health and rights of all individuals.***

Examples of possible indicators include:

Unmet need for quality modern contraceptives by choice [*which captures unmet need among all sexually active people regardless of age or relationship status; begin the biological reproductive age range at 13 and not 15; monitor choice, voluntariness and quality, and better capture need for both short and long term modern methods*]; Contraceptive prevalence rate (MDG 5); Maternal mortality ratio and rate (MDG 5); Mortality and morbidity due to unsafe abortion; Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (MDG 5); % of new mothers/newborn attended by skilled provider within 48 hours after birth ; % of national budget’s expenditure on health, and % of health expenditures for SRH/MNCH; Existence of national laws to support expanded access to safe, legal abortion *and* mechanisms to monitor law enforcement in place.

03

POPULATION DYNAMICS FROM A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE AND AS A CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE

Meeting the needs of a large and growing population (currently over 7 billion and projected to grow to over 9 billion by the middle of the century), while ensuring the sustainability of the natural environment and human health and wellbeing is one of the major challenges underpinning the development of the SDGs. It is therefore important that population dynamics are **addressed as a cross-cutting issue** *and taken into account in the development of all SDGs* and not only under the health focus area^{xxi}.

The various ‘components’ of population dynamics should be addressed first and foremost using a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and taking into account gender equality.

Addressing population dynamics within the post-2015 development agenda will require:

- Systematic use of population trends and projections in the formulation of development strategies, goals and targets;^{xxii}
- Access to timely and complete data for population trends and projections;^{xxiii}
- Universal birth and death registration^{xxiv};
- The availability and use of **high quality data**, produced in a timely manner **and disaggregated** by sex, age, disability, location (rural/urban), wealth quintiles, marital status, sexual orientation and other characteristics as appropriate, to help address inequalities;^{xxv}
- Targets and indicators related to the needs of particular population groups, including young people and the elderly.

Examples of possible indicators include:

Improvements in capacity to prepare population projections and to use them for the formulation of national, subnational and sector development strategies, goals, targets and policies (UNFPA); improvements in institutional capacities to generate quality data, disaggregated by age, sex, location (including urban/rural), wealth quintiles, among other categories, including birth and death registration, censuses, service-related management and information systems (UNFPA); estimated proportion of births and deaths that are registered.

04

A TARGET, UNDER THE EDUCATION GOAL, ON “PROVISION OF RIGHTS-BASED, AGE-APPROPRIATE, NON-DISCRIMINATORY, ACCURATE AND COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION”

We agree with the importance of integrating “relevant knowledge and skills in education curricula” as proposed in the OWG Focus Area Document,^{xxvi} and call for the inclusion of **a target on comprehensive sexuality education**,^{xxvii} which provides accurate information on sexual and reproductive health and rights for all adolescents and youth, in and out from school. Such a target is crucial to achieve universal access to SRHR and could also be integrated under the health goal (health information services).

In addition we call governments to **remove all barriers that hinder girls’ and women’s opportunities for education and staying in school**, including unintended pregnancies, sexual harassment and sexual violence on the way and in schools and the lack of appropriate sanitary facilities in schools.

Examples of possible indicators include:

% of individuals aged 15-24 who receive comprehensive sexuality education in and out of school; % of schools in which comprehensive sexuality education is mandatory in school curricula, and in line with UNESCO/UNFPA guidelines; % of women and men aged 15-24 who both correctly identify ways of preventing sexual transmission of HIV [and unwanted pregnancy] and who reject major misconceptions about HIV transmission [and unwanted pregnancy]; % of teachers trained in teaching comprehensive sexuality education at primary and at secondary levels, where it is possible to separate them out; % of schools with separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls at primary and at secondary levels, where it is possible to separate them out.

05

A SPECIAL FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADOLESCENTS' NEEDS THROUGH SPECIFIC TARGETS AND INDICATORS ACROSS THE FRAMEWORK

We express concern for the lack of attention towards young people's needs within the wider post-2015 discussions. In a world of 7 billion, 1.8 billion are young people. We believe that the future agenda should invest in the capabilities of adolescents and youth as a prerequisite to achieve poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Therefore **specific targets and indicators must be included that address young people and adolescents' needs in terms of:**

- **Education** (through *inter alia* the provision of comprehensive sexuality education for all adolescents and youth in and out of school),
- **Health** (through *inter alia* universal access to sexual and reproductive health services for young people, particularly for adolescent girls, on the basis of confidentiality and privacy that are supportive and non-judgmental)^{xxviii},
- **Social development and human rights.**

We specifically recommend **disaggregating data according to age, sex, marital status, and other characteristics as appropriate.**

Examples of key youth specific indicators include:

Unmet need for quality modern contraceptives by choice [*which captures unmet need among all sexually active people regardless of age or relationship status; begin the biological reproductive age range at 13 and not 15; monitor choice, voluntariness and quality, and better capture need for both short and long term modern methods*]; Contraceptive use, by method, by adolescents and youth (UNFPA); Age of mother at birth of first child ever born (UNFPA); HIV and other STI infection in adolescents and youth (MDG 6).

ⁱ ICPD Programme of Action, paras 7.2, 7.3.

ⁱⁱ Beijing Platform for Action, para 96.

ⁱⁱⁱ Council of the European Union General Affairs Council meeting on the Overarching Post 2015 Agenda, Council Conclusions, 25 June 2013.

^{iv} UN ECE, Chair's Summary, Regional Conference, Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st Century, Geneva, 1-2 July 2013.

^v UN ECLAC, Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Montevideo, 12-15 August 2013.

^{vi} UN ESCAP, Report of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference Bangkok, 16-20 September 2013.

^{vii} UN ECA, Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa beyond 2014, African Regional Conference on Population and Development, Addis Ababa, 3-4 October 2013.

^{viii} United Nations (2014) Report of the Operational Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its Follow-up Beyond 2014.

^{ix} Report of the UN Secretary General to the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development (2014) Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014.

^x Report of the UN Secretary General to the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2014) Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.

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- ^{xi} UN General Assembly, Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, October 2013, A /68/L.4*.
- ^{xii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xiii} See IPPF (2014) Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights – a crucial agenda for the post-2015 framework.
- ^{xiv} Joint Statement to the OWG on SDGs delivered by Argentina on behalf of 50 countries, February 2014.
- ^{xv} In line with the Agreed Conclusions of the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and its call for *‘gender equality, the empowerment of women and human rights of women and girls to be reflected as a stand-alone goal and to be integrated through targets and indicators into all goals of any new development framework’*.
- ^{xvi} UNFPA (2013) Empowering People to Ensure a Sustainable Future for All, p. 4.
- ^{xvii} Co-Chairs of Open Working Group, Focus Areas document, Working Document for 5-9 May session of Open Working Group.
- ^{xviii} *Ibidem.*
- ^{xix} UNFPA (2013) Empowering People to Ensure a Sustainable Future for All, p. 4.
- ^{xx} Co-Chairs of Open Working Group, Focus Areas document, Working Document for 5-9 May session of Open Working Group.
- ^{xxi} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxii} UNFPA (2013) Empowering People to Ensure a Sustainable Future for All.
- ^{xxiii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxiv} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxv} EuroNGOs (2013) Addressing Population Dynamics in the Post-2015 Development Framework: Fulfilling Rights, Empowering Women, Investing in Youth, Advancing Sustainable Development.
- ^{xxvi} Co-Chairs of Open Working Group, Focus Areas document, Working Document for 5-9 May session of Open Working Group.
- ^{xxvii} ‘Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is an age-appropriate, culturally relevant approach to teaching about sex and relationships by providing scientifically accurate, realistic, non-judgemental information’, [UNESCO](#).
- ^{xxviii} UNFPA (2014) Empowering Adolescents and Youth to Ensure a Sustainable Future for All, p. 3.