



## ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON POPULATION, DEVELOPMENT AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

January 2008  
NEWSLETTER No 15

### **FUNDING**

#### **UK pledge to UNFPA**

The UK government announced additional funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) of £100 million over the next five years to cut maternal deaths at the Women Deliver conference in October 2007. Funding will be used for commodities and strengthening reproductive health supply systems.

UNFPA have calculated that every £1 million invested in family planning could:

- avert 720,000 unwanted pregnancies
- prevent 300,000 induced abortions;
- save the lives of 1600 mothers and 22,000 infants.

#### **Europeans of the Year Award Donates €32,000 to "Campaign to End Fistula" to UNFPA**

In November 2007 the UNFPA was awarded one of the 2007 'Europeans of the Year' awards, known as EV50. The €32,000 award will support the UNFPA-led Campaign to end obstetric fistula in more than 40 countries.

#### **Global Fund – International Funding Commitment**

Donors pledged \$9.7 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria at a fund-raising conference in Berlin in October 2007 — an increase over previous donations, but well short of the \$15-\$18 billion the fund had hoped to raise. Kofi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General, who led the creation of the multilateral fund in 2002, said he was "*very pleased with the pledges made*". Some outside campaigners, however, expressed disappointment.

#### **Global Fund Board**

The November 2007 Global Fund Board meeting came to the decision to adopt "diagonal intervention", which means that Global Fund grants can be used to strengthen public, private or community health systems, but only if doing so makes it easier for the country to combat the three diseases. This should make it more likely for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) prevention programmes to gain Global Fund grants.

#### **Third Annual Clinton Global Initiative Meeting in New York**

President Clinton kicked off the third annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative in September 2007 with over one thousand leaders of business, government and non-governmental organisations representing over 70 countries and including 52 current and former heads of state. During the opening session, President Clinton announced five new commitments, including Norway's \$1 billion over ten years and Netherlands' \$175 million over three years for child and maternal health.

#### **New Figures on Financing for the Universal Access Goals**

The new Interact Worldwide/MSI report "Strategic Options for Greater European Investment in Reproductive Health Supplies" (RHS), published in November 2007, provides evidence, recommendations and strategic options for consideration by policy makers.

It states that European donors must:

- increase effective use of resources through appropriately integrated and linked responses to SRH and HIV and AIDS;
- consider the effects on SRH when assessing the effectiveness of aid;
- work with governments to ensure that national plans include robust SRH indicators;
- ensure RHS budget lines are implemented;
- provide annual reviews indicate expenditure against these goals.

#### **Euro-mapping: European Cash Cuts to Family Planning**

European policy makers neglect family planning in their development aid, concludes a study produced in October 2007, by the German Foundation for World Population and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF).

According to the latest available data, the share of family planning aid in total from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development population assistance fell from 30% to 9% between 2001 and 2004.

This leaves millions of people suffering unnecessarily from maternal and infant deaths, unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions. The drastic funding cut for family planning comes at a time when the largest youth population ever enters child-bearing years and recent years have seen a shift towards increased funding for AIDS prevention and treatment at the expense of other forms of population assistance.

### **LEGISLATION/POLICY**

#### **MDG Target on Reproductive Health and Indicators**

In October 2007, the UN General Assembly accepted the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target *"to achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health"* under MDG 5 - Improve Maternal Health. The indicators for this new target are:

- adolescent birth rate;
- antenatal care coverage;
- unmet need for family planning.

#### **Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) Chair, Elected as Japan's New Prime Minister**

The AFPPD Chair, Mr Yasuo Fukuda MP was elected as the Prime Minister of Japan in September 2007. He has been a chair of the AFPPD since 2005. Mr Yasuo Fukuda is also the Chair of the Japanese Parliamentarians' Federation on Population and the Asian Population and Development Association.

#### **International Health Partnership (IHP) Launched**

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Ministers from developing and donor countries, and leaders from major health agencies and foundations, launched the IHP in September 2007.

The IHP aims to improve the way that international agencies, donors and developing countries work together to develop and implement health plans and improve health services to improve and save lives.

#### **European Parliament Call to Reduce VAT on Condoms**

Dublin Labour MEP Proinsias De Rossa presented a petition to Government Ministers to mark World AIDS Day, calling on the Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen, to reduce VAT on condoms from 25% in some European countries to the minimum possible rate of 5% in the upcoming budget. The UK reduced VAT on condoms and other contraceptives to 5% on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006.

#### **Women of Foreign Nationalities Allowed Abortion in Sweden**

From January 2008, women of foreign nationalities are allowed to have an abortion in Sweden. The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, had long advocated this legal change and welcomed the new law.

However, in reality many women in need of a safe and legal abortion will not have the funds to travel abroad.

#### **Swedish Law Cuts Street Prostitution**

A Swedish law, introduced in 1999, outlaws buying sex and views prostitutes as victims of male violence. It was created to reduce the sale of sex nationwide, when some 2,500 native Swedes or permanent residents from abroad were working as prostitutes. By 2003, the number had dropped to 1,500.

#### **SRHR Included in Conference on Health and Migration in the EU**

The EU Conference on Health and Migration held in Lisbon in September 2007 was a success. Conference recommendations and conclusions included references to SRHR. The conference represented the main event of the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council – Health. Given the fact that migration is generally tackled under home affairs/security, linking it to a "rights" approach sets a precedent.

#### **Japan, TICAD IV and the G8 Presidency**

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has selected IPPF as a key partner for the 4th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), taking place in May 2008. TICAD was launched in 1993 by the Government of Japan to re-prioritise the development of Africa. IPPF hopes to be able to use its special designation to advocate for the mainstreaming of sexual and reproductive health within development in Africa.

IPPF also hopes to be able to use its position to mainstream sexual and reproductive health within Japan's Official Development Assistance. Crucially, TICAD IV takes place just prior to the G8 in July 2008, which is also hosted by Japan. It is expected that TICAD IV will be used as a vehicle by the Government of Japan to shape the agenda of the G8.

#### **EU-Africa Strategy and SRHR**

Strong SRHR language has been retained in the EU-Africa strategy. Paragraph 62 of this strategy states: "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) will be promoted with the aim of achieving universal access to reproductive health by 2015 and to reduce newborn, infant and

maternal morbidity and mortality, as set out by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Maputo Plan of Action.”

### **UN Parliamentary Assembly?**

The Committee for the creation of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, along with numerous Parliamentarians and NGOs met in Geneva in November 2007 to discuss plans for creating a global Parliamentary Assembly for the United Nations.

The EPF participated in the strategy discussions and provided its perspective as the only Europe-based parliamentary network already working in key areas of the UN's mandate, namely the MDGs.

### **MDG Monitor Website**

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, a new MDG Monitor website was launched by the UN along with Google and Cisco. The website is designed as a tool for policymakers to track progress through interactive maps and country-specific profiles, learn about countries' challenges and achievements and support organisations working on the MDGs around the world. The website address is: <http://www.mdgmonitor.org>.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Maternal Mortality Indicators**

Maternal mortality indicators show the greatest gap between rich and poor countries among all other health measures.

The maternal mortality ratio in 2005 was highest in developing regions, with 450 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, in stark contrast to 9 in developed regions and 51 in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Countries with the highest initial levels of mortality have made virtually no progress over the past 15 years.

Whilst an annual global decline of 5.5% in maternal mortality ratios between 1990 and 2015 is required to achieve MDG 5, figures show a current annual decline of less than 1%.

### **Croatia Limited Sex Education Programme Challenged**

A group of human rights organisations have filed the first international legal challenge to a sex education programme. The complaint has been submitted to the European Committee of Social Rights against Croatia for its sponsorship of, and efforts to expand, a discriminatory and non-science based programme which promotes abstinence at the expense of other viable alternatives such as contraception.

### **Preference for Sons High in Vietnam**

A new report from UNFPA has examined Vietnam's increasingly unbalanced sex ratio as a result of a preference for boy babies over girls. China and India have long been affected by skewed sex ratios, which have created a shortage of brides and an increase in violence and sex trafficking. The latest figures show that sex ratios in Vietnam are 110 boys to 100 girls, with ratios as high as 120 to 100 in some provinces.

### **Hungary legalises same-sex partnerships.**

The Hungarian Parliament has passed a bill legalising civil unions for both homosexual and heterosexual couples. It provides the same legal status for same-sex partners as it is in the case of traditional marriages. The bill does not provide legal basis for child adoption.

### **Abortion is Constitutional in Slovakia**

After six years, the Slovak Constitution Court recently decided that the liberal abortion law is in accordance with the constitution and thus abortions remain legal, at a woman's request, in Slovakia, up to 12 weeks.

### **Pro-Choice Demonstrations in Spain**

Police searched abortion clinics in Madrid and Barcelona in November 2007 in the belief that illegal late term abortions were being carried out. This has led to a number of pro-choice demonstrations across Spain in January 2008, with campaigners calling for abortion to be provided by the public health system and be removed from Spain's penal code.

### **MSI Global Safe Abortion Website**

The website that was created for the Global Safe Abortion Conference is still being updated. It provides useful resources and videos from the conference. <http://www.globalsafeabortion.org>.

## **SRHR PROGRAMME WORK**

### **WHO Recommend's 4 Million More Health Workers in Developing Countries**

To reduce the huge health workers shortage in developing countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) formally launched in January 2008 new-task shifting guidelines. Action mainly consists of increasing the number of physicians, nurses, midwives and less specialised health workers who can be quickly effective. This should cost \$7 billion.

### **Population Action International Report on Reproductive Risk and Teenage Pregnancy**

'A Measure of survival: calculating women's sexual and reproductive risk', a report by PAI in October 2007, ranks 130 countries, comprising 96% of the world population, into categories from highest to lowest sexual and

reproductive risk. The study's authors looked at factors including HIV prevalence, teenage birth rates, maternal deaths and infant mortality rates.

While Britain was one of the safest countries for pregnancy and childbirth, it was still only 19th safest, behind countries including Croatia, Estonia, Cuba and the Czech Republic. According to the report, Britain has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Western Europe and the authors of the report warn that teenagers, whose pregnancies were often unplanned, run a higher risk of complications in pregnancy and childbirth.

### **Abortion Figures Worldwide**

The number of induced abortions worldwide declined from nearly 46 million to under 42 million between 1995 and 2003. Abortion rates fell most significantly in Eastern Europe, a trend that corresponds with substantially increased contraceptive use in the region.

### **Female Condoms Improve Public Health in Madagascar**

The availability of female condoms is associated with more condom use, and thus better protection against STIs according to results of a USAID-supported study in Madagascar. When female condoms were added to a male-condom distribution system for sex workers, the use of protection with paying partners increased. The proportion of sex acts in which male or female condoms were used rose from 78% to 88% among paying partners and the prevalence of STIs in the study population declined from 50% to 40%.

### **New HIV Infections Nearly Doubled in EU**

According to a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control report, in November 2007, the number of new HIV infections recorded in EU countries has nearly doubled from 28.8 infections per one million residents in 1999 to 57.5 infections per one million residents in 2006. The report finds that more than 50% of infections occur through heterosexual sex. The number of HIV infections is continuing to rise most significantly in non-EU countries of Europe.

### **Catholics around the World Believe Good Catholics Can Use Condoms**

A new multinational poll, shows that Catholics the world over believe that using condoms is pro-life because it prevents the spread of HIV and AIDS. According to the poll, which interviewed Catholics living in Ghana, Ireland, Mexico, the Philippines and the United States, the support for condom use is overwhelming. When asked if "using condoms is pro-life because it helps save lives by preventing the spread of AIDS", 90%

of Catholics in Mexico, 86% in Ireland, 79% in the US, 77% in the Philippines and 59% in Ghana agreed.

### **UK SRHR:**

#### **Childbirth – NHS Compensation**

NHS compensation levels for a baby who suffers brain damage, due to negligence during birth, is £3m-£6m. Maternal death compensation can run into millions. Parents of a child who is stillborn receive £50,000-£100,000. Relatively minor damage, for example to a baby's arm, brings about £45,000. The NHS has ended up in a position where it is currently being sued for £4.5bn in compensation for alleged mistakes in just one area of its work - obstetrics.

The UK Department of Health insist that England has a good record on births. In a study of almost 2 million UK births over three years, just 50 women died of mismanaged obstetric complications.

#### **Nearly Half of UK Catholics Back Abortion**

A large minority of UK Catholics back a woman's right to have an abortion and are critical of their bishops for paying "too much attention" to the issue. A YouGov poll of 1,983 adults in the UK, conducted on behalf of US-based group Catholics for a Free Choice, has shown 43% of Catholics agreed that it should be legal for a woman to have an abortion when she has an unwanted pregnancy with only 27% disagreeing. A further 20% said they neither disagreed nor agreed.

The survey also found that 42% of Catholics agreed with the view that the Catholic bishops concentrated too much of their attention on abortion. The poll found the highest level of support for abortion among the general population with 63% of all respondents agreeing it should be legal for a woman to have an abortion when she has an unwanted pregnancy.

#### **Conservatives Call for Sex Education**

David Cameron, the leader of the Conservative Party, called for sex education lessons to discuss the issue of consent and for a review of sentencing in rape cases. Speaking to a Conservative women's conference he highlighted figures showing that at least 75% of rape cases are not reported, and of those that are, only 5.7% result in a conviction.

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