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General Debate 3 (a): Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the global, regional and national levels

(b) Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Statement submitted by Women's Health and Education Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council²

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

¹ E/CN.9/2019/1.

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Affordable contraception counselling and services to improve compliance and achieve 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Inequality and unwanted fertility in developing countries reminds us all, that maybe this is the time to attain 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, by achieving all pregnancies to be intended, consciously and clearly desired at the time of conception. Unwanted pregnancies are not only the major cause of maternal mortality and morbidity but are also a great social and financial burden to societies in both developed and developing countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are an estimated 200 million pregnancies around the world each year, and a third of these, about 75 million, are unwanted. There is no magic pill or quick-fix solution to the population explosion. Governments, healthcare providers and religious leaders working together, can contribute substantially towards a healthy future for families around the world.

Availability, accessibility and perspectives towards contraception are complex social, political and economic issues. Contraception is a women's health and human rights issue. It is about choices, not fear, guilt and shame. The negative images and concepts perceived regarding family planning and contraception in some religious and social arenas are the major factors responsible for noncompliance and meagre usage of birth control methods in many areas of the world. A fundamental tenet in ethical, female-centred care is that women have a right to participate in their choice of contraceptive method. A woman who has actively chosen a method is more likely to use it consistently and correctly. Responsible sexual behaviour and family planning should be part of men's health checks as well. This will increase users' compliance with various birth control methods. It takes two people to conceive.

The Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC), grounded in the vision of equality as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action, and peace and security. The WHEC Global Health Line (WGHL) aims to establish in collaboration with programs in low- and middle-income countries to improve maternal and child health, in collaboration with the developed countries, of mutual benefit and mutual respect, through its LINK (Learning and Innovation Network for Knowledge and Solutions) Access Project. Its syllabus is designed to promote the use of a broad understanding of women's and children's health; seek science and technology-based solutions to development challenges; and encourage the next generation, especially girls and women, to have education in science, mathematics and technology.

WGHL provides free access and educational programs to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), identified by United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This helps WHEC to address inequalities in health and education and encourage sustainable development. Contraception counselling is essential to provide accurate information about the mechanism, efficacy and safety of available options. Understanding the needs and characteristics of the individual patient can help the healthcare provider to direct her towards the method that will suit her needs in terms of efficacy, safety and ease of use. We believe our initiatives are placing public health on the 2030 agenda and it is catalysing collaborative networks – cutting across disciplines, sectors and borders.

Statement

Follow-up and review of WHEC's LINK Access Project to provide affordable reproductive research worldwide

Our Global Network is available in 227 countries and territories and 6 official languages of the United Nations. It is currently serving 14 million subscribers worldwide. It is also posted in Projects on the World Map. Please visit CSO Net, under Best Practices ID # 364: <https://esango.un.org/irene/?page=viewContent&type=2&nr=364§ion=2>.

Recommendations

1. Health and educational services should be free or low-cost and provided by healthcare providers who are non-judgmental;
2. Healthcare workers are trained in providing age-appropriate health information and welcoming towards adolescents' health and contraceptive needs;
3. Availability of preventive services such as birth-control, psychological counselling, and/or testing for sexually transmitted diseases;
4. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers;
5. Promote education, training and professional development for women of all ages;
6. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality at regional, national and international levels;
7. Provide strong and coherent leadership in support of Member States' priorities and efforts, building effective partnership and civil society and other relevant actors.

Join the initiatives of WHEC with the United Nations and the World Health Organization to promote Health and Human Rights and achieve our common goals. The desire for a healthier and better world in which to live our lives and raise our children is common to all people and all generations.
