

CSO Statement

Promoting Accountability and Addressing Inequalities: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights & Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA) and partners

We, the undersigned organizations, representing civil society organizations that gathered at the 12th APA Conference on 15 - 16 October 2014 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, are calling for stronger accountability for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for all in achieving sustainable development.

Economic growth has lifted millions of people out of poverty in Asia and the Pacific, however the region still is home to over two-thirds of the world's poorest populations. Specific challenges are holding back progress, including growing inequality both between and within countries, the unequal allocation of resources by donors and the lack of fulfilment of people's SRHR. Sexual and reproductive health problems take a huge toll on lives, families, societies and economies – and public budgets – yet they are preventable. Added to this, SRHR have high payoffs for poverty eradication, social, economic and sustainable development, and for equality and equity, because they can improve women's health, education, and economic productivity, the key elements of human capital for eradicating poverty and sustaining economic growth and development.

Governments in our region showed leadership with the adoption of the 'Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development' at the 6th Asian Pacific Population Conference (6APPC) in September 2013 in Bangkok, which served as input for the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the follow-up to the Programme of Action (PoA) of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The Declaration is a progressive and visionary agenda for the region, and it reaffirms that gender equality and SRHR are indispensable to sustainable development. This was reaffirmed in the subsequent global Framework of Actions for the follow up to the ICPD Beyond 2014.

We call on national governments, and policy makers, development partners and other duty bearers at the national, regional and global level to ensure that the ICPD PoA is fulfilled and the Ministerial Declaration is translated into action and sexual and reproductive rights fully realized. It is essential to put into place accountability mechanisms to accurately monitor the progress of implementation of the Cairo Agenda and the Declaration at all levels and across all countries, as well as ensuring strong linkages with the Post-2015 development framework. We call for the following actions:

To address the inequality that exists at regional, national and community levels:

- Recognise that gender equality, equity and SRHR are central and integral to sustainable development.
- Address the need for a quality, comprehensive and integrated approach to SRHR, with universal access to services, education and information
- Ensure the integration of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) into national strategies and programmes

- Eradicate all forms of violence, stigma, and discrimination based on age, sex, occupation, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, migrant or HIV status, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, or other. This necessitates the repeal and reform of any discriminatory laws, policies, practices and institutions
- Eliminate all forms of gender based violence and sexual violence, including intimate partner violence
- Provide universal comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and high quality youth-friendly health services for all young people regardless of socio-economic level, in formal, informal and non-formal settings
- Address harmful social practices around gender norms, in particular: sex selection, child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (and promote a 'one shop window')
- Ensure that SRHR interventions target the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Ensure attention and resources are dedicated to meeting the SRHR needs of the Pacific
- Address preventable maternal mortality and morbidity by implementing the UN Technical Guidance on the application of a human rights based approach to the reduction of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity
- Ensure linkages with the Post-2015 framework, and ensure a comprehensive, gender sensitive and human rights based approach which bridges silos and addresses inequalities in a holistic manner is embedded in the framework
- Acknowledge that key affected women and girls, including women and girls living with HIV, female sex workers, female drug users, transgender women, migrant women, and women with partners who engage in risky behaviour that places them at risk for HIV infection, are the most at-risk of and affected by HIV and ensure policies address their needs
- Ensure coverage of health insurance for SRH and voluntary confidential counselling and testing (VCCT) including prevention for unregistered migrants. A mechanism is needed to encourage employers to support SRH and HIV prevention services

We call for a rights based and people-centered development agenda based on human rights accountability and the establishment of transparent, participatory, and effective mechanisms to guarantee the full realization of rights. Meaningful civil society participation is crucial in the design and development of programs as well as implementation, including monitoring and evaluation.

Transparency:

- Review the 2013 Asia Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development as well as any Post-2015 commitments by governments with full involvement of civil society.
- Create an enabling environment which recognizes the indispensable role of civil society in achieving not only social development goals but also political, economic and human rights objectives.
- Monitor progress in achieving SRHR, social equality and equity

Participation:

- Engage and enable communities and vulnerable populations to claim their rights.
- Put into place mechanisms which will facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue, including active engagement of multi-sectoral partners in developing and implementing country level plans.
- Include civil society and parliamentarians as representatives on government delegations in intergovernmental processes

- Engage and involve communities in the process of planning, monitoring and evaluation in SRHR programmes and policies. In particular, young people and marginalized or vulnerable groups.
- Ensure civil society participation in official development programs
- Guarantee meaningful participation of key affected women and girls in, but not limited to, development, implementation and monitoring of programmes

Effectiveness:

- Collect and utilize disaggregated data at both national and state level to gain an accurate picture of progress and how it improves the lives of vulnerable and marginalized groups, particularly rural/urban, age, gender and other socio-economic indicators
- Support gender-sensitive research that provides the evidence for policy making and programming related to SRHR and development
- Ensure civil society participation in national consultations and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, particularly those working on SRHR issues
- Strengthen institutional responses on access to justice, and establishing redressal mechanisms

Financing:

Financing should focus on inclusive and sustainable development. This means:

- Ensure that developed countries fulfil the global target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income towards official development assistance and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of comprehensive SRHR interventions in the region
- Encourage resource mobilization for SRHR in middle income countries, to help address the trend of growing inequities and inequalities
- Strengthen leadership on financial accountability. Parliamentarians should work with civil society in their resourcing function, including monitoring plans and budgets, as an important aspect of effective governance. National budgets should be analyzed with a health and gender lens
- Target and ensure resources to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and underserved groups, including key affected populations
- Ensure that the Pacific is included in regional resource mobilization, plans and strategies

Organizations

Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD)

Aliansi Remaja Independen (ARI)

Asian Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (AFPPD)

Burnet Institute

Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP)

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)

Family Planning Association of India

Family Planning NSW

Family Planning New Zealand

Indonesia Planned Parenthood Association (IPPA)

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) South Asia Regional Office (SARO)

International Council on Management of Population Programmes (ICOMP)

IPPF East & Southeast Asia and Oceania Region (ESEAR)

Japan Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP)

Maries Stopes International (MSI) Australia

Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA)

Pathfinder International Vietnam

Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand (PPAT)

Planned Population Federation of Korea (PPFK)
Population Foundation of India (PFI)
Raks Thai Foundation
The Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka
Vietnam Family Planning Association (VINAFFPA)
Women's Global Network of Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)
Youth Coalition



The Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA) brings together nongovernmental organisations, donors and other stakeholders with common goals to build a strong network to ensure everyone's right to health is fully achieved through the promotion and inclusion of SRHR in development agendas.

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