



Influencing the United Nations Commission on Population and Development Outcome

January 2015

CASE STUDY

The African Women Leaders Network for Reproductive Health and Family Planning (AWLN) successfully advocated for the inclusion of strong family planning language in the outcome report of the 47th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD47) in New York, April 7-11, 2014. This milestone is a critical one for elevating the visibility of family planning on the global stage, engaging high-level leaders from the global South, and ensuring family planning is included in the post-2015 development agenda.

In collaboration with other advocates and stakeholders, AWLN—a partner in the Advance Family Planning (AFP) initiative—contributed to this success through eight months of sustained advocacy with strong, consistent messaging at strategic points in the CPD development process. AWLN members actively participated in drafting regional and national documents prior to CPD47 and, as a part of official national delegations during the meetings, were able to influence the deliberations as they unfolded.

Specific mention of family planning in the negotiated outcome document will enable governments,

especially in the global South, to make the investments needed to broaden access to voluntary, quality, modern contraception and contribute to improved maternal health, reduced child mortality, and enhanced quality of life for women and girls.

Repositioning Family Planning

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development¹ (ICPD), 179 governments adopted a 20-year Programme of Action, which repositioned population in relation to development and prioritized sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).² Governments were expected to put in place strategies aimed at achieving the goals and objectives set out in the ICPD Programme of Action. Advocates heralded the conference as a turning point for advancing SRHR.

However, two decades later, the Programme of Action has yet to live up to its promise in terms of family planning. More than 200 million women want but lack access to effective contraception. Lack of access to SRHR for women and girls accounts for one of the greatest constraints to receiving an education, achieving financial independence, and reaching their

full potential as individuals. It is also associated with a greater likelihood of exposure to gender inequality, discrimination, violence, and disempowerment.³

At its annual convening in August 2013, AWLN prioritized the 20-year review of the ICPD and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in its advocacy efforts.⁴ AWLN recognized the danger that family planning and SRHR would be overlooked in post-2015 discussions. Network members set out to ensure that country positions included strong recommendations for the inclusion of family planning in the CPD47 process as well as in the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which succeed the MDGs in 2016. AWLN embarked on a multi-level advocacy strategy to ensure that its requests to policymakers were reflected in critical points in the lead up to the CPD47 meeting in New York. (See Boxes on AWLN's Advocacy Asks and Family Planning Language Adopted in the Outcome Report of CPD47)

Engaging at the National and Regional Level

For key countries, AWLN members participated in consultation review meetings as advisors, meeting conveners, or drafters of country and regional statements. This positioning enabled ALWN to influence the language of the outcome statements in their respective countries by emphasizing the critical importance of family planning and reproductive health in advancing human rights and development. Five AWLN members from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda and one representative from the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), the AWLN co-secretariat, actively engaged in country-level preparation processes leading up to CPD47. All six were included in the official country delegations to CPD47 for their respective countries.

In September 2013, AWLN participated in two meetings at the Africa Regional Conference on Population and Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The first was a meeting of women's rights organizations, organized alongside the regional consultation to present the women's rights perspective on the Beyond 2014

process. Two AWLN members made presentations at the meeting on the need to see family planning and reproductive health as rights issues and the need to include them in the joint statement issued after the meeting. The second was the civil society organizations (CSO) pre-meeting consultation organized to include CSO input into the regional position document.

The strong language advocated for by AWLN members was accepted and included in the CSO recommendations. Importantly, an AWLN member was involved in the drafting committee for the CSO recommendations, which were presented to the African Regional Ministerial Meeting. These recommendations were subsequently reflected in the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and adopted as the negotiating document for Africa at CPD47.

In February 2014, AWLN members led sessions and

AWLN'S ADVOCACY ASKS

- Prioritize and adequately finance universal access to comprehensive, quality and integrated sexual and reproductive health services that is age appropriate and includes adequate counseling and information.
- Reposition family planning as a as a key development driver and ensure universal access to the full range of family planning choices to reduce maternal mortality.
- Ensure equitable access to a full range of acceptable, affordable, safe, effective and high-quality contraceptives of choice and user-friendly, comprehensive maternal health services.

presented at The 6th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights held in Yaoundé, Cameroon to once again advocate for inclusion of family planning and reproductive health at CPD47. AWLN asks were reflected in the conference outcome document submitted to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as another channel to influence the language of the CPD outcome document.

In March 2014, AWLN members ensured that the Pre-CPD and Post-2015 consultative meeting in Nairobi, Kenya included its asks in the outcome document, meant to influence delegations and government positions at CPD and beyond. AWLN members led discussions on the review of the Common African Position and made further suggestions for strengthening the language of the recommendations.

Achieving Results

By April 2014, when CPD47 began, AWLN's preparation

began paying off. Network members from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda participated as part of their official government delegations. Members participated in joint briefing sessions for the African CSO Caucus to review country positions and strategize on ways in which to influence delegates and the deliberations. AWLN members who were official country delegates were able to use messages and language that had been agreed at the CSO Caucus meetings to influence adoption of specific language in individual country statements. Daily AWLN team meetings were also held to compare notes and share strategies for taking remedial action when there were difficulties in getting strong family planning and reproductive health language and asks into country positions.

Lessons Learned

- **National and regional advocacy informs international advocacy:** It was important to begin



“at home” and build trust and confidence among policymakers at the national level. This strategy enabled AWLN to influence their respective country teams, which propagated up through regional and international processes.

- **Consistent, focused, evidence-based messages increase the chances for success:** AWLN invested significant resources in developing the case for family planning and reproductive health and core advocacy asks that were tailored to national, regional, and international agenda-setting opportunities. AWDF and International Planned Parenthood Federation, Africa Regional Office–

AWLN’s co–secretariats–combined their technical resources to strategize for each opportunity.

Next Steps

Looking ahead, 2015 will be crucial for influencing the post-2015 agenda. AWLN will continue to engage at multiple levels. The 59th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59), CPD48 and the International Conference on Financing for Development will be important venues for stressing the importance of a standalone maternal health goal and targets for access to contraception and family planning. AWLN members have already begun to reach out to key

Family planning language adopted in the outcome report of the 47th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development

RECOGNIZING THAT:

“health is a precondition for economic and social development and aware that **sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are central** to the realization of social justice and to the achievement of global, regional, and national commitments for sustainable development”

CPD URGES GOVERNMENTS TO:

“address existing gaps in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action including in the area of, inter alia, the respect, protection, promotion and fulfillment of human rights, gender equality, and empowerment of women and girls, unequal progress in **achieving universal and equitable access to health services, including for sexual and reproductive health...**”

“give particular attention to the areas of shortfall in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, including, among others...**equitable and universal access to quality, integrated and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, as well as ensuring access to adolescents and youth** to full and accurate information and education on sexual and reproductive health, including evidence-based comprehensive education on human sexuality, and promotion, respect, protection, and fulfillment of all human rights, especially the human rights of women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights...”

AND EMPHASIZES THAT:

“to realize and capitalize on demographic dividend, it is essential to increase and sustain investment in women and youth, especially...**meeting the unmet needs of women for family planning...**”

SOURCES: United Nations Commission on Population and Development, Report on the 47th Session, New York, 7-11 April 2014. Assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, E/2014/25-E/CN.9/2014/7.

officials in member countries to explore country priorities regarding family planning and reproductive health. Concurrently they are exploring opportunities for consolidating gains made and employing similar national, regional, and global strategies.

References

¹ United Nations Commission on Population and Development, Report on the 47th Session, New York, 7-11 April 2014. Assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, E/2014/25-E/CN.9/2014/7. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2014/25

² Report of the International Conference on Population and

Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex. <http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2004/icpd_eng.pdf>

³ United Nations Population Fund, <http://www.unfpa.org/rh/planning.htm>

⁴ Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014. Report of the Secretary-General. A/69/62. 12 February 2014. <http://icpdbeyond2014.org/uploads/browser/files/93632_unfpa_eng_web.pdf>

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AWLN members advocate for family planning and reproductive health at a regional summit.



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Advance Family Planning (AFP) aims to increase the financial investment and political commitment needed to ensure access to quality family planning through evidence-based advocacy. An initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, AFP works to achieve the goals of the FP2020 initiative: to enable women and girls in some of the world's poorest countries to use contraceptive information, services and supplies, without coercion or discrimination.

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