

PRESS RELEASE

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Forum Demands Concrete Action On Cairo Commitments

BERLIN, September 4 — Activists for women’s health and rights today demanded “concrete, practical and fully-funded actions” by governments to fulfill their 15 years of promises about investing in equality, human rights and social and economic development, especially for women and girls.

In a five-point Berlin Call to Action ending the *Global Partners in Action* forum here, more than 400 delegates from 131 countries urged the international community to meet the 2015 deadline for achieving the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

“As urgent as the ICPD agenda was in 1994, it is even more so today,” said the declaration, which the non-governmental organization (NGO) delegates hammered out in a late-night session after three days of talks. “We demand that all governments fulfill the commitments made to their own people and the international community at Cairo in 1994.”

The ICPD created “a visionary global consensus” among 179 governments that overturned existing demographics-based approaches to achieving sustainable development, reducing poverty and slowing population growth in favor of policies based on meeting the needs of individuals for human rights and sexual and reproductive health care. Reaffirmed in many United Nations and international meetings ever since, including the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Cairo Consensus pledged investments that in too many cases have not been made.

“With five years left,” the Berlin Call to Action said, “we call on local, national and international decision-makers to join with non-governmental organizations to establish and implement concrete, practical and fully-funded actions for ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights.”

The NGOs pledged cooperation with policymakers and urged immediate national, government and international action to:

- **Guarantee that sexual and reproductive rights, as human rights, are fully recognized and fulfilled,** through legal reforms and new family policies;
- **Invest in comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, supplies and services as a priority in health systems strengthening,** by increasing access for all (especially in emergency settings) to family planning and skilled maternal and newborn health care, and to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services, and by addressing unsafe abortion as a public health and human rights issue;

- **Ensure the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents and young people**, by removing barriers to their access to information and services and empowering them to make policies and informed decisions about their own lives;
- **Create and implement formal mechanisms for meaningful civil society participation in programs, policy and budget decisions, monitoring and evaluation**, by protecting advocates as human rights defenders, involving young people, marginalized groups and NGOs in policy dialogue and guaranteeing them autonomy; **and**
- **Ensure that donor contributions and national budgets and policies meet the needs of all people for sexual and reproductive health and rights**, especially during times of economic stress.

The NGOs also asked decision-makers to adopt principles of equity and equality, inclusiveness and transparency, accountability and sustainability, and processes free from fundamentalist doctrines that restrict human rights.

“Human beings cannot live in dignity without the full implementation of the ICPD Program of Action,” the statement said. “It is a matter of human rights, democracy and equality for all.”

Theme of the *Global Partners in Action: NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development* was “Invest in Health, Rights and the Future.” It was co-hosted by the Government of Germany’s Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and UNFPA, the UN Population Fund, with additional support from the MacArthur Foundation.

For additional information and the full text of the Berlin Call to Action, visit www.globalngoforum.org