

Prioritizing Family Planning in the Global Strategy Update

Organizational statement

March 20, 2015

We, the undersigned partners and collaborators of the Advance Family Planning (AFP) initiative, support the effort to update the *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health* and to establish new funding mechanisms for development through the Global Financing Facility (GFF). The 2010 Global Strategy built a strong platform on which to grow: it established a rights-based strategy with clear targets, such as Millennium Development Goal 5b, which set global expectations for universal voluntary access to contraceptives. For the 2015 update, AFP and its partners urge an even greater emphasis on the benefits of investing in family planning and recommendations to operationalize stronger family planning programs. We recommend that the updated strategy emphasize:

- **Access to high-quality, voluntary family planning is critical to delivering the aims of the Global Strategy.** Any country wanting to reduce maternal and newborn deaths, fight extreme poverty, promote sustainable economic development, and strengthen human rights and equity must give women, men, and young people control over their fertility. Family planning is the most cost-effective public health and development intervention and should be included as a 'best buy' intervention in the Global Strategy and any new funding mechanism.
- **Universal health coverage (UHC) includes universal access to family planning.** The Global Strategy should set the global norms and standards for UHC, and call for all UHC programs to deliver universal access to family planning services, information, and a full range of supplies. Coverage cannot be universal if some services, users, and supplies are routinely left off the list. Financial protection packages (i.e. prepaid health services under universal health coverage schemes) often exclude essential and routine family planning services, such as contraceptives.
- **Better coordination with country plans and priorities means engaging subnational governments.** The success of a national framework, such as that proposed by the Global Strategy and GFF, depends on the active engagement of subnational governments. Focusing on financing at the national level alone ignores the roles and resources of regional and provincial government leaders. By addressing the devolution of governance, the Global Strategy can set a firmer foundation for long-term sustainability of development policies and programs.
- **Stronger accountability and transparency requires involvement of government officials, parliamentarians, and civil society.** The Global Strategy should ensure that there is a strong and robust system of monitoring progress and tracking resource flows at the global, national, and subnational levels. This requires transparency on the part of the development community, as well as ensuring a system of accountability is in place. In addition, the Global Strategy and GFF indicator framework must include strong family planning indicators, such as: contraceptive prevalence rate and met demand for modern contraception, and percent of GFF funding allocated to family planning. In addition, civil society must be afforded a formal role in the design and establishment of the GFF and in the design of national plans, financing maps, and accountability efforts.

- **A rights-based framework includes sexual and reproductive health and rights**—women, men, and young people should have access to full range of contraceptive information and methods to meet their needs. Young people in particular should have access to age appropriate sexuality education, which also builds understanding on contraceptive choices available to them. Having both quality and choice equals rights. Voluntary family planning and access to modern contraception are essential elements of promoting gender equity and human rights.
- **Investments in health systems strengthening should be targeted towards scaling up the health workforce needed to deliver family planning services**, including logisticians and supply chain managers, as well as enhancing health information systems and ensuring equitable and sustainable access to family planning supplies and technologies.

More than 225 million women in the world want to prevent pregnancy but are not using effective and affordable, modern methods of contraception. This results in 80 million unintended pregnancies, 30 million unintended births and 20 million unsafe abortions every year. Fulfilling the unmet need for family planning would prevent 150,000 maternal deaths and 640,000 newborn deaths globally each year.

Seventy-three low and middle income countries have already made explicit national commitments to family planning and sexual and reproductive health. The Global Strategy and GFF should support national progress toward these commitments and, as the Sustainable Development Goals take shape, provide a clear path to ensuring that high-quality services and supplies are available to the women, men, and young people that are demanding them.

Signatories	
The Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health	African Women Leaders Network for Reproductive Health and Family Planning
African Women’s Development Fund	Equilibres et Population, Burkina Faso
Health Promotion Tanzania	Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs - Indonesia
International Planned Parenthood Federation	Jhpiego Kenya
John Snow, Inc.	Pathfinder International
Partners in Population and Development, Africa Regional Office	Population Action International
Reproductive Health Uganda	United Nations Association of Tanzania
Yayasan Cipta Cara Padu Foundation, Indonesia	

Advance Family Planning aims to increase 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 aims to achieve the goals of the Family Planning 2020 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. AFP is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.