2014 marks the target year of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA), followed by the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While progress has been made, these ambitious and forward-looking objectives remain unfinished. Political will and financial investments by governments have not been sufficient in guaranteeing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents and youth globally.

Both the ICPD PoA and the MDGs provide opportunities to integrate issues and adopt a comprehensive human rights approach into their development and implementation.

However, the work on both processes has been done largely in silos with insufficient discussion around combining issues into both agendas alongside a human rights-based approach to development.

Unfortunately, several arguments made in the report are rooted in a demographic approach to population. This is a concerning trend as we move into the Post-2015 development framework and away from the ICPD people centered approach to a reductionist approach of valuing the rights of youth and adolescent. Human rights principles – not demographic numbers – should be the core foundation of the new development framework.

ICPD Beyond 2014 & Emerging Issues

Building on the last twenty years of the ICPD PoA, governments must recognize emerging issues in the Post-2015 Development Framework. The following three issues are crucial for moving forward:

1. The recognition of sexual rights, which reaffirm and protect everyone’s right to fulfill and express their sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity and to have a responsible, pleasurable and healthy sex life. While sexual rights were not recognized at the ICPD, we strongly applaud the Report of the Secretary General (E/CN.9/2014/4), the Addis Ababa Declaration (pg 7.35), the Montevideo Consensus (p. 15.34), the Asia and Pacific Declaration (pg 14-15) and the Bail Declaration (United Nations, pg. 10, sec. 3.3) in recognizing sexual rights. A sustainable Post-2015 Development Agenda must ensure that all people have control over their own bodies and lives; sexual rights are crucial toward this end.

The evidence presented by the review overwhelmingly supports the ICPD consensus that the respect, protection, promotion and fulfillment of human rights are necessary preconditions to improving the development, dignity and well-being of all people; and that sexual and reproductive health and rights, and an understanding of the implications of population dynamics are critical foundations for sustainable development.” — Report of the Secretary General: Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014.
2. In 1994, the language of the ICPD was structured in a binary way: male versus female and husband versus wife. Labeling someone as male or female is a social construct through which strict gender divisions are maintained (Sterling 2000).

The Montevideo Consensus and Global Youth Forum Bali Declaration are important steps toward the elimination of binary gender divisions that exclude key populations and the increased recognition of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. To ensure that the Post-2015 Development Agenda will be the basis of a dignified life for all that is free of all forms of discrimination, governments need to move away from a binary understanding of gender and recognize, accept and embrace the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identities. It is evident that using heteronormativity as the basis for crafting policy and programs have failed the essence of the ICPD PoA (NAZ Foundation).

3. In 1994, the ICPD was compromised when stating that measures related to safe abortion access were subject to national legislative processes. Such national-level restrictions limit the ability of women and girls to fully exercise their reproductive rights. Providing access to on-demand safe abortion services is a matter of safeguarding the lives of women and girls and a matter of human rights respect (ICPD Beyond 2014: 96).

Abortions rights are particularly important to youth. Adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 account for 40% of all unsafe abortions worldwide and three million unsafe abortions occur every year among this age group (Women’s Refugee Commission et al. 2012). It is crucial for the well being of young people that the Post-2015 Development Agenda focus on the removal of unnecessary restrictions on abortion in all countries.

Challenges and Opportunities of ICPD Beyond 2014 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

As part of the preparations for the discussions on Post-2015, the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLPEP) released its report, *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development* in May 2013. This report illustrates the overall trend in discussions on Post-2015, which fail to address growing inequalities and to critique the current neo-liberal economic structures that implicitly prioritize the benefit of corporations over the interest of people’s human rights (Bello 2013: 100).

As mentioned above, both the ICPD PoA targets and MDGs remain unattained, failing to be the transformative agendas governments once aspired them to be. A key challenge is that many governments translate policy and programs on poverty eradication, health, education, economic growth and environmental sustainability as separate from human rights, especially sexual and reproductive rights.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are at the root of development and need to be respected, protected and promoted by governments as agreed 20 years ago. The discussions on ICPD Beyond 2014 and Post-2015 provide governments with an opportunity to create a transformative agenda that addresses systemic inequalities and builds upon the intersectionality of human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and development.

> “These are the most intimate and fundamental of human rights, as they relate to making informed decisions about basic aspects of life – one’s body, sexuality, health, relationships, marriage and having children. Achieving poverty eradication, educational, health, economic and sustainable development objectives hinge on the fulfillment of these rights for all women, men and young people.” — High Level Taskforce for ICPD (2013)

### Recommendations

1. **We call on governments to work in equal partnership with young people, especially youth-led organizations, in the development of goals, targets and indicators for the ICPD Beyond 2014 and the Post-2015 Development Framework.** Partnership with young people is the catalyst of a transformative agenda.

2. **We call on governments to endorse the ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Report, organize national consultations to discuss its findings, implement the recommendations, and take the report forward into discussions on the Post-2015 Development framework.**

3. We call on governments to develop targets and indicators that fill the gaps identified in the ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Report, especially those related to young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights.

4. **We urge governments to build on the commitments of the ICPD PoA by utilizing a human rights-based approach as the foundation of the Post-2015 development agenda that recognizes youth and adolescent sexual and reproductive rights.**

5. **We call on governments to reiterate the progressive outcomes of the ICPD+20 thematic and regional review within the Post-2015 Development Framework discussion, including the recognition of sexual and reproductive health and rights as integral to development.**

In considering the ICPD+20 Review within the Post-2015 Development Agenda,

6. **We call on governments to address the emerging issues emphasized in the ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Report with specific targets and indicators, especially on those related to access and provision of safe and legal abortion, comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly health services.**

7. **We call on governments to recognize and promote the rights of young people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity within the Post-2015 Development Framework debates.** The particular challenges that young people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities face, including violence, discrimination and limited access to sexual and reproductive health information and services are unacceptable.

8. **We call on governments to improve accountability mechanisms that safeguard the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all people, including young people, within the ICPD PoA and ensure the protection and promotion of youth and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights at the national level beyond 2014.**

9. **We call on governments to prioritize public investment for the ICPD Beyond 2014 agenda and recommendations given its strategic niche on addressing systematic inequalities and its emphasis on the promotion of youth and adolescent well-being.**

### Bibliography


### References for further reading & bibliography


1 Sexual rights has been adopted as UN agreed language. It has been included within the outcome of the Global Youth Forum (2012) and the UNECLAC and UNESCAP Regional Population Conferences on ICPD (2013), all which have been part of the ICPD+20 Operational Review.