

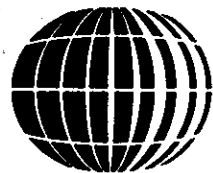
COORDINACION DE HUMANIDADES



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"IPPF and its member associations
promote and defend the right of
women and men, including young
people, to decide freely the number
and spacing of their children, and the
right to the highest possible level of
sexual and reproductive health."

IPPF Vision 2000 - Strategic Plan,
approved 1992 (Mission Statement).



International Planned
Parenthood Federation

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No prece-
dente en el
mundo



**THE HUMAN
RIGHT TO
FAMILY PLANNING
AND SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH**



International
Planned
Parenthood
Federation

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1 Salud reproductiva
2 Planificación familiar
3 Decisión personal

THE HUMAN RIGHT TO FAMILY PLANNING AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Foreword

Since 1968, when family planning was first enshrined as a human right at the Teheran human rights conference, the value of family planning and of individuals and couples being able to make their own childbearing decisions has been widely accepted. Today, over half of all couples are planning when to have children by using contraception and family size has dropped in most areas of the world. The health of women and children has improved and the rate of global population increase is slowing down. Most governments around the world are now persuaded that family planning is a right of all concerned individuals.

The changes in the attitude towards family planning were reflected at two recent international conferences: at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, and again in 1995 in Beijing at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The focus in the documents emerging from these conferences clearly stressed the expansion from the right to family planning towards establishing the right to better sexual and reproductive health.

The latter focus reflects the position of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). IPPF's *Vision 2000* Strategic Plan, approved in 1992 by all IPPF's member family planning associations, states clearly the Federation's determination to promote the right to sexual and reproductive health. This determination was

reinforced in 1995 when IPPF drew up a Sexual and Reproductive Rights Charter, setting out the fundamental principles underlying IPPF's work and intended also to be useful to other partners in this field.

This leaflet charts the evolution of rights in this area. It quotes international endorsements of the right to family planning and reproductive and sexual health information and services over the last 25 years.

Despite the progress, many millions of people are still not able to exercise their right to family planning. I believe that as long as there are women anywhere in the world who lack the freedom to make reproductive choices and who continue to suffer and die because of unwanted pregnancies, we have a vital task to do. The human rights to family planning and to sexual and reproductive health and well-being, must be realized. I hope this leaflet will prove useful to all those working in the development field to promote such rights.



Ingar Brueggemann
Secretary General
International Planned Parenthood Federation



NOTABLE DATES

*in the development of rights to family
planning and sexual and reproductive health*

60s

70s

70s

1968

**UN International
Conference on
Human Rights**
(Teheran)

The Teheran Declaration stated that parents had the basic human right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and a right to adequate education and information.

1974

**World Population
Conference**
(Bucharest)

This conference gave the right to family planning to couples and individuals, rather than parents, and stated the right to the means – as well as to information and education – to decide the number and spacing of children.

1978

**International
Conference on
Primary Health Care**
(USSR)

The Alma Ata Declaration established family planning as part of maternal and child health care.

1979

**UN Convention on
the Elimination of All
Forms of
Discrimination
Against Women**

The convention emphasized equality between men and women in their right and ability to control reproduction. It required member states to eliminate discrimination against women in the exercise of their right to health care, including family planning, and in all matters relating to marriage and family relations.

1984

**UN International
Conference on
Population**
(Mexico City)

Recommendations from the Mexico population conference stated that it was a matter of urgency for governments to make universally available information, education and the means to assist couples and individuals to achieve their desired number of children. Family planning should include all medically approved methods and particular attention should be given to those hard to reach. For the first time, governments were asked to meet the needs of adolescents for adequate family life and sex education and to make available appropriate services.

80s

1985

**Forward-Looking
Strategies for the
Advancement of
Women**
(Nairobi)

Adolescent girls were identified as a significant group at risk of unwanted pregnancy and in special need of government attention.

90s

1993

**UN World Conference
on Human Rights**
(Vienna)

The Vienna Declaration for the first time specified that the human rights of women and of the girl child were an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The declaration reaffirmed a woman's right to accessible and adequate health care and the widest range of family planning services. Also for the first time, violence against women was recognized as a human rights abuse.

1994

**International Conference
on Population and
Development (ICPD)**
(Cairo)

The ICPD Programme of Action established the right of couples and individuals to attain the highest standard of reproductive health, which was defined as including sexual health and family planning. The conference reiterated the right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents, and stated that the promotion of the responsible exercise of these rights for all people should be the fundamental basis for government and community-supported policies and programmes



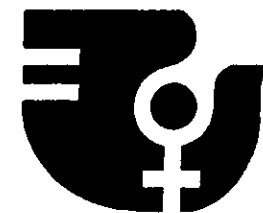
in the area of reproductive health. The conference made it a goal to achieve universal access to a full range of safe and reliable family planning methods, and to related reproductive health services, by 2015. Programmes for adolescents should include education and counselling on gender relations and equality, responsible family planning practice, reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS prevention. Governments were urged to deal with unsafe abortion as a major public health concern.

90s 90s

1995

**Fourth World Conference on
Women** (Beijing)

The Platform for Action urged governments to ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child. The right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their fertility, was said to be basic to their empowerment. The document stated that reproductive health and family planning programmes should include education and awareness raising about reproductive rights as human rights.



The conference recognized a distinction between women's rights in relation to their sexuality and those related to reproduction. Female genital mutilation was classified as violence against women and therefore a violation of their human rights. Governments were urged to review laws containing punitive measures against women who had undergone illegal abortion.

THE RIGHT TO FAMILY PLANNING

Human rights

"Parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."

Proclamation, adopted unanimously at the UN International Conference on Human Rights, Teheran, 1968 (Article 16)

"All couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have information and means to do so; the responsibility of couples and individuals in the exercise of this right takes into account the needs of their living and future children, and their responsibilities towards the community."

World Population Plan of Action, agreed by a consensus of 136 governments at the UN World Population Conference in Bucharest, 1974 (paragraph 14(f)).

"... the World Conference reaffirms, on the basis of equality between women and men, a woman's right to accessible and adequate health care and the widest range of family planning services, as well as equal access to education at all levels."

Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, 1993 (Part II, paragraph 41).

Human rights conferences

The right to family planning received its first official, universal endorsement from 157 governments at the United Nations International Conference on Human Rights in 1968. Previously, in 1966, a resolution of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly had stated that "the size of the family should be the free choice of each individual", and it was a natural progression when the 1968 conference, convened to reaffirm and update the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reached agreement on the issue. It stated the right of parents to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and the right to adequate education and information.

Since then, the right has been repeatedly restated in international documents, and has been extended from the right to information and education to the right to the means to plan families, and from the right of parents to the right of couples and individuals, including the young. At the most recent World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, the declaration reaffirmed, on the basis of equality between women and men, a woman's right to accessible and adequate health care and the widest range of family planning services. This was the first conference at which women's rights were distinguished separately from human rights, and the final

declaration made the full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex priorities for the international community. It called for an end to all forms of violence against women, including sexual slavery and forced pregnancy.

Other international documents

In 1978, the momentous Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care identified family planning as an essential component of health care.

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, requires member states to eliminate discrimination against women in the exercise of their right to health care, including family planning. To date 140 countries have ratified the Convention, and therefore have an obligation to offer all their citizens family planning information and services. The Convention states that governments have this obligation regardless of their population policies. For many countries, however, even when the appropriate legislation is enacted, lack of government commitment or lack of resources means that the right is not translated into reality.

The Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted in Nairobi

"The Fourth World Conference on Women reaffirms that reproductive rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents."

Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 (paragraph 223).

Health

"Primary health includes at least: education concerning prevailing health problems and the methods of preventing and controlling them; promotion of food supply and proper nutrition, an adequate supply of safe water, and basic sanitation; maternal and child health care, including family planning; immunization against the major infectious diseases; prevention and control of locally endemic diseases; appropriate treatment of common diseases and injuries; and provision of essential drugs."

Declaration of Alma Ata, International Conference on Primary Health Care, USSR 1978 (paragraph VII(3)).

"Everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States should take all appropriate measures to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, universal access to health care services, including those related to reproductive health care, which includes family planning and sexual health. Reproductive health care programmes should provide the widest range of services without any form of coercion. All couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so."

Programme of Action, International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994 (Principle 8).

"All Governments and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are urged to strengthen their commitment to women's health, to deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern and to reduce the recourse to abortion through expanded and improved family-planning services."

Programme of Action, International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994 (paragraph 8.25).

"The explicit recognition and reaffirmation of the right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility, is basic to their empowerment."

Beijing Declaration, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 (paragraph 17).

in 1985, further specified that "all medically approved and appropriate methods" should be made available, as well as education in responsible parenthood.

More recent international declarations, including the 1984 International Conference on Population held in Mexico City, have stressed the urgency of government responses to the needs of their citizens, particularly "those segments of the population which are most vulnerable and difficult to reach".

The latest world population conference, the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, specified a time, 2015, by which governments should provide universal access to a full range of family planning services. The number of governments providing such services has gradually increased. Nevertheless, in many countries the private sector is still required to be the torchbearer for family planning, to fill gaps in provision and to demonstrate to governments the ways in which services can be provided in order to enable people to exercise their right to plan their families.

National constitutions

The human right to family planning has increasingly found expression in national constitutions, even in francophone Africa where old colonial French laws are still in place, and in Latin America. The right is fundamental to the establishment of equal

rights for men and women since it underscores the right of women to control and manage their own fertility and thus enables them to enjoy other human rights, for example the right to good health.

A GRADUAL PROGRESSION OF RIGHTS

The right given to adolescents

The right to family planning is now well established. While it was given to "parents" in the original 1968 conference, it was extended to "all couples and individuals" in the 1974 World Population Plan of Action (at Bucharest) and in the recommendations from the 1984 UN International Conference on Population (Mexico City). This 1984 conference had an additional clause recommending that "suitable family planning information and services should be made available to adolescents within the changing socio-cultural framework of each country".

The 1985 Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women identified adolescent girls as a significant group at risk of unwanted pregnancy and therefore in special need of government attention.

Despite these enjoiners, most governments have been slow to provide sex education for young people. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo) called on governments to protect and

Young people

"Governments, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, are urged to meet the special needs of adolescents and to establish appropriate programmes to respond to those needs. Such programmes should include support mechanisms for the education and counselling of adolescents in the areas of gender relations and equality, violence against adolescents, responsible sexual behaviour, responsible family planning practice, family life, reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection and AIDS prevention."

Programme of Action, International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994 (paragraph 7.47).

"Ensure the full enjoyment by women and the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and take effective action against violation of these rights and freedoms."

Beijing Declaration, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 (paragraph 23).

Women's status

"Governments must take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women, in order to ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women, the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to exercise these rights."

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979, ratified by 140 States (Article 16).

"Advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility, are cornerstones of population and development-related programmes. The human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, are priority objectives of the international community."

Programme of Action, International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994 (Principle 4).

promote the rights of adolescents to reproductive health education, information and care, and greatly reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies. Governments should ensure that adolescents have access to appropriate services and the information they need, including on sexually transmitted diseases and sexual abuse. It stated that services must safeguard the rights of adolescents to privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent, respecting cultural values and religious beliefs.

Extending the right to include sexual and reproductive health

The 1994 Cairo population conference was the first to move the emphasis away from demographic targets towards people-centred recommendations. Its final document repeated the right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and added their right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health as well. The promotion of the responsible exercise of these rights for all people should be the fundamental basis for government and community-supported policies and programmes in the area of reproductive health, including family planning.

The conference also specified the right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as

expressed in human rights documents. In the exercise of this right, couples and individuals should take into account the needs of their living and future children and their responsibilities towards the community.

The Platform for Action from the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women stated that lack of family planning and other health-related services had put women at risk of maternal mortality, malnutrition, anaemia and too early and too frequent pregnancies. It called for reproductive health and family planning programmes, including education and raising awareness about reproductive rights as human rights. It urged governments to ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Freedom of choice

Freedom of choice is the overriding value which has been established in international documents. Nations with many different traditions, cultures and religious beliefs have accepted family planning as a basic human right, although the Vatican, which has a vote in the United Nations, has consistently rejected the more liberal language used. In 1994, the Holy See expressed a general reservation on the reproductive rights and reproductive health chapter in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on

"The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences."

Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 (paragraph 96).

Access to services

"Governments should, as a matter of urgency, make universally available information, education and the means to assist couples and individuals to achieve their desired number of children. Family planning information, education and means should include all medically approved and appropriate methods of family planning, to ensure a voluntary and free choice in accordance with changing individual and cultural values. Particular attention should be given to those segments of the population which are most vulnerable and difficult to reach."

Recommendations from the UN International Conference on Population, Mexico City 1984 (Recommendation 25).

"All countries should take steps to meet the family planning needs of their populations as soon as possible and should, in all cases by the year 2015, seek to provide universal access to a full range of safe and reliable family planning methods and to related reproductive health services which are not against the law. The aim should be to assist couples and individuals to achieve their reproductive goals and give them the full opportunity to exercise the right to have children by choice."

Programme of Action, International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994 (paragraph 7.16).

"Ensure equal access to and equal treatment of women and men in education and health care and enhance women's sexual and reproductive health as well as education."

Beijing Declaration, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 (paragraph 30).

IPPF will ...

"Advance the basic human right of all women, men and youth to make free and informed choices regarding their own sexual and reproductive health, and advocate for the means to exercise this right."

IPPF Vision 2000 – Strategic Plan, approved 1992 (Goal 1).

Population and Development. According to this document, reproductive health objectives are to ensure that comprehensive and factual information and a full range of reproductive health care services, including family planning, are accessible, affordable, acceptable and convenient to all users. They should enable and support responsible voluntary decisions about childbearing and methods of family planning of choice, as well as other methods of choice for the regulation of fertility which are not against the law.

IPPF AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The human right to family planning was the fundamental principle on which IPPF's constitution was based in 1953. The Federation has recently reaffirmed, in its mission statement, that it will work to promote and defend this right, and the right to the highest possible level of sexual and reproductive health, for all people, including the young. In 1995, the Federation agreed a **Sexual and Reproductive Rights Charter**, which sets out the fundamental principles which guide the Federation's work in sexual and reproductive health. The twelve rights represent what the Federation considers to be the basic human rights of persons within the sphere of the exercise of their sexual and reproductive lives. Each right is supported by clauses from international human rights instruments.

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The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is the world's leading voluntary family health care organization, working on a global scale to promote and provide sexual and reproductive health and family planning services, and to develop public support for sustainable population, environment and development policies.

The Federation was founded in 1952 by eight national family planning associations, and today has member associations in over 150 countries and works in many others. IPPF and its members are committed to promoting the right of women and men to decide freely and voluntarily, without coercion or discrimination, the number and spacing of their children and the right to the highest possible level of sexual and reproductive health.

For more information about the Federation or more copies of this leaflet, please contact the Public Affairs Department at the address below.

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