

FRANCE & SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Sexual and reproductive health is a human right and is essential for sustainable and equitable development. Numerous economic and social barriers hinder individuals' access to health services and information regarding sexuality and reproduction. Today still, unprotected sexual relations are the second risk factor for diseases and mortality in the poorest developing countries. Most diseases and fatalities could be prevented by simple and effective methods such as contraception, sexual education and improvements in the status of women.

Each year, between 350,000 and 500,000 women die from complications during pregnancy or childbirth. These complications are the primary cause of death in adolescent girls in most developing countries.



France has made family planning a **major focus of its strategy to reduce child and maternal mortality** (Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5). More generally, its action aims to promote the recognition and implementation of sexual and reproductive rights, and the taking into account of the social determinants of health.

During the 2010 Muskoka G8 Summit, France pledged to dedicate an extra €500 million to achieving those goals. In accordance with this commitment, France supports sexual and reproductive health programmes in nine French-speaking African countries, contributing €100 million over the 2011-2015 period.



International commitments

■ The 1994 **International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)** in Cairo enshrined the right to “sexual and reproductive health”. The 179 participating Governments committed to providing universal access to reproductive health by 2015.

■ Premature deaths linked to sexual and reproductive health primarily hit women and adolescent girls. Their general well-being, both physical and mental, requires firstly that gender equity and **equality, mutual respect, and physical integrity** be guaranteed. To achieve this, **comprehensive sexual education must become systematic within the educational system**, and include information of a medical nature and awareness-raising of social norms based on gender relations.

« Human rights include their right [of individuals] 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.»

Commission on Population and Development, 45th Session, April 2012

« Full attention should be given to the promotion of mutually respectful and equitable gender relations and particularly to meeting the educational and service needs of adolescents to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality.»

Cairo Programme of Action, 1994

Family planning: a key tool in sexual and reproductive health

■ Prevention is the primary action focus of sexual and reproductive health services. The capacity of a woman to prevent, space and limit pregnancies thanks to the use of contraceptive methods has a direct impact on her health as well as on the outcome of each pregnancy. All women, including adolescents, must have access to family planning services, contraception, abortion services under good conditions and sexual health information and services. These must come alongside an improvement of the status of women and the protection of minors.

« The aim of family-planning programmes must be to enable couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information and means to do so and to ensure informed choices and make available a full range of safe and effective methods.»

Cairo Programme of Action, 1994

Implementation of France's commitments

■ On the occasion of the 2011 Ouagadougou Conference, France announced that it would allocate €100 million of its Muskoka commitments for 2011-2015 to **supporting reproductive health programmes in nine French-speaking African countries**: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. From this conference was born the "Ouagadougou partnership for family planning".

THE ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION AIMS TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING BY 2015

It is estimated today that 200 million women in developing countries would like to delay, limit or space out births, but do not have access to contraception.

In West Africa, only 13% of married women of childbearing age (15-49 years) use contraception.

■ Through the partnership it launched jointly with the American USAID agency, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, France strongly supports advocacy in West Africa. The cooperation targets unsatisfied family planning needs in order to help governments increase the contraceptive prevalence rate (modern methods) and reduce teenage pregnancies (MDG Target 5.B).

FRANCE'S DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN THE AREA OF FAMILY PLANNING

It aims to promote:

- a comprehensive approach based on the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights for the prevention of unwanted and early pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases;
- integration of services covering all aspects of sexual and reproductive health, supporting informed use of combined methods and choice of services;
- comprehensive sexual education, particularly for young people and communities, to support the adoption of responsible sexual behaviours.

➤ FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

WHO

www.who.int

UNFPA

www.unfpa.org

UNICEF

www.unicef.org

AFD

www.afd.fr

These commitments are fulfilled through different channels.

The bilateral channel

■ The **French agency for development (AFD)** supports activities for sexual and reproductive health. For example, the Republic of Benin is allocated a subsidy of **€10 million** to improve child and maternal health. Some of the funds allocated to this project aim to improve family planning services, which are primarily aimed at young people and adolescents. The **Mouvement français pour le planning familial (MFPF)**, the French movement for family planning) also receives a subsidy of €490,595 for a multi-country project dedicated to promoting rights and health in the area of sexuality and gender equality. The final beneficiaries are girls and women with little access to sexual and reproductive health services and information. Moreover, outreach work is conducted with the male population to improve gender relations.



The multilateral channel

■ France provides direct support to four United Nations agencies united around a shared analysis and action coordination framework: the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** and **UN Women**. The UNFPA and UN Women are the main operators in sexual and reproductive health through a programme financed by the Priority Solidarity Fund (PSF) to a total of **€6 million per year (2011-2015)**. This programme aims in particular to develop advocacy campaigns promoting family planning and prevention of unsafe abortions, to ensure that the necessary quality contraception equipment and supplies are available and financially accessible, and to increase the offer of family planning services in centres for young people and include HIV care in reproductive health services.

■ Moreover, France has increased its contribution to the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria** to €360 million per year, and to the **Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)** by **€6 million per year in 2011 and then €5.5 million per year until 2015**.

© MAE 2012

Directorate-General for Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships/Global Public Goods Directorate/Health and Human Development Department

Execution: Directorate for Communication and Press

Contact person: Thomas Dubois – thomas.dubois@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Photo credits: © Ken Opprann (front) © Don Hinrichsen (back)

www.diplomatie.gouv.fr