



47th Session of the CPD: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Last week, governments and civil society came together for the 47th session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD). This CPD was particularly important because 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the negotiated outcome document, along with the regional ICPD review outcome documents, will influence the ICPD index report. The ICPD index report will be considered in the development of a post-2015 framework. A CPD outcome document with a strong connection to the post-2015 agenda is important to ensure that reproductive health is not left out of the next round of development goals once again. To that end, it was critical that this year's CPD:

- Reaffirm the principles of the Programme of Action (POA);
- Address the gaps in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and move the agenda forward;
- Recognize the importance of the ICPD review as a larger part of the post-2015 process.

Unfortunately, despite some strong regional outcome documents, the final CPD negotiated outcome document did not firmly reinforce the link to the post-2015 agenda or significantly advance the ICPD POA principles. Sticking points around adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, abortion and sexual rights, and sexual orientation and gender identity were both regrettable and predictable. Yet, the momentum from strong regional outcome documents like those from Latin America and the Caribbean infused a renewed sense of urgency around these issues — and brought strident criticism when they were eliminated from the outcome document.

So where does this leave us? Did the 47th CPD take us backward? Well, no. When we take a final look at the good, the bad and the ugly, we remain at the status quo with some important opportunities for future advocacy:

The Good

- **Sexual and reproductive health and rights** is included several times in the outcome document, signaling that it is not as controversial as in the past. Reproductive rights is included as “central to the realization of social justice and the achievement of global, regional, and national commitments for sustainable development” and as an area of the implementation of the ICPD POA that still needs to be adequately addressed by governments.
- **The link between ICPD and post-2015** was not very strong but was included in the outcome document. However, it calls for the progress made and experienced gained from the last 20 years of ICPD implementation to be recognized in the post-2015 development agenda.
- **Empowerment of women** is linked to a variety of issues throughout the outcome document and is consistently included as a gap in the implementation of the ICPD POA. Specifically, there is a call for more work to be done to address **gender-based violence**, particularly violence against women and girls. However, the outcome document fails to mention the increased need of services for survivors of gender-based violence. Additionally, the elimination of **violence and discrimination without distinction of any kind** was important, new language included in the outcome document.

The Bad

- The **sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youth** was mentioned first by recognizing the “rights, duties and responsibilities of parents.” This takes away adolescents’ and youth’s ability to make decisions about their own sexual and reproductive health needs. Despite the inclusion of parents, **evidence-based comprehensive education on human sexuality** was included as an area that must continue to be addressed in ICPD implementation.
- Mentions of **abortion** were limited to quality services for the management of complications arising from abortion and ensuring that abortion is safe and accessible only in countries where abortion is legal. The link between access to safe and legal abortion and the decrease in maternal mortality was never mentioned.
- **Sexual rights and sexual orientation and gender identity** were not included in the final outcome document, though there was support among a handful of countries to add this language. Unfortunately, it was removed during the negotiation process. The inclusion of this language would have signaled countries’ desire to advance the principles of the ICPD POA.

The Ugly

- Challenges with this year’s CPD began even before the meeting as it was unclear if there would be a negotiated outcome document. Lack of leadership from this year’s Chair not only left the negotiated outcome document question unanswered until the last minute, but also set bad precedent for a lack of management during the meeting.
- A handful of member states were determined to derail the process by requesting negotiations be moved to a different room and threatening to “flood” the draft text with unnecessary paragraphs.

- In addition to member states attempting to thwart negotiations, there was a small but vocal opposition who tried to influence delegations with factually incorrect information in hopes of weakening sexual and reproductive health references in the outcome document.

What's Next?

The negotiated outcome document not only feeds into the ICPD review and post-2015 development agenda, but provides the foundation for real policies to be created and strengthened to support the reproductive health needs and rights of all people.

PAI will collaborate with civil society organizations to hold governments accountable for implementing the agreed conclusions of this year's CPD, and ensure the post-2015 development agenda: 1) prioritizes comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights; 2) fully realizes gender equality and women's rights as a stand-alone goal; and 3) closes the data gap through robust collection and disaggregation of data.

The combined effort of progressive governments and a strong civil society was critical at this year's CPD, and will be even more crucial moving into the negotiations for the post-2015 development agenda.