ICPD Beyond 2014 – From Promise to Action, CSOs Defining the Way Forward

Geneva, 3-4 July 2013
The EWL: the democratic voice of women at European level

- The largest umbrella organisation of women’s associations in the EU
- Promoting women’s rights and equality between women and men in Europe
- Members in all 28 EU member states and 3 candidate countries, as well as 20 European-wide associations → representing over 2000 women’s organisations
- Diversity in membership and advocacy
- Virtual working group on SRHR + Observatory on violence against women
Challenges in Europe today

SRHR as a priority?

✓ Lack of services – e.g. in Slovenia on HIV support services: only 1 self-help group, for gay men

✓ Therefore lack of access: 5% of women in Serbia use services

✓ Lack of trained health professionals – e.g.: in FR Belgium on abortion: only 1 module in 1 university

✓ Cost of contraceptives & lack of diversity – 8 types in Serbia (5 subsidised)

✓ Lack of access for women with specific needs: women with disabilities, women from rural areas, undocumented/migrant/refugee women

✓ Lack of comprehensive policies on violence against women: direct link between VAW and SRHR, impact of VAW on SRHR and vice-versa (impact on health & enjoyment of rights)

→ Disengagement of the public authorities, worsened by current crisis and austerity measures
Challenges in Europe today

Impact of the crisis and austerity measures on SRHR

✓ Discrimination against young women in the workplace: job interviews in Slovenia, precarious contracts
✓ Closing down of medical centers and hospitals (Greece, Bulgaria), mainly in areas with high unemployment, low income and in rural areas
✓ Population loosing public health insurance (1/3 of population in Greece) because of prolonged unemployment
✓ Cuts in public care and health services: return to traditional roles of men and women & reprivatisation of care (home)
✓ Poverty of women: in France, young women with low income less often use contraceptives
✓ Increase of violence against women: direct impact on SRHR
✓ Facilitates attacks from conservative and religious groups
Challenges in Europe today

Pressure from conservative and religious groups + use of tradition as an excuse

✓ **Attacks on abortion legislation**: Turkey, Poland, Spain, Hungary...
✓ **Biased counselling**
✓ **Increase of the use of conscientious objection**
✓ **Attacks on LGBT rights**: e.g. in Slovenia, rejection of family code / Conservative reaction in France about same-sex marriage
✓ **Attacks on sexuality education**: e.g. in France
✓ **Promotion of breastfeeding as first choice for women**: Slovenia
✓ Early marriage in Romani communities justified as “specific cultural phenomenon” + FGM (Serbia)

→ Increases gender inequality, attacks on women’s rights and women’s and girls’ empowerment
Challenges in Europe today

Pressure from neoliberalism and the consumer society

✓ **Commodification of health**: professionals seeking profitable activities + persecution of midwives + influence of pharmaceutical companies

✓ **Sex education through the Internet**: in Bulgaria, 45% of 14-19 year-old children get awareness about sex from the Internet

✓ **Sexualisation of girls and commodification of sexuality**

→ Impact on enjoyment of SRHR for young people

→ WHO “Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence”

→ Obstacle to making boys and men responsible for SRHR
Agenda post-2015 & challenges

✓ Overarching financial architecture / governance
✓ Poverty reduction / food security
✓ Climate change / sustainable energy
✓ Access to land and resources
✓ Jobs and growth

➔ **Invest the post-2015 agenda**
➔ **Re-politicise the post-2015 agenda**
➔ **A human-rights & people-centered approach: OUR framing**
Agenda post-2015: focus on rights

- UN context: narrowing of SRHR in MDGs + refusal to talk about rights
- Any human being should have the right to enjoy the highest standards of sexual and reproductive health, on an equal footing
  → **Equality of sexual and reproductive rights**, between women and men
  → Ensure accessibility, availability, and quality services for all – multiple discrimination and diversity of needs

- Health depends on one’s power to negotiate efficiently with someone else about questions linked to sexuality and reproduction, at intimate/individual but also institutional/social level
  → **Questioning the power relations in SRHR**, from all sides (religions, traditions, markets, politics...), and other systems of domination (economic, racism, hetero-normativity, etc.) + structures that reproduce them
Agenda post-2015: linking SRHR and gender equality

- SRHR should be a priority in the post-2015 agenda
- Should be linked to gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment + address diversity of needs and situations
- **A stand-alone goal on gender equality + gender mainstreaming**
- Gender perspective in health in general
- Building on international agreements: Cairo, Beijing, CEDAW
- Addressing resource inequalities and distribution
- Agenda post-2015: not only a development issue!

→ **Europe needs to take the post-2015 agenda seriously, as an EU internal issue too**
2013 EP report on SRHR

Focus on rights, in Europe, in broader context of gender inequalities and multiple discrimination

- SRHR in general
- Unwanted pregnancy: access to contraception and safe abortion services
- Comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly services
- STI prevention and treatment
- Violence related to sexual and reproductive rights
- SRHR and official development assistance

EWL amendments

- SRHR of lesbians, migrant women, women with disability, Roma women, transgender women
- Sustainable funding

Impact of sexual violence on SRHR
Thank you!

www.womenlobby.org