

Position Paper for the United Nations Population Fund

The issues before the United Nations Population Fund are: Integrating Cultural Approaches to Reproductive Health; Alleviating Poverty Through Voluntary Family Planning; and Preventing the Spread of HIV/AIDS Among Women. The Russian Federation is dedicated to collaborative, multilateral and multicultural approaches to promote sustainable development and to ensure the well-being of the people around the world.

I. Integrating Cultural Approaches to Reproductive Health

The Russian Federation emphasizes the immense importance reproductive health has for all mankind, being highly cognizant of the pressing problems of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), unsafe abortions and infant mortality. All too often these ills are exacerbated by negative cultural attitudes towards family planning and modern methods for reproductive health. As an ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse Eurasian country, the Russian Federation is intimately acquainted with the necessity of integrating community-based cultural approaches to reproductive health. Respect for cultural sensitivities and diversity, however, can never entail inaction towards Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP), such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriages and other forms of gender violence and discrimination. Russia proudly points to its successes in addressing these issues within the National Public Health Project launched in 2006. National projects like the Model Youth Reproductive Health Center (2008) yielded good progress, as did projects with international partners, such as the Maternal and Child Health Initiative (MCHI) concluded in 2009 and the ongoing project for Institutionalizing Best Practices in Maternal and Child Health (IBP-MCH). Through these efforts, modern methods for reproductive health were popularized, while abortion rates, infant mortality and post-natal diseases were significantly decreased. Russia is convinced that strong national legislation, active involvement with local communities, and international cooperation are the keys to a successful promotion of reproductive health.

The Russian Federation reaffirms its commitment to the fundamental *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). We are also supportive of the *Program of Action of the International Conference on Population* (1994) and the *Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing* (1995), emphasizing the right to reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, reemphasized by *A/RES/2002/1* (2002). Russia further recalls the 2005 World Summit which added universal access to reproductive health to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) framework, outlined in *A/RES/55/2* (2000). In this context, Russia calls attention to *A/RES/65/1* (2010), stressing the need for cooperation and solidarity for achieving the MDG. Russia reiterates the importance of effective measures to lower the number of HIV/AIDS infected people, the rate of child mortality and death of women of childbearing, as dealt with in *A/RES/60/265* (2006). The firm commitment of the Russian Federation to universal healthcare and particular concern with reproductive health are evident in *Articles 7 and 41 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation* (1993) and the long-term *Healthcare Development Concept 2020* presented in 2009.

The Russian Federation suggests that Centers for Reproductive Health Education of Youths (CREY) shall be set up by national health authorities, assisted by UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNESCO and other public and private entities. CREY will provide youths with a venue for cultural activities, health counseling, distribution of contraceptives and educational material. To bolster the efforts of the international community, Russia further calls for an international educational campaign for an initial four year period, named Culture for Reproductive Health Education (CURE), coordinated by UNAIDS. CURE will employ mass media, cultural activities and enlist prominent personalities as positive advertisers in order to reach a young audience. CURE shall vigorously promote modern methods for reproductive health, male involvement and family planning, while discouraging HTP, FGM, abortion, gender violence and irresponsible sexual behavior. In all their region-specific works CREY and CURE will integrate cultural sensitivities of the communities addressed, by actively involving their community and religious leaders.

II. Alleviating Poverty Through Voluntary Family Planning

The Russian Federation emphasizes the importance of voluntary family planning as an effective means in the fight against poverty, which constitutes an obstacle to the enjoyment of basic human rights throughout the world. Deficient family planning accounts for widespread socioeconomic ills such as illiteracy, malnutrition, maternal and child mortality and unbalanced rates of population growth. Enormous rates of population growth in less developed countries, hamper the fight against poverty, while other parts of the world suffer from a population decrease. The Russian Federation is dedicatedly promoting the use of responsible family planning, based on evidence and best practices. Thus the use of modern contraceptives increased in the Russian Federation, from 41% in 2000 to 58% in 2010, while abortions were reduced from 50,000 to 30,000 thousand (2000-10) in St. Petersburg alone. These achievements are owed to energetic national initiatives of our Institute for Family Health, in cooperation with international partners. Recent projects included beside the MCHI (2006-09) also the Improving Care for Mothers initiative (2008-10), reducing abortions and mortality rates for mothers and children.

The Russian Federation is committed to the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), which stressed the right of men and women to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as women's ability to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant. We further welcome *A/RES/59/111* (2005), recommending that all relevant international and national entities strive to improve the livelihood of families and reiterate that poverty alleviation and responsible family planning are integral parts of the MDGs as underscored by *A/RES/65/1* and *E/RES/2010/24* (2010). Russia also raises particular attention to *E/2010/NGO/58* (2010), submitted by Family Care International, encouraging development policies that recognize the link between family health and the eradication of poverty.

The Russian Federation calls for the initiation by UNFPA of a global five year campaign named Wealthy Young Family (WYF), counseling young families and prospective parents on family planning, care for children, fidelity to the sexual partner and avoidance of abortions and risky behavior. Central message of WYF shall be the intrinsic link between family planning and material prosperity. WYF will bring together experts from international organizations, national authorities, business and religious leaders, in order to create culturally sensitive material based on scientific evidence and best practice. WYF shall make use of public and private facilities as available and employ popular personalities from the business and cultural sphere as positive advertisers. Russia further proposes the establishment of a Fund to reduce Poverty by Family Planning (FPFP), dedicated to the promotion of poverty reduction through voluntary family planning, under the auspices of the ECOSOC. The international community shall contribute to the FPFP with annually, exempting least developed countries. The FPFP shall support family planning projects, deemed by the fund to be sensible, and submit annual reports to the ECOSOC and UNFPA.

III. Preventing the Spread of HIV/AIDS among Women

For almost 30 years, the *Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome* (AIDS) is considered to be a serious disease. Currently, approximately 33.3 million people on this planet are carrying the *human immunodeficiency virus* (HI-Virus). The Russian Federation itself inhabits half a million people infected with the HI-Virus, among them mostly affected young and pregnant women. In spite of all endeavors from the Russian Government, the number of new infected citizens grows day by day – as it does in many other parts of the world.

In 1994, the ECOSOC adopted *E/RES/1994/24* (1994), thereby establishing the *Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS*, following a resolution of the World Health Assembly. The Russian Federation realizes that the HIV/AIDS pandemic constricts the implementation of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs), particularly MDGs 3 and 6, as stated in *A/RES/55/2* (2000). With *A/RES/S-26/2* (2001) the General Assembly adopted the *Declaration of Commitment on AIDS*, emphasizing the need to have an urgent, coordinated and sustained response to the epidemic. Already in 1995 the Russian Government enacted the federal law *On Prevention of Spreading in the Russian Federation of Disease Caused by HIV* therewith creating a multidimensional approach to tackle the disease. Additionally, the Government of Russia encourages and supports the over 300 civil society organizations dealing with AIDS in their fight against the spread of the syndrome. The *GLOBUS Project*, consisting of the five largest Russian NGOs involved in the fight against the epidemic, was established in 2005 and is co-financed by the *Global Fund to Fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria*. In 2006, Russia and South Africa signed a cooperation agreement with the purpose of joint activities in the fight against AIDS in both states.

The Russian Government is convinced that knowledge is the most powerful tool to combat the spread of HIV. Since it is complicated to exchange methods of resolutions, the Russian Federation favors a special database to offer the possibility of sharing data. As Russia itself benefits from bilateral agreements, we ask for a database established under the framework of UNFPA, in which governments can agree on joint projects. It shall contain every bilateral and multilateral agreement signed in the fight against HIV/AIDS in order to create synergetic effects in the common fight. However, the Russian delegation is well aware of the fact that governments alone cannot provide enough help. Consequently, Russia calls for a strengthening of the civil society. Local organizations are encouraged to work together with governments providing special knowledge, specialized treatment, and the possibility to get tested in yet to be established HIV-centers. Therefore, the Russia urges Member States to implement HIV-control programs within national legislation. All efforts ought to be co-financed and supported by the *GLOBAL Fund*. Due to the fact that the fund is underfinanced, Russia requests all partners of to increase their contributions. The aforementioned propositions serve a third proposal: As women are highly affected by AIDS, they shall be the main target group of all efforts. Russia demands special trainings and educational programs that meet gender-specific needs. The Russian Federation invites civil society groups to provide these trainings and their special knowledge. Finally, as another proactive means, we appeal governments as well as companies to guarantee better access to contraceptives and to educate young people in the use of them.