

# Global Alliances for the International Conference on Population and Development

Supporting sustainable population policies

## Context and challenges

Sustainable development goals such as eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, promoting resilient economies and conserving natural resources cannot be achieved unless demographic change is taken into consideration. Population growth, aging, youth bulge, migration and urbanisation are trends presenting many partner countries with increasing challenges, for instance with regard to providing health services and education, establishing social security systems, and employment. The consequences have the potential to adversely affect national development as a whole. Women, girls and young people are particularly vulnerable to their impacts.

These issues were discussed at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo back in 1994. At the ICPD, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Cairo Programme of Action (PoA), which formulated objectives for sustainable, human rights-based and gender-sensitive policies. The right of every individual to sexual and reproductive health was recognised for the first time.

However, key aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) – including sexual self-determination, sex education and safe abortion – are still highly contentious issues within international negotiations. This impedes the implementation of the PoA and therefore, the realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## Our solution

Project title	Global alliances for the ICPD
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Global
Overall term	1 May 2013 to 31 July 2019

The project promotes the building of alliances and networks designed to provide policy support for the PoA. To this end, it fosters dialogues and agenda setting within international processes (such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the review of the ICPD and the Commission on the Status of Women) on issues concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights and population dynamics. Project activities include:

- promoting dialogue on SRHR issues among like-minded governments in order to develop common positions and strategies for negotiations at EU and UN level;
- supporting dialogue and exchange forums for regional and cross-regional alliances of civil society and government stakeholders;
- cofinancing cross-regional multi-stakeholder platforms such as the High-Level Task Force for ICPD and the Gutmacher-Lancet Commission on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights;
- strengthening regional networks of parliamentarians and civil society organisations, including Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women, European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development and International Planned Parenthood Federation.



Left: Forging alliances and common strategies at the International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development in Berlin, 2016

Right: German Development Minister Gerd Müller with high-ranking guests at a side event during the United Nations General Assembly's Special Session on ICPD+20 in New York, 2014

### IZR budget line

In late 2011, the BMZ introduced the International Cooperation with Regions for Sustainable Development budget line (IZR). Measures funded from this budget item meet specific criteria, including the following:

- They adopt a multi-country, cross-regional and cross-sectoral approach to global challenges.
- They promote multi-stakeholder networking, involving politics, academia, civil society and the private sector.
- They are based on joint financing and the partners' own contributions to sustainable development.

## Results

In collaboration with its partners, the project helped to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights issues were enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In key international processes coordination of the partners was improved and a common strategic approach was adopted. As a result, the outcome documents of the corresponding UN commissions set out common positions on SRHR that are shared by Germany and other countries.

Diplomatic consultations have increased stakeholder awareness of controversial issues such as comprehensive sex education. Cross-regional alliances of like-minded states have steadily expanded their scope via informal dialogue formats such as group chats.

Successful alliance building has also been promoted by the High-Level Task Force for ICPD. This independent body of experts initiated cross-regional joint statements on SRHR issues in preparation for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with up to 58 governments participating.

Conferences such as the annual International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development in Berlin, where experts from governments, civil society, the academic and research community and the private sector discuss SRHR and devise strategies for common action at global, regional and national level, have contributed to joint learning and stakeholder networking across various sectors.

## Examples from the field

Activities funded by the project for African and Asian parliamentarians and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have demonstrably enhanced their monitoring function and presence within international processes. Network partners in sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific region support NGOs' policy work and advocacy through capacity-building measures such as training, and the use of online tools. This enables NGOs to assert their interests and play an active role in policy development. NGOs in 15 countries have received support under financing agreements.



The project is part of the consortium for an EU-funded *Right by Her* Campaign. The project aims to achieve gender equality and empower women, with a particular emphasis on SRHR, through enhanced participation of civil society. A centrepiece is a report to be launched at an interactive regional forum, which is based on the learnings of the International Dialogue in Berlin.



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