



CHANGE
CENTER FOR HEALTH
AND GENDER EQUITY

CHANGE Matters

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Dear advocates,

We are facing a tough political climate in Washington, D.C., and throughout the United States, yet there are signs of hope for advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in U.S. foreign policy.

We hear so often that there is no U.S. "grassroots" movement or concern for global women's health and rights issues. Not true. CHANGE's second annual advocacy training--Healthy Future Action Summit--brought 20 advocates from four states to Washington, D.C., to advocate for global sexual and reproductive health and rights. Their tremendous success and enthusiasm proved without a doubt that it is possible to engage and mobilize domestic grassroots and grassroots on global matters.

As much as it is important for U.S. policy makers to hear from their constituents, like those who participated in our training, it is also important they hear from those living in countries that are affected by U.S. international funding and programming decisions. CHANGE recently partnered with our colleagues from the Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme in the Netherlands and Nigeria for a congressional briefing and meeting with the Office of Global AIDS Coordinator, USAID, and the State Department's Office of Women's Global Issues to promote increased funding and policy support for female condoms. Our next step is to make sure that these agencies take steps to improve program coordination and increase support for making female condoms accessible to prevent HIV and unintended pregnancies.

As always, your support is crucial in every step of our advocacy work. It is appreciated and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

In solidarity,

Serra Sippel, President
Center for Health and Gender Equity

"We should be beyond arguing about family planning. Rich women in every culture have access to family planning. It's poor women who don't. And I've always believed if it's good enough for a woman of education and affluence, then why isn't it good enough for a woman who is struggling to raise the children she already has? So family planning, to me, should be just obvious and available."

--Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
April 2, 2010

Prevention Now: Congressional Briefing on Female Condoms

On May 14, more than 40 people attended "Female Condoms: A critical tool for global women's health and HIV prevention," a congressional briefing focused on the need to increase funding and policy support for female condoms in U.S. foreign assistance. The event was organized by CHANGE in cooperation with Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) and co-sponsored by CHANGE, UNAIDS, Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme (UAFC), and the Embassy of the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The three panelists, Pauline Muchina, UNAIDS; and Lucie van Mens and Victoria Archibong, UAFC; discussed the critical role of female condoms in HIV prevention, in addition to their importance for achieving gender equality, and why it is important for governments and donor agencies to increase funding and support for the purchase, distribution, and programming of female condoms.

A fruitful conversation followed with attendees, who represented HIV/AIDS, global health, U.S. government agencies, and staff from congressional offices. We learned from their questions and input that we still have considerable work ahead of us in order to bring full awareness of female condoms' importance to policy and decision makers. Above all, the event made clear that yes, women do want and need female condoms.

Visit the [photo gallery](#) from this event.

Healthy Future Action Summit, Washington, D.C., May 2-4, 2010

CHANGE's second annual grassroots advocacy training, the Healthy Future Action Summit, brought 20 advocates from Minnesota, New York, Georgia and Texas to Washington, D.C., for an intensive three-day workshop on comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, advocacy, and U.S. foreign policy and assistance. The training focused specifically on advocacy for the [Global Sexual and Reproductive Health Act \[H.R. 5121\]](#), a newly-introduced bill that would guarantee comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services for women in developing countries.

After completing two days of advocacy training conducted by CHANGE staff and a board member, participants met with their respective congressional representatives to advocate for the bill. In the long term, these advocates have initiated or bolstered important relationships with their elected leaders, and have fresh enthusiasm for advocacy on global women's health.

In their own words:

- "(I learned) that there is hope, and that I can direct my hope in a much bigger way than I thought. I feel that my approach to advocacy/activism has been and will be improved and enhanced in a major way...I feel rejuvenated and stronger."
- "This is such useful information for me and it has enhanced this work that I do...I look forward to participating more in reproductive justice and using the advocacy in other areas as well."
- "Our organization is currently in the process of restructuring and broadening our definition of our work-I will use information (I learned) to train our staff, to build stronger coalitions, and to mobilize around women's sexual and reproductive health."

You can also see [photos](#) and [videos](#) of the summit on [Facebook](#).

What's New

Take a look at our fact sheets on three new bills: Global Democracy Promotion Act, the Global HEALTH Act, and the Global Sexual and Reproductive Health Act. These one-pagers break down the key points of the each bill, highlight why they are important, and recommend action steps.

In brief:

[Global Sexual and Reproductive Health Act \[H.R. 5121\]](#) establishes U.S. policy and authorizes assistance to support universal access to sexual and reproductive health care in developing countries, including contraception and safe abortion.

[U.S. Global HEALTH Act \[H.R. 4933\]](#) establishes a strategy to coordinate health-related U.S. foreign assistance and to assist developing countries in strengthening their indigenous health workforces and improving delivery of health services.

[Global Democracy Promotion Act \[H.R. 4879 and S. 311\]](#) provides that the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act cannot impose eligibility restrictions on international recipients of U.S. aid that would be illegal if imposed nationally. It would constitute a legislative repeal of the Mexico City Policy, also called the Global Gag Rule.

Coming Up

Women Deliver, June 7-9, Washington, D.C. "Delivering Solutions for Girls and Women"

CHANGE has organized three sessions on sexual and reproductive health and rights for the Women Deliver conference, to be held in June in Washington, D.C. The second bi-annual international Women Deliver will focus on developing solutions to myriad problems women face on daily basis, that also compromise their health and lives. CHANGE sessions include:

- **"Delivering Solutions for Women at the Margins: Reaching the Hard to Reach"**
Moderated by former president of Ireland Mary Robinson, this session will explore solutions to the cultural and political barriers that impede access to maternal, sexual, and reproductive health services for the most marginalized women, including female sex workers, indigenous women, women who use or whose partners use injecting drugs, women living with HIV, and women who are incarcerated.
- **"A Common Goal: Building Shared Responsibility for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights"**
Planning and ensuring healthy and safe pregnancies, in addition to preventing STIs, are not solely a woman's responsibility. What is the role of men, women, and young people? This panel of practitioners and experts will discuss the cultural factors that affect perceptions of shared responsibilities when it comes to sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- **"Gender, Sex and the Family: Culture as Carrier and Barrier to Gender Justice"**
Challenges and opportunities around gender identity, sex, and sexuality, and the family are frequently grounded in culture and disparate ideologies. While many individuals have used conservative ideologies to oppose sexual and reproductive rights, others have underscored common values of democracy, health, and human dignity to advance them. This session will explore how culture, including religion, can be both a barrier and a carrier of the sexual and reproductive health and rights agenda.

CHANGE will also host a booth in the Expo Hall. Additional information about CHANGE sessions can be found [here](#).

Gender Forum, June 10-11, Washington, D.C.: "Bringing Gender Home: Implementing a Gender Responsive National HIV/AIDS Strategy for U.S. Women and Girls"

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, in partnership with UNAIDS/DC

CHANGE is serving on the steering committee of the [2010 HHS Gender Forum](#), a two-day meeting intended to promote and encourage increased leadership for a woman-sensitive national HIV/AIDS response in the United States. The meeting will include health providers; U.S. policy makers; and public and private entities, including governmental and nongovernmental organizations. CHANGE is working to

bring the voices and experiences of women from around the world, especially women living with HIV, to the meeting in order to better inform the strategy.

CHANGE in the Media

Al-Jazeera, April 15, "[Maternal Morality on the Decline](#)"

The New York Times, Letter to the Editor, April 18: "[HIV and maternal mortality](#)"

USA TODAY, April 22: "[Female Condom empowers women to save themselves](#)"

NPR, April 29: "[Canada Has It Both Ways on International Abortion Funding](#)"

Additional media clips can be found in the [press center](#) on our [website](#).

Take Action

[Urgent Action Needed on Prison Sentence of Same-Sex Couple in Malawi](#): The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) strongly condemns the conviction and 14 year prison sentence of two Malawian men accused of committing "unnatural acts" and "gross indecency" under the Malawi Penal Code. A number of NGOs in Africa including AIDS & Rights Alliance of South Africa, Centre for the Development of People, and the Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation are spearheading a petition drive to express outrage and solidarity on this issue. While NGOs based in Africa are especially encouraged to sign on, NGOs from around the world are also welcome to endorse. Please add your or your organization's name to the petition here.

[Raise your voice for the Global Sexual and Reproductive Health Act](#): Ask your Representative to co-sponsor the Global Sexual and Reproductive Health Act, new legislation that promotes a truly comprehensive and integrated approach to U.S. international reproductive health programs.

[Take Action on the Global Gag Rule](#): Join your voice with others and urge your member of Congress to co-sponsor the Global Democracy Promotion Act.

[End the Forced Sterilization of Women in Namibia](#): The sterilization of women living with HIV without their informed consent in Namibia is an emerging human rights issue and the extent of the problem is yet to be discovered. In 2007, reports surfaced of cases in which women seeking medical care were allegedly subjected to sterilization without informed consent at state hospitals in two of the thirteen regions of Namibia. Since February 2008, fifteen individual cases have been documented, which appear to be merely the tip of the iceberg. Tell the government of Namibia to stop this human rights violation.

Support CHANGE

Please consider making a [contribution](#) today. Any way you choose to contribute, your support strengthens our efforts to ensure U.S. international policies and programs promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide.

The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) is a U.S.-based non-governmental organization whose mission is to ensure that U.S. international policies and programs promote sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls worldwide.

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