



CHANGE Matters

Dear Advocate,

This month marked the 30th anniversary of what we recognize as the beginning of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We know that after three decades, women have become the center of the virus, accounting for half of all infections worldwide and 60 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. That HIV has become a woman-centered pandemic is not new, but to the continued neglect of women in HIV interventions is increasingly urgent.

Over the past months, our advocacy work at CHANGE has focused on making women a priority in global HIV interventions by emphasizing the link between family planning; sexual, reproductive, and maternal health, and HIV. We released [Female Condoms and U.S. Foreign Assistance: An Unfinished Imperative for Women's Health](#), a report that offers recommendations to the U.S. government for increased support for female condoms, which play a woman-centered, dual-protection role against unplanned pregnancy and HIV. This week, we'll hold a Congressional briefing and a documentary premiere on female condoms with advocates from Zimbabwe and Zambia, one of whom is a woman living with HIV.

Our objective is to ensure that HIV and family planning are seen as intrinsically linked. The result would be integrated programs on the ground that meet women's life-long sexual, reproductive, and overall health needs. Recognizing each of those aspects of a woman's life as inseparable is the first step to creating woman-centered HIV interventions.

I hope that you will consider helping CHANGE to a strong finish of our fiscal year by sending a [contribution](#) before June 30, 2011.

In peace and solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Serra Sippel".

Serra Sippel  
President, Center for Health and Gender Equity

---

### **In this Issue**

[New CHANGE Publication: Female Condoms and U.S. Foreign Assistance: An Unfinished Imperative for Women's Health](#)

[United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, June 8-10](#)

[A Healthy Future for Women and Girls Globally Action Summit, May 1-3](#)

[CHANGE and Marie Stopes International— USA Join Efforts on Women's Health and Rights at Massachusetts State House](#)

[Upcoming CHANGE Events: Female Condoms and HIV Prevention for Women: Congressional Lunch Briefing and Evening Documentary Premiere](#)

[Washington Update](#)

[Global Health Initiative](#)

[CHANGE in the Media](#)

[Support CHANGE](#)

Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#)

---

### **New CHANGE Publication: Female Condoms and U.S. Foreign Assistance: An Unfinished Imperative for Women's Health**

In April, CHANGE released [Female Condoms and U.S. Foreign Assistance: An Unfinished Imperative for Women's Health](#), a publication that summarizes U.S. efforts to support female condom procurement, distribution, and programming. The report found that while the U.S. government is a leader in supporting female condoms, they still represented just 3.2 percent of total U.S. condom shipments in 2009. The report goes on to identify barriers to sufficient funding and programming; and offers policy and program recommendations for improving U.S. female condom efforts, including that the U.S. government only fund integrated, comprehensive, and evidence-based HIV prevention programming that explicitly refers to female and male condom programming. The report is a follow-up to [Saving Lives Now](#), released in 2008.

CHANGE leveraged the release of the report to hold meetings with administration officials and advocate for the various recommendations in the report prior to the High Level Meeting.

---

### **United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, June 8-10**

Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) faced significant attacks at the High Level Meeting, from attempts to completely delete from the final declaration all references to SRHR to labeling sex work as "irresponsible behavior." While these efforts did not succeed, those spearheading the opposition, including several country delegations that were [led by the Holy See](#), ensured that language and targets around SRHR are exactly the same as the 2006 declaration. In other words, while SRHR didn't lose any ground, it didn't gain ground either.

Overall, the language around SRHR is still weak. The declaration still includes the statement that "...women and girls can exercise their right to have control over, and decide freely and responsibly on, matters related to their sexuality in order to increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection, including their sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence;" however, there is little specific language to provide for woman-centered interventions.

While CHANGE considers it a victory that the 2006 language was retained, the meeting is an indication that women are still being disproportionately [ignored by the global HIV response](#).

---

### **A Healthy Future for Women and Girls Globally: Third Annual Action Summit on Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, May 1-3**

CHANGE held its third annual [Healthy Future Action Summit](#) with 20 advocates representing Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, Illinois, and Nevada, May 1-3, in Washington, D.C. The training focused specifically on advocacy for increased funding and policy support for international reproductive health.

After completing two days of advocacy training conducted by CHANGE staff, a board member, and members of the advocacy community, participants met with their respective senators and representatives, some of whom had recently voted to defund international family planning entirely. Reactions ranged from adamant support to hedging about tough economic times, but in each office, advocates made a strong case for why spending on reproductive health abroad is critically important.

In their own words, the participants' most important lessons learned from the training were:

- “(I learned that) my voice matters and even though I may not always have everyone’s support, talking about it, educating, and empowering others to do the same does matter and can change things.”
- “I will definitely never hesitate to advocate for my community by calling, writing, or visiting Washington. I want to specifically bring back knowledge I gained here about the positive economic impacts of international family planning to my community members and educate them.”
- “I learned the ways in which my voice can be valuable for this cause by delving more into the nuts and bolts of political advocacy. I felt that I really learned the ins and outs of creating an advocacy plan to target and meet with legislators and look forward to putting those skills to use.”

---

### **CHANGE and Marie Stopes International – USA Join Efforts on Women’s Health and Rights at Massachusetts State House**

In March, CHANGE continued its efforts to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights for women globally by hosting an event in Boston, as a follow-up to our [Ethiopia speakers’ tour](#) in November 2010. CHANGE partnered with State Rep. Kay Khan of Massachusetts ( a participant in our July 2010 study tour to Ethiopia) and Marie Stopes International – USA to hold a panel discussion in the Massachusetts State House. The event drew participants from the health advocacy community in the greater Boston area and generated urgency around advocating for adequate U.S. funding to serve the health needs of women globally.

The Boston event was the first in a series of activities that CHANGE will be embarking on to broaden our education and outreach efforts, using the [findings](#) from the Ethiopia study tour as the vehicle to keep the dialogue going about the urgent need for services to meet the global health challenges facing the poorest women in the world.

---

### **Upcoming CHANGE Events: Female Condoms and HIV Prevention for Women: Congressional Lunch Briefing and Evening Documentary Premiere**

#### **Congressional Briefing: [Female Condoms and HIV Prevention for Women: An Unfinished Imperative for Women’s Health and Rights](#)**

Tuesday, June 28, 12:00 noon - 2 p.m., Rayburn House Office Building, Room B-340, Washington, DC

#### **Panelists:**

Chilufya Mwaba-Phiri, Executive Director, Zambia Health Education and Communication Trust (ZHECT)  
Annah Sango, Member, International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (ICW), Zimbabwe  
Mitchell Warren, Executive Director, AVAC—Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention  
Serra Sippel, President, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)  
Pauline Muchina, Senior Partnership Adviser, UNAIDS, moderator

Lunch will be provided.

RSVP to Kiki Kalkstein at [kkalkstein@genderhealth.org](mailto:kkalkstein@genderhealth.org)

*This event is sponsored by UNAIDS*

[Event flyer](#)

#### **Reception and Video Screening: [Female Condoms and HIV Prevention for Women](#)**

Tuesday, June 28, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM, Busboys and Poets, Cullen Room, First Floor 1025 5th Street NW, Washington, DC (corner of 5th and K St. NW)

Join us for an evening of conversation, networking with female condom advocates from Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the premiere of [Choosing Prevention](#), a documentary on female condoms in Malawi.

Brief remarks will be provided by:

Sabrina Heard, Early Intervention Specialist, Women's Collective  
Chilufya Mwaba-Phiri, Executive Director, Zambia Health Education and Communication Trust (ZHECT)  
Annah Sango, Member, International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (ICW), Zimbabwe  
Serra Sippel, President, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)  
Pauline Muchina, Senior Partnership Adviser, UNAIDS

Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be served  
RSVP to Kiki Kalkstein at [kkalkstein@genderhealth.org](mailto:kkalkstein@genderhealth.org)  
*This event is sponsored by UNAIDS*  
[Event flyer](#)

---

## **Washington Update**

### Legislation

Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-NC2) introduced on May 31 a bill ([HR 2059](#)) that would eliminate the U.S. contribution to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). No vote has been scheduled. The bill is the result of a program called [Youcut](#), an online forum that allows people to vote for a budget cut on pre-selected issues, giving politically-slanted information about the issue. If the measure passes, it would mark the second time in 10 years that the U.S. has defunded UNFPA based on incorrect allegations that the agency supports abortion and China's one-child policy.

### Budget

After passing a series of emergency stop-gap measures that fund the government for a few weeks at a time, Congress passed the FY11 budget on April 14. The foreign affairs budget was funded far below President Obama's original FY11 request; however, cuts were not as deep as anticipated. The global health accounts, including family planning was also funded below the president's request, but received a modest increase over 2010 funding levels. Cuts to foreign assistance already characterize FY12 budget debates, with Rep. Paul Ryan's (R-WI1) budget proposal reducing the foreign assistance budget by nearly 30 percent.

---

## **Global Health Initiative**

On June 3, the Obama administration released guidance to support the country process of drafting and finalizing GHI country strategies. However, implementation of the GHI continues at a very slow pace, which is having an impact on the efficacy and credibility of the initiative. In a recent meeting with the newly appointed executive director of the GHI at the State Department, CHANGE learned more details about the administration's internal priorities related to implementation, including a focus on country-ownership. We will continue to meet regularly with the heads of GHI in Washington, and conduct our own on-the-ground assessment work, in order to assess and advocate for the elevation of human rights of women and girls.

---

## **CHANGE in the Media**

*CQ Researcher*: "[Foreign Aid and National Security](#)"  
*Health Affairs*: "[Slow Going for the Global Health Initiative](#)"  
*Huffington Post*: "[Ending HIV Starts With Women](#)", Special to the launch of the *Huffington Post* Women's section  
*The Guardian*: "[Why won't the pope let women protect themselves from HIV?](#)"  
*Huffington Post*: "[30 Years is Enough: An HIV Strategy for Women Now](#)"  
*IRIN Plus News*: "[HIV/AIDS: Bold new goal for 2020 set at UNAIDS summit](#)"

---

**Support CHANGE**

Please help CHANGE finish of our fiscal year strongly by sending a contribution before June 30, 2011. Any way you choose to contribute, [your support](#) strengthens our efforts to ensure U.S. foreign policies and programs promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide. For federal employees, CHANGE is part of the Combined Federal Campaign, #62113.



---

Center for Health and Gender Equity | 1317 F St. NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20004 | [www.genderhealth.org](http://www.genderhealth.org)

[f](#) Join Us on Facebook | [t](#) Follow us on Twitter | [Donate](#) | [Tell a Friend](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright © 2010 Center for Health and Gender Equity