



CHANGE Matters

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Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Already, this has been an exciting year for CHANGE and for women's health and rights globally. CHANGE launched our [Facebook page](#) and a [Twitter account](#), and there has been a tremendous increase in support for female condoms around the world.

Earlier this month, I joined thousands of women from around the world at the United Nations for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the groundbreaking Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women. It was an incredible feeling of empowerment and humility to be among so many dedicated women who fight daily for women's human rights. From Edinah Masiyiwa of Zimbabwe, who is keeping women and men healthy and informed with female condoms, to Rathi Ramanathan, who is fighting for the health and human rights of sex workers in the Asia Pacific Region, to Dr. Mabel Bianco of Argentina, who is creating synergies and strategies with women from the Global South for advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV/AIDS prevention. I was also proud to attend an event at the U.S. Mission with the fabulous women leaders of the Obama administration: Ambassador Susan Rice, Ambassador Melanne Vermeer, and the White House Council on Women and Girls Executive Director, Tina Tchen.

As we continue our work to bring the results of Beijing to bear on U.S. foreign policy, we are starting to see the fruits of our labor in Washington. The Obama administration is giving shape to the Global Health Initiative (GHI), a comprehensive approach to global health that specifically calls for a woman-centered approach to policy and programming. CHANGE is weighing in as the GHI develops, most recently with a [policy paper](#) defining key aspects of the woman-centered approach.

This month, we also turn attention to Capitol Hill, as legislators are set to introduce legislation that could advance

sexual and reproductive health and rights globally (stay tuned for advocacy opportunities).

We are buoyed by advances in female condom availability and programming. Two weeks ago, the FC2 female condom was launched in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, while at the United Nations, governments were urged to ensure accessibility of female condoms in their efforts to address HIV and AIDS and women.

Overall, it's been a promising start to 2010. Thank you, as always, for your continued [support for CHANGE](#). We expect for the rest of this year we will continue to grow on these successes.

In solidarity,



Serra Sippel, President
Center for Health and Gender Equity

"When women are given the opportunity of education and access to health care, their families and communities prosper. And when women have equal rights, nations are more stable, peaceful, and secure."

--Secretary Hillary Clinton, [remarks at the UN Commission on the Status of Women](#)
March 12, 2010

Global Health Initiative

President Obama's Global Health Initiative (GHI) has the potential to save lives and improve the health and rights of women globally. It is the first comprehensive U.S. policy approach to global health that recognizes that our greatest plagues -- HIV/AIDS, maternal and infant mortality, and poor sexual and reproductive health -- are all interconnected, and they are all preventable.

In February, the administration released its [consultation document](#) on implementation of the Global Health Initiative. CHANGE worked with colleague organizations to submit comments to the document:

- CHANGE, Advocates for Youth, Family Care International and International Women's Health Coalition [submitted joint comments](#) addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights
- The Global Health Initiative working group, of which CHANGE is a founding member, [submitted comments](#) on several key global health issues

Shortly after the release of the consultation document, CHANGE issued its [policy paper](#) on the Global Health Initiative's woman-centered approach. The brief serves as a background paper to define a "woman-centered approach" by identifying its key elements, providing examples of what it looks like, and demonstrating the

importance for the success of the GHI.

Prevention Now: Advances for Female Condoms in the U.S. and Globally

Women and girls worldwide are marking a win in their corner -- the FC2, the second generation of the FDA-approved female condom, launched earlier this month in Washington, D.C. and Chicago, and is available free of charge in both cities. The female condom remains the only available woman-initiated and controlled HIV prevention and family planning method. Its increased accessibility gives women the freedom and basic right to protect themselves, instead of leaving their health in the hands of their partner.

The same day of the D.C. FC2 launch, at the High-Level Plenary of the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, Kim Whipkey, CHANGE senior associate for outreach and advocacy, delivered an [NGO statement](#) demanding increased funding and support for female and male condom programming. CHANGE also helped circulate [a civil society statement signed by more than 200 international organizations](#) demanding governments and donors to increase support for female condoms distribution and programming in developing countries. Prevention Now!, CHANGE's HIV prevention initiative, continues to mobilize female condom advocates through its [sign-on letter for individual supporters](#).

More than 100 people attended a female condom advocacy event March 1st co-sponsored by CHANGE, the Brazilian and Danish governments, and the [Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme](#), which demanded that governments honor commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing to support and promote woman-centered HIV-prevention. Specifically, the event emphasized the need for increased investments for the procurement, distribution, and programming of female condoms. Members of more than 10 government delegations to the CSW attended the event, and at the conclusion of the CSW, governments agreed to a [Resolution on Women and HIV/AIDS](#) that urged governments to ensure availability of and access to female condoms. [Visit the photo gallery](#) for pictures from this event.

Kim Whipkey, senior associate for advocacy and outreach, and Kiki Kalkstein, program assistant, facilitated a female condom panel discussion at CSW for a packed audience of more than 70 people. Panelists provided examples of successful civil society advocacy for female and male condoms and strategized about the future of advocacy for prevention technologies. The event was co-sponsored by CHANGE, Support, AVAC, CEDPA, World YWCA, Population Council, The Condom Project, the Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme, Global Campaign for Microbicides, the Durex Network and Prevention Now!.

Capitol Hill Update: Proposed Legislation Strengthens SRHR for Women and Girls Worldwide

Global Sexual and Reproductive Health Act: This bill has been in the works for many months with input from NGOs such as CHANGE, and will be introduced by Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (D-NY) at the end of April. It creates a comprehensive, integrated, and rights-based framework for the U.S. global health agenda. It promotes linkages among critical women's health issues -- maternal health, family planning, and HIV/AIDS -- with economic and social issues that impact women's health and human rights. We will keep you posted about when the

bill is introduced and how to take action.

Global HEALTH Act of 2010: This bill will be introduced any day now by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA). The Global HEALTH Act will help transform the principles of the President's Global Health Initiative -- such as country ownership, a woman- and girl-centered approach, and strategic coordination and integration -- into a concrete, benchmarked strategy for effective and sustainable U.S. global health programs. The bill brings together the wide range of global health issues--HIV and AIDS, maternal, newborn and child health, sexual and reproductive health, TB, Malaria, and neglected tropical diseases; seeks to ensure access to a comprehensive package of primary health services that includes reproductive health services; and strengthens health systems and workforce capacity through the establishment of the Global Health Workforce Initiative.

Global Democracy Promotion Act (H.R. 4879): Last week, Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) introduced the [Global Democracy Promotion Act \(H.R. 4879\)](#) to help end the political back and forth surrounding the [Mexico City Policy \("Global Gag Rule"\)](#). If passed, this legislation would prevent a future administration hostile to reproductive rights from re-instating the Global Gag Rule by executive order. In other words, the bill would change the law governing U.S. foreign aid programs so that Congress would have to pass legislation reinstating the harmful policy. Advocates are pushing to include this language in the upcoming FY 2011 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill, thus increasing its likelihood of being passed.

Take action on the Global Democracy Promotion Act: International and U.S.-based organizations are encouraged to endorse a sign-on statement supporting the inclusion of this language in the appropriations bill. Please join your voice with others and sign the statement. The statement can be read [here](#). To endorse, please complete a quick [online form](#).

What's New

In February, CHANGE distributed its most recent policy brief, [A Woman-Centered Approach to the US Global Health Initiative](#), to U.S. policymakers and colleague organizations.

CHANGE has launched its [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter feed](#). Join us!

Call for Applications: Action Summit on Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Grassroots support is critical to achieving a U.S. foreign policy that advances sexual and reproductive health and rights. To build that support, CHANGE will be hosting its second annual Healthy Futures Action Summit May 2-4 in Washington, D.C. It will bring 20 highly motivated advocates from targeted districts in the U.S. to Washington, D.C. for an in-depth, three-day training on comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, advocacy, and U.S. foreign policy. With colleagues from around the U.S., participants will discuss the elements and advantages of a comprehensive approach to sexual and reproductive health care while building their understanding of key global issues and strengthening their advocacy knowledge and skills. Participants will also have the opportunity to network with women's health and rights organizations and leaders in Washington and will meet with key Congressional offices to educate them about the need for U.S. leadership on international sexual and reproductive health.

The summit is open to applicants from the following districts:

Arkansas (4th district)

Texas (12th, 18th and 29th districts)

Georgia (13th district)

Minnesota (5th district)

New York (5th, 6th, 7th, 13th, and 17th districts)

Please feel free to pass the [application](#) and information to anyone who may be interested.

CHANGE in the News

Serra Sippel in the *Huffington Post*: [March 8](#) and [February 1](#)

Serra Sippel in *Cincinnati Magazine*, [February](#)

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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