



CHANGE Matters

December 2008

In this edition

- World AIDS Day: Action for Effective HIV Prevention
 - Advocating for Reproductive Rights in Africa
 - Capitol Hill Update: Change for the World's Women
 - Meet Carmen: New Senior Associate for Research and Analysis
 - What's New: CHANGE Publications
 - CHANGE Moved to a New Location!
-

Dear Friends,

Like many of you, at CHANGE we are reflecting on the past year and looking forward to what lies ahead. As my first year as executive director comes to a close, I am very happy with the many achievements of CHANGE's dedicated staff and energized by the challenges that the new year will bring. Most importantly, I am grateful for the support of people like you, who have turned our email alerts and resources into real action on behalf of women and girls worldwide.

Some benchmarks over the past year include publication of a major report on female condoms; field research in three countries; education of policy makers and activists about PEPFAR's flaws; a policy brief on the prostitution loyalty oath; a policy paper on foreign aid reform; and countless presentations, Congressional visits, conference calls, blogs, news articles and workshops. To top it off, we completed a strategic planning process to ensure that CHANGE is sustainable and successful far into the future.

In 2009, CHANGE will continue working tirelessly to ensure that the U.S. prioritizes human rights, gender equality, and evidence-based practices in its international programs and policies. I am heartened and hopeful that we will witness a new era for women for years to come under the Obama administration. But we cannot leave it up to political leaders -- CHANGE's voice is more vital than ever as we have a real and exciting opportunity to shape U.S. policy and ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights take a central role.

As we work to transform the promise of sexual and reproductive health and rights into a reality for women and girls globally, your support is more important than ever. Please take a moment to reflect on the value CHANGE has for you, and for the women and girls you care about around the world. As you think about your year-end donations, we hope you will consider making a [contribution to CHANGE](#).

I wish you a safe and restful holiday season.

In solidarity,

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

Serra Sippel, Executive Director
Center for Health and Gender Equity

"We must engage in honest, open dialogue and reach out to those most at risk. My administration will educate people about HIV/AIDS, ensure people living with HIV/AIDS have access to treatment, and work with Congress to enact an extensive program of prevention, including access to comprehensive age-appropriate sex education for all school age children."

--President-elect Barack Obama, [Official Statement from the Obama-Biden Transition Team](#).
World AIDS Day, December 1, 2008.

World AIDS Day: Action for Effective HIV Prevention



CHANGE commemorated the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day (December 1) with a series of initiatives spotlighting the urgent need for HIV prevention that addresses the varied realities of women and marginalized populations at risk of infection.

In coalition with more than fifteen faith-based, HIV/AIDS and women's rights organizations, CHANGE organized a World AIDS Day audio press conference and interfaith service calling for truth and leadership in U.S. domestic and global HIV prevention policies and programs. More than sixty people attended the interfaith observance and candlelight vigil at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. For more information about these events--including speaker line-ups, a written transcript of the audio press briefing, and photos from the service--please visit www.pepfarwatch.org/worldaidsday.

In addition, CHANGE mobilized an international coalition of organizations representing Latin American women and U.S. Latina women to issue a World AIDS Day statement demanding increased access to the female condom as an essential, woman-initiated strategy for protection against HIV. More than 35 organizations across the Americas endorsed the call to action. To read the statement and press release (in English and Spanish), please visit www.preventionnow.net.

Advocating for Reproductive Rights in Africa

In September 2008, USAID issued instructions to U.S. Missions in six African countries to urge host governments to ensure that U.S.-donated contraceptive supplies do not reach MSI, a London-based organization that provides sexual and reproductive health services globally. While providing no evidence, the U.S. asserts that MSI's work in China violates the Kemp-Kasten Amendment, which prohibits U.S. funding for organizations that support coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.

CHANGE spearheaded the response to this encroachment on reproductive rights, issuing an action alert to advocates throughout the U.S., who responded by sending 158 emails to USAID protesting their decision. In coordination with global advocates, CHANGE wrote an international sign-on letter that urged USAID to reconsider its decision and gathered over 140 signatures from diverse international leaders such as Members of the European Parliament and heads of Amnesty International UK, World YWCA, and International Council of AIDS Service Organizations. The letter criticized the U.S. decision for imposing an onerous task on countries with over-burdened health systems, like separating out donated contraceptive supplies, saying the action "violates the rights of individuals to enjoy-and impedes government commitments to provide-the highest attainable standard of health."

To view the international sign-on letter, please visit: <http://www.genderhealth.org/pubs/2008.msi-intlsignon.pdf>.

Capitol Hill Update: Change for the World's Women

The United States has experienced the kind of change that will be etched in history for years to come. The election of Barack Obama is symbolic for many people, in many ways. For the Center for Health and Gender Equity, it means the possibility of the U.S. fully affirming the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls across the world.

President-Elect Obama appears to be making women's sexual and reproductive health a priority as he continues to work with key members of Congress in reforming health care domestically. He has also been forthright in his support for addressing women's health and empowerment in the developing world. For President-Elect Obama's agenda on women's health, please go to www.change.gov.

As we look forward to a new year, CHANGE plans to work with Congress and the new administration in reforming policies that compromise the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide. We would also like to see the U.S. reform foreign aid in a way that fully recognizes the importance of sexual and reproductive health for all persons, and safeguards their human rights. Our recommendations for foreign assistance reform can be found here: <http://www.genderhealth.org/pubs/foreignassistancereform.pdf>.

Meet Carmen: New Senior Associate for Research and Analysis

Carmen Valenzuela-Dall, CHANGE's new Senior Associate for Research and Analysis, is a Guatemalan physician and pediatrician who has devoted her career to maternal and child health. Carmen brings to CHANGE her valuable experience as a former pediatrics professor at three teaching hospitals at the National University of San Carlos in Guatemala, her work with several sexual and reproductive health and rights organizations in the U.S., and her human rights activism and advocacy on behalf of refugee women and children. Carmen is very excited to work for CHANGE and to contribute to the organization's evidence-based research and advocacy initiatives.

What's New: CHANGE Publications

- **Policy Paper:** "[Making U.S. Foreign Assistance Work: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Human Rights as Key to Global Development](#)," Center for Health and Gender Equity, October 2008.
 - **Blog:** "[In Sync with the World? A New U.S. Approach to International Reproductive Health](#)," Mary Beth Hastings, *RH Reality Check*, November 12, 2008.
 - **Blog:** "[Delivering the Truth: World AIDS Day 2008](#)," Kimberly Whipkey, *RH Reality Check*, November 30, 2008.
-

CHANGE Moved to a New Location!

On December 1, 2008, we began operating out of our new office in downtown Washington, D.C. Please note that our address and contact information have changed!

1317 F Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20004
Phone: +1 (202) 393-5930
Fax: +1 (202) 393-5937

Support CHANGE

Please consider making a donation today! 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. [Click here to donate.](#)

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.

[Update your contact information](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

1317 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C. USA

tel: 202-393-5930 fax: 202-393-5937

www.genderhealth.org www.pepfarwatch.org www.preventionnow.net