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Report of the 1998 UNFPA Field Inquiry

Progress in the
Implementation
of the ICPD
Programme of
Action

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FOREWORD

From June through August 1998, UNFPA conducted a global Field Inquiry of developing and developed countries as part of a five-year review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in 1994. The Inquiry focused on the operational dimensions of population and reproductive health programmes and was designed to assess what progress countries had made since the ICPD and what obstacles they are facing. One hundred and fourteen responses were received from developing countries and those with economies in transition, and 18 developed countries reported their experiences.

The Inquiry undertaken in developing countries covered four subjects: (i) policies and programmes in population and development; (ii) gender equality, equity and women's empowerment; (iii) reproductive rights and reproductive health care; and (iv) government partnerships and collaboration with civil society. Within each of these four areas the Inquiry sought to determine whether progress had been made in key operational areas of interest to the Fund.

In the area of population and development policies, the Inquiry sought to learn the degree to which governments have adopted policy measures emerging from the ICPD PoA. The criteria in this regard centre on an official population policy, strategy and action plan; or a wider plan on integrating population concerns into an overall national development strategy; and whether and how governments have developed mechanisms for monitoring the progress made in achieving the quantitative goals of ICPD.

In the area of gender equality and equity, the Inquiry intended to discover whether governments had taken measures to protect the rights of women and to promote their empowerment, as stipulated in the ICPD PoA. Specific measures raised in the questions included themes such as the elimination of discrimination and violence against women, the promotion of primary education of the girl child, and women's participation in reproductive health-care services.

A central objective of the Inquiry was to assess post-ICPD progress made by countries in the areas of reproductive rights (RR) and reproductive health (RH). The major attention directed to country-level initiatives on RH and RR reflected the importance ICPD placed on them. The Inquiry attempted to learn the progress made in improving access to and quality of RH-care services, including any measures to add new components of RH service, to integrate RH into primary health care, and to decentralise the health-care system. Furthermore, the Inquiry raised the specific issue of addressing the RH needs of adolescents.

The Inquiry also sought to elicit information on the extent of government-civil society collaboration and partnerships in countries. The Inquiry focused on governments' efforts in promoting involvement of civil society at the national level, including new legislative changes and other steps to strengthen the capacity of civil society; initiatives by part of civil society to be a more effective partner and new measures to promote the involvement of the private sector.

The Inquiry conducted in developed countries encompassed the views and perceptions of developed countries regarding the achievements and constraints they faced in the implementation of the ICPD PoA. It also treated partnerships and collaboration between donor countries and non-governmental and other civil society organisations, both in their own countries and in developing countries they are assisting. Also critical to the Inquiry was the need for developed countries' views concerning international assistance, including problems and constraints faced by donor countries in mobilising resources to help implement the PoA

The success of the Inquiry was the result of the good collaboration between UNFPA, governments, partner agencies and civil society. I would like to thank all those officials and members of governments and civil society who generously gave their time to assist UNFPA Field Offices in completing the questionnaires. I would like to acknowledge the excellent support of UNFPA Field Office Representatives and their staff, as well as representatives of partner agencies. Further, many Units and Divisions at UNFPA headquarters provided encouragement and advice, and I would like in particular to thank the four Geographical Divisions for their support. Finally, I would also like to thank members of the Field Inquiry team (listed on page iii) for their good efforts and dedication in carrying out the survey and compiling this report.

I am hopeful that the results of the Inquiry will provide guidance for recommendations to further the implementation of the ICPD PoA, so that all countries may realise its goals and objectives.



M. Nizamuddin
Director, Technical and Policy Division
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MEMBERS OF THE FIELD INQUIRY TEAM

Richard Leete *Project Manager*

Keiko Watanabe *Project Coordinator*

Wilhelmina Waldman *Senior Research Associate*

Rene Desiderio *Research Associate*

Yunae Yi *Research Associate*

Tashi Chodon. *Research Assistant*



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