



ICPD+5 PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS FRIDAY, 25 JUNE 1999

The PrepCom for the Special Session for the review and appraisal of implementation of the ICPD POA met briefly in Plenary to adopt the list of NGOs recommended for accreditation to the Special Session. Delegates then resumed informal consultations on the proposals for key actions for further POA implementation, proposing amendments to the first paragraph of the preambular background section and commenting on amendments to 11 of the 27 bracketed paragraphs proposed by delegations on Thursday.

PLENARY

Chair Chowdhury convened the PrepCom in a brief Plenary session to introduce the List of NGOs recommended by a committee of the PrepCom Bureau and the Secretariat for accreditation to the 21st Special Session of the General Assembly (E/CN.9/1999/PC/6). Delegates adopted the list as recommended.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

BACKGROUND: On paragraph 1 (summary of ICPD outcomes), the G-77/CHINA proposed replacing the text with four paragraphs, which: outline ICPD POA objectives; stress the need for greater investment in health and education services for all people, particularly women; emphasize the importance of couples' and individuals' reproductive rights as defined in POA paragraph 7.3; and underscore the need for the ICPD to be seen as closely related to the outcome and follow-up of the other major UN conferences. Regarding text noting that the POA makes the [development and] [rights, development and] well-being of human beings the focus of population and development activities, the US preferred "development and well-being of people" and added "with full respect for human rights." The EU preferred "rights, development and well-being." The US proposed adding that "interrelationships between population, resources, environment and development should be fully recognized, properly managed and brought into balance." To bracketed text noting that the ICPD reaffirmed the importance of universally accepted human rights, including the right to development, the US recommended adding "the human rights of women" and, with the HOLY SEE, deleting "recognized reproductive rights based upon these universally accepted human rights." The HOLY SEE proposed noting that the ICPD did not create any new international human rights and amending text on access to health care services to "universal" access "on a basis of equality of men and women."

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS:

Changing Age Structure and Ageing of the Population: On 13(a) (developing and implementing plans to meet young people's needs),

NORWAY proposed an alternative paragraph stating that governments should meet the needs of young people, especially young women, with the active support of parents, communities, NGOs and the private sector, with priority to programmes such as education, income-generating opportunities, vocational training and health services. With the US, CANADA, ISRAEL and the EU, she proposed removing reference to the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents. The HOLY SEE noted that youth can be considered to include those as young as ten years old and thus the reference to parents is important. The EU suggested specifying young people as those aged 15-24. The G-77/CHINA reserved its position, noting that it was continuing consultations on this paragraph.

International Migration: On 17ter (special attention to the needs of refugee women and children in refugee assistance activities), NORWAY stressed the need to include sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for refugees. She supported the G-77/CHINA's call for refugees to respect the laws of countries of asylum and added that countries should respect refugees' human rights. The EU proposed inserting text based on POA paragraph 10.27 urging governments to abide with international law concerning refugees. CANADA recommended specifying the principle of *non-refoulement*. The EU and US said refugees should also be protected against violence. The HOLY SEE, supported by the US, added access to basic social services, including sanitation, clean water and nutrition. TURKEY reiterated the need to address the needs of elderly refugees. SYRIA added that the return and integration of refugees in their homelands should be facilitated with assistance from relevant international organizations. PAKISTAN emphasized the need for international support in planning and implementing refugee assistance activities.

EGYPT objected to the introduction of new proposals, stating that countries and regional groups had already had an opportunity to present their amendments on Thursday. NORWAY said new proposals represented an attempt to accommodate the broad views already presented by different groups and countries. EGYPT cautioned against interrupting the negotiations to conduct group consultations and suggested that such consultations be held outside the room to allow the meeting to proceed. The HOLY SEE disagreed, noting that this would delay the process further.

Chair Chowdhury distributed a compilation text containing amendments presented on Thursday and sought delegates' support for proceeding on the basis of this text and focusing on how best to reach agreement. The G-77/CHINA said it needed to consult further to enable negotiations to proceed, and noted that if countries from the various groups intervened individually, greater delays would result. She said the Group would reserve its position on the remaining paragraphs until it had completed its consultations.

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Population, Development and Education: On 23(a)*bis* (including sex education in school curricula), delegates supported including SRH education in school curricula at all levels and programmes promoting the well-being of adolescents as well as enhancing responsible sexual behavior. ISRAEL proposed specifying “youth” programmes.

GENDER EQUALITY, EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: Promotion and Protection of Women’s Human Rights: On 27 (ensuring respect and protection of the human rights of women and girls), Chair Chowdhury identified elements for potential agreement and highlighted the G-77/CHINA addition, which states that “in the implementation of the goals of the POA and those of other UN conferences, measures aimed at achieving gender equality and equity in a systematic and comprehensive manner should be coordinated and harmonized.” Regarding human rights, “including economic, social and reproductive,” delegates expressed differences over what rights should be included.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: Reproductive Health, Including Family Planning and Sexual Health: On 41*bis* (increased UN efforts on key SRH indicators), Chair Chowdhury proposed a formulation that primarily used the G-77/CHINA’s formulation, including elements related to: the UN system and key indicators; identification of UN bodies involved; the priority and prominence of maternal mortality and morbidity; and capacity building. UNFPA Executive Director Nafis Sadik highlighted DESA’s work on indicators and suggested its inclusion in the list of UN bodies involved.

Ensuring Voluntary Quality Family Planning Services: On 43(a) (allocating sufficient resources to provide access to information, counseling services and follow-up on family planning services), Chair Chowdhury noted general agreement on some of the terms proposed, such as “medically safe.” The EU and US expressed reservations about reference to allocating resources for effective family planning and contraceptive methods “which are not against the law.” NORWAY, supported by MEXICO, suggested including “female condoms, emergency contraception and underutilized methods, such as vasectomy and male condoms, within the framework of national legislation.” CANADA urged inclusion of women-controlled methods. SLOVAKIA, the HOLY SEE, LIBYA and SUDAN were opposed to including emergency contraception. EGYPT recalled WHO’s statement that emergency contraception was not an abortifacient.

Reducing Maternal Mortality and Morbidity: On 45(e) (health impacts of unsafe abortion), MOROCCO supported the G-77/CHINA’s proposal to replace this paragraph with POA paragraph 8.25, which states that abortion should not be promoted as a means of family planning, prevention of unwanted pregnancies should be prioritized and every attempt made to eliminate the need for abortion, and paragraph 7.24, which calls on governments to take appropriate steps to help women avoid abortion. He stressed the need to adhere to POA language.

On 46*ter* (WHO’s leadership role in assisting countries to establish standards for care), delegates supported adding the G-77/CHINA’s proposal that WHO “in cooperation with other relevant UN bodies” be urged to fulfill this role, “in particular in developing countries.” CANADA proposed that countries be assisted in establishing standards for care “and treatment” that women “and girls are entitled to.” The US and NORWAY did not wish to limit standards to women and girls. CANADA’s proposal to specify standards “that incorporate gender perspectives and promote gender equality to health care and delivery” was supported by the US but not the EU. The US supported the G-77/CHINA’s addition of “taking into consideration the level of development and economic and social conditions of countries,” provided that the text was amended to clarify that this addition refers to “identification of” functions that health facilities should perform to help guide development of health systems to reduce risks associated with pregnancy. The HOLY SEE said WHO cannot define services related to maternal health that health facilities should perform.

On 52(a) (providing specific and user-friendly reproductive and sexual services for adolescents), NORWAY emphasized that such services should include strategies for prevention of reproductive ill-health. Several delegates supported the EU’s suggestion of “health promotion strategies.” The HOLY SEE, supported by ARGENTINA, stressed the need to balance mention of adolescents’ rights to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent with recognition of the prior rights of parents by including relevant language from POA paragraph 7.45. The EU noted that paragraph 7.45 was already referenced in the chapeau. MEXICO reiterated that the paragraph is not referring to confidentiality in the family but in medical services, and adolescents are entitled to confidential relationships with medical professionals. NORWAY, the EU and CANADA said a reference to respecting adolescents’ cultural values and religious beliefs addresses the HOLY SEE’s concern.

The HOLY SEE noted its proposal to merge 52(f) (removal of barriers to SRH information and services) with 52(e) (adolescents making informed choices about SRH) and, with NICARAGUA, expressed concern with proposals to delete references to the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents. He emphasized that the text should address the issue of sexual abuse. Chair Chowdhury suggested compromise language incorporating proposals from delegates stating that “countries must ensure that the programmes and attitudes of teachers, parents, health care and other service providers should enable the access of young people to appropriate services and information, including for the prevention and treatment of STDs, HIV/AIDS and sexual violence and abuse. In this context, countries should, in the context of paragraph 52(e), where appropriate, remove legal, regulatory and social barriers to reproductive health information and care for adolescents.”

On 53 (resource allocation for promoting and protecting adolescent health, including SRH), NIGER supported the G-77/CHINA’s proposal to delete the paragraph. The EU noted that it had not been able to prepare a negotiated position on this and subsequent bracketed paragraphs and said that, like the G-77/CHINA, it would be unable to take a position until it consulted with its members. Several delegates suggested adjourning the meeting early to allow the various groups to consolidate their respective positions. The EU, opposed by the G-77/CHINA, suggested that, when consultations resume, the PrepCom split into smaller groups in order to hasten progress. Chair Chowdhury closed the meeting to allow the G-77/CHINA and the EU to negotiate within their groups.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The mood of cautious optimism lingering after the PrepCom’s first day of negotiations swung gradually to one of concern Friday as negotiations ground to an early halt rather than proceeding in a night session as planned. This was largely due to substantive as well as basic procedural divisions within the G-77/China that rendered it unable to negotiate without further consultations within its own membership. Some observers felt that Friday’s negotiations, where delegates commented on one another’s proposed amendments, had helped move delegates closer to compromise language. However, with the absence of consolidated G-77/China positions and therefore the PrepCom’s inability to reach agreement on any of the bracketed text, others felt it had been a futile exercise. They expressed concern that the lost time and the likelihood that all too familiar differences, both within the G-77/China and in the larger PrepCom negotiations, would derail negotiations in the remaining two days of the PrepCom and prevent it from completing its work.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: The PrepCom will convene at 10:00 am in Conference Room 2 to continue negotiations on proposals for key actions for further POA implementation. It is expected that delegates will meet in morning, afternoon and night sessions.