



6th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights
Yaoundé, Cameroon, 5-7 February 2014

Outcome Document

Eliminating women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health vulnerabilities in Africa

The African Federation on Sexual Health and Rights in collaboration with a broad range of partners convened diverse stakeholders including young people at the 6th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights held in Yaoundé, Cameroon from the 5th – 7th February 2014 with the theme, eliminating women and girls' sexual and reproductive health vulnerabilities in Africa.

The conference;

Recognized the significant progress recorded on the continent in certain relevant areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Nevertheless, the conference, noting however that progress is still short of the MDG targets;

Appreciated the critical role that leadership at the continental and national levels has played in facilitating the delivery of concrete results on the continent;

Noted the continued relevance of key global and continental commitments that seek to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights in Africa especially;

1. ICPD Programme of Action (1994) and ICPD beyond 2014.
2. Millennium Development Goals (2000)
3. Abuja Commitments (2001, 2005, 2013)
4. Continental Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and its Maputo Plan of Action (2006)
5. Kampala Declaration: Actions on Maternal & Child Health (2010)

Highlighted the broad range of factors rooted in systemic and institutional weakness, including economic challenges as well as socio-cultural and religious barriers, amongst others, that continue to underpin the vulnerabilities of women and girls to sexual and reproductive health vulnerabilities;

Identified critical SRHR issues on the continent, notably gender based violence, child marriage, unsafe abortion, unmet need for contraception, female genital mutilation, as well as lack of access to SRH information and services, especially for adolescent girls amongst others;

Acknowledged that set targets in sexual and reproductive health cannot be delivered without addressing the specific needs and fulfilling the human rights of all persons especially the vulnerable and the disadvantaged including the diverse categories of young persons, , while confronting the unique challenges of persons with disabilities;

Further noted that on going continental and global policy dialogue processes such as the AU Vision 2063; ICPD beyond 2014 and post 2015/MDG agenda setting provides a unique opportunity to highlight critical SRHR issues, engage a wide range of stakeholders involving all segments of the population and facilitate commitment to strategic targets;

Emphasized the critical linkages between universal access to SRH and the promotion of rights to the achievement of Africa's development agenda;

Identified the critical contribution of indigenous research and all efforts to strengthen the evidence base for decision making, in promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of Africans;

The Conference recommends to the *Governments of African states to:*

- a) Revise national legislation, removing provisions that are discriminatory and/or reinforce SRH vulnerabilities for any segment of the population especially for girls and women;
- b) Ensure adequate resourcing and implementation of the programmes that respond to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all segments of the population including those with special needs and key populations such as people with disabilities;
- c) Step up action to eliminate harmful practices especially child marriage, FGM and all forms of violence and discrimination against girls and women;
- d) Scale up access of young persons, in and out of school, to comprehensive sexuality education information as well as to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services including contraception;
- e) Advocate for concrete SRHR related goals and targets, including a youth focused development goal within the continental frameworks as well as the post 2015 development agenda;
- f) Integrate SRH and HIV services to improve quality of care as well as removing barriers to access while addressing

discrimination and stigma of persons living with HIV and AIDS;

- g) Adopt innovative programmes to reposition family planning as a key intervention to enhance sexual and reproductive health status;
- h) Reinvigorate the efforts to reverse the incidence of HIV, with special emphasis on key populations and vulnerable people including persons with disabilities;
- i) Implement effective social protection schemes that address the economic and social factors that underpin the vulnerabilities of the poor;
- j) Address the impact of unsafe abortion on maternal health by facilitating access to safe abortion within limits of national legislation;
- k) Harmonize and enforce laws on harmful practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation;
- l) Provide enabling environment and framework to promote triangular cooperation (South-South and North-South collaboration) and harness the contribution of the African diaspora to guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights;

Communities especially parents, traditional and religious leaders to;

- a) Recognise the benefits of promoting SRHR to the overall wellbeing and socio-economic development of the community;
- b) Strongly discourage socio-cultural practices that violate the sexual and reproductive health and rights of any segment of the society especially those of marginalised/vulnerable girls and young women;

- c) Support the provision of sexuality information and services to all segments of the community, in a manner consistent with evolving capacities, to facilitate informed choices;
- d) Promote male involvement and cultivate positive stereotypes of masculinity with men and boys as part of the solution to deliberately bring actions to address vulnerabilities, enhance the status of women and girls and realize the sexual and reproductive health of all;

Development partners and civil society organizations to;

- a) Facilitate the institution of mechanisms and systems that promote accountability of all stakeholders to the duties they bear with regards to SRHR;
- b) Explore the avenue of strategic litigation to motivate critical changes in legislation and policies in support of SRHR thus eliminating all forms of discrimination;
- c) Support the strengthening of institutional capacity to implement programmes and provide integrated services to all segments of the community;
- d) Promote meaningful and non-discriminatory community participation in decision making and policy dialogue processes relating to SRHR;
- e) Facilitate capacity strengthening for the conduct of African driven research to strengthen to evidence base to guide relevant interventions;

The African Federation on Sexual Health and Rights in collaboration with the broad range of partners and stakeholder groups will explore all credible platforms including the auspices of the African Union to advocate for the implementation of these recommendations.

