

## RH Reality Check

# Reaching the Global Goal: Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights for All

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This afternoon, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will deliver a major [speech](#) to mark the 15th anniversary of the United Nations [International Conference on Population and Development \(ICPD\)](#), which set ambitious goals for improving sexual health and reproductive rights throughout the world.

Prior to the ICPD, the importance of securing women's health and rights was largely absent from international development discourse. It took the mobilization—and action— of grassroots women's groups from across the Global South to persuade governments that women's health and human rights are imperative in their own right—and crucial to sustainable global development. In response to this movement, 179 governments agreed to a [20-year action plan](#).

Since ICPD, we have seen progress on securing the health and rights of women and young people. Despite these gains, much remains to be done. Women and girls in many parts of the world [still face egregious violations](#) of their basic human rights, and lack access to the comprehensive reproductive health services they need to stay healthy: contraception, comprehensive sexuality education, testing and treatment for reproductive cancers and prevention, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; maternity care, and access to safe abortion services.

Recognizing the urgent need for concrete action, more than 50 faith-based, human rights, health, and environmental organizations and program implementers—including [CHANGE](#) and [IWHC](#)— are advocating for [specific steps](#) the U.S. can take to fulfill the goals of ICPD. The core recommendations include:

- Ensure that U.S. policies and programs address the real-life circumstances of individuals and communities being served and ensure equitable and maximum access to services and information;
- Ensure that U.S. programs and policies protect and promote the human rights of women and youth, including their right to decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexual and reproductive health free of coercion, discrimination and violence;
- Increase the amount of U.S. funding that goes directly to innovative, local and women's organizations that advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality; and
- Re-engage with international organizations on meeting global goals (such as ICPD) related to sexual and reproductive health and rights through increased financial support and enhanced coordination.

This afternoon, the world will be watching for a renewed U.S. commitment to reaching the ICPD goals, and other related UN agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals. The Congress is working on a similar statement of commitment, though a [resolution](#) introduced by [Rep. Barbara Lee](#) (D-CA).

These statements of commitment by the Administration and the Congress now need to be turned to action – in program implementation, funding levels, and diplomatic endeavors to ensure the right of all people to make decisions about their own sexuality and access the services needed to make that right a reality. And we all need to be behind them and support them in taking those steps forward.

*The speech will be streamed live on [www.icpd2015.org](http://www.icpd2015.org) starting at approximately 2:30 pm EST. A transcript and video of the speech will be posted on this site following the event.*