

Developing a Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy Framework: A Case-Study Review



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Foreword

This year, the global community marks the 20th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo where the world leaders from 179 countries forged a groundbreaking consensus that changed the very terms of development. Cairo marked a turning point on the path towards equitable and inclusive sustainable development, shifting population policy and programmes from a focus on numbers to a focus on individual human lives and rights. Delegates from all regions and cultures agreed that the access to sexual and reproductive health is a key strategy for achieving the overall development goals. They recognized that empowering women and girls is one of the most effective ways to improved well-being for all.

Good sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system. It implies that people are entitled to have a satisfying and safe sex life, the capability to reproduce, and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so. When sexual and reproductive health needs are not met, individuals are deprived of the right to make critical choices about their own bodies and futures, with a cascading impact on their families' welfare and future generations.

Since the ICPD, many countries in various regions have developed a comprehensive SRH policy frameworks tailored to their national context in order to guide advocacy, planning, investment, implementation and monitoring of national efforts in promoting sexual and reproductive health (SRH). These policy frameworks facilitate a comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing many inter-related aspects of SRH.

In the last two decades, China has made marked progress in reproductive health, especially in preventing and reducing maternal morbidity and mortality. It has instituted targeted policies for selected SRH issues, such as maternal health, family planning, STIs and HIV, and reproductive cancers. However, it is lacking an overarching SRH policy framework, which can serve as a basis in identifying gaps and formulating policies for other priority issues, such as unmet needs of young people for SRH, health sector response to victims of gender-based violence, among others. These issues are

inter-related and significant impact can be achieved if addressed comprehensively. With the success on many aspects of the SRH, China is now in a position to expand its policies and programmes to address a wider range of sexual and reproductive health issues.

Commemorating the ICPD Beyond 2014 at the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in September 2013, the Government of China, and other members and associate members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and the Pacific, have adopted the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development. The Asian and Pacific Ministers committed to accord priority to policies and programmes to achieve universal access to comprehensive and integrated quality sexual and reproductive health services.

As a follow up to this commitment, UNFPA and the national partners in China plan to develop a proposal for a national comprehensive SRH policy framework. In preparation for this, UNFPA supported a case study review of the existing SRH policy frameworks of other countries in different regions, highlighting good examples as well as key factors defining core content and scope of such policy framework. The report presents the cases of thirteen countries across a range of different levels of social and economic development. We hope that together with other references, the report will be a good resource for ensuing policy discussions and dialogue.

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