

# Looking Back, Moving Forward

Results and recommendations from the ICPD-at-15 process

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# Preface

After more than a decade and a half, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) remains a visionary, holistic and pragmatic blueprint for countries seeking to address many of the challenges they face. This was just one of the conclusions of the ICPD-at-15 review, which is described on the following pages. The review found that progress in implementing this blueprint has been multilayered and varied, ranging from actions to strengthen relevant legal and policy instruments to providing services to underserved groups, to empowering women and promoting zero tolerance for gender-based violence, to furthering understanding of the dynamic links between population and the environment, including climate change. Still, progress has been insufficient and uneven. The universal and timeless agenda of the ICPD has not affected the lives of all people equally, and an unprecedented level of solidarity and international cooperation is needed to achieve the shared objectives of the ICPD and the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

This report provides insights into the ICPD-at-15 process and results. It is a valuable reference source in assessing progress and can contribute to the discourse on development and rights, including the MDGs and other consensus international agreements. My hope is that it will also call attention to the urgent tasks ahead, guide future interventions, and inspire a policy environment that enables the ICPD vision to fully unfold.

**Thoraya A. Obaid**  
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# Executive Summary

**F**ifteen years after the adoption of the Programme of Action at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt, the third five-year review was held of progress in its implementation. Within a 20-year time frame, the Programme of Action addresses a broad range of issues that underpin sustainable development. It defines (and recommends action on) sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including, among other elements, maternal health, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the centre of the Programme of Action and remain guiding principles throughout the document. Education and the family are also addressed in detail. The ICPD Programme of Action is rooted in respect for human rights and the attendant need to address violence against women and harmful practices. It also includes recommendations on population and the environment, including climate change and migration, and goes beyond usual development discussions by addressing issues of humanitarian assistance. Emphasis is placed on implementation, with recommendations also made on

regional and country reports and background papers—was also prepared and published. All of these materials contributed to the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, and clearly demonstrated the continued validity of the ICPD vision 15 years after the conference. The review also reconfirmed the ICPD's importance to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly goal 5 on maternal health and both of its targets—5.A on reducing maternal mortality and 5.B on universal access to reproductive health by 2015.

## LOOKING BACK

This report reviews the key ICPD-at-15 activities that were organized in 2009 to assess progress and to define gaps that will require further action over the next five years. It also notes the changes that have taken place, including health sector reform and the 'gender agenda', which have influenced the way in which the ICPD Programme of Action is now being implemented. Sexual and reproductive health, for example, is now more firmly embedded in health systems and is directly affected by health systems reform. Adolescent sexual and

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