

C-Fam Contribution to the PGA's Stock-taking on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

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1. We need to focus on improving maternal health in the post-2015 development agenda. Development and health policies so far have only reduced maternal deaths 22% since 1990, according to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. Recent analysis of maternal health programs currently in place found they are not effective, and the medicines and interventions that are now getting attention are “almost useless”, according to reports in the Associated Press.

2. The post-2015 development agenda should build on efforts to achieve MDG5. Concrete measures that improve maternal health are well known and are not controversial and include (1) Higher education levels for women, (2) Skilled birth attendants, (3) Prenatal and antenatal care, (4) Access to water and sanitation, (5) Emergency obstetric care. Changes in abortion law do not improve maternal health. Similarly, contraception and other similar reproductive commodities do not make pregnancy or childbirth any safer for women, even though they might reduce overall maternal deaths because of a reduction in overall pregnancies.

3. It would be duplicative and ineffective to simply recommit countries to already existing commitments like ICPD. ICPD policies have been remarkably successful on their own terms. Only 8% of women in poor countries say they can't afford or lack access to contraception. Pregnant mothers have received the short end of the stick, when it comes to ICPD policies and their implementation. Despite a remarkable flow of resources to ICPD policies over the past two decades, maternal health has not improved anywhere near the 75% target reduction of maternal deaths by 2015. ICPD policies and their implementation have diverted resources away from maternal health to fertility reduction measures and contentious social policies.

4. The notion of “reproductive rights” in particular should not be included in the post-2015 development agenda. The term refers to changing norms. The post-2015 development agenda must be about measurable outcomes and results. Including the reproductive rights in the post-2015 development agenda diverts attention away from policies that improve the concrete conditions of women to politically divisive debates about normative change best left to sovereign states. *See* <http://c-fam.org/en/briefing-papers/7910-the-unfinished-business-of-mdg-5-on-maternal-health-and-the-post-2015-development-agenda>