

COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS THE CPD?

The Commission on Population and Development (CPD) works within the United Nations (UN) system on monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA). It is a so-called functional commission of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which means it carries out certain tasks on ECOSOC's behalf, and advises it on issues related to population and development, and the ICPD PoA. The CPD assists ECOSOC by:

- ♥ Setting international standards and creating policies that promote inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development worldwide;
- ♥ Arranging for studies and research, and providing advice and recommendations to ECOSOC on global population issues and trends, and sustainable development;
- ♥ Monitoring, reviewing, and assessing the implementation of commitments contained within the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA) at the national, regional, and international level, and advising ECOSOC on this progress;
- ♥ Bringing UN member states, civil society, and experts together for an annual session in April;
- ♥ Since there is a lot of overlap between the ICPD PoA and the 2030 Agenda, the CPD will likely also contribute to the review and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets related to population and development (e.g. through shared indicators). This connection to the 2030 Agenda could be a very positive development, as the ICPD PoA is far more progressive and ambitious when it comes to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and young people.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ICPD) PROGRAMME OF ACTION

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and is one of the key guiding documents on gender equality which has set the international agenda for the empowerment of women and girls for the past two decades. The Platform's goal is to remove all obstacles that prevent women's equal participation by highlighting 12 'critical areas of concern' that are vital to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls:

(1) it was finally recognized that key population issues like immigration, rapid urbanization, and family planning, were intimately interlinked with sustainable and inclusive development, and that none of these topics could be addressed in isolation from the others;

QUICK FACTS

WHAT?

UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD)

FOCUS?

Monitoring the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the outcomes of its review conferences

WHO?

47 UN Member States are elected to sit on the Commission for 4 years, but all UN Member States and observers can participate.

REPORTS TO?

United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

WHEN?

The CPD hosts an annual 5 day Session in April

WHERE?

United Nations Headquarters in New York City, United States of America

The Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) serves as the CPD's secretariat, and is responsible for providing up-to-date information on population and development by regularly conducting studies and research around the world, and in this way also contributes to the monitoring and review of the ICPD PoA.

(2) it put the rights and needs of human beings at the heart of development; and

(3) it recognized the importance of sexual and reproductive health, and stressed that **REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS**.

The ICPD PoA contains objectives and recommended actions on the following topics related to population and development:

- ✓ Interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth, and sustainable development
- ✓ Gender equality, equity and empowerment of women
- ✓ The family, its roles, rights, composition and structure
- ✓ Population growth and structure
- ✓ Reproductive rights and reproductive health
- ✓ Health, morbidity and mortality
- ✓ Population distribution, urbanization, and internal migration
- ✓ International migration
- ✓ Population, development, and education
- ✓ Technology, research, and development
- ✓ National action
- ✓ International cooperation
- ✓ Partnership with NGOs
- ✓ Follow-up to the ICPD

With the ICPD PoA, governments agreed to implement an ambitious 20 year agenda, which was renewed in 2014, to deliver inclusive, equitable, and sustainable global development, that focuses on needs and realities of human beings and not just numbers and statistics. The ICPD PoA requires that all states that have ratified the program must develop national policies and plans of action describing how they will implement these commitments nationally. This makes the CPD an important space for UN member states and civil society to hold states accountable for implementing their agreements, and to evaluate national, regional, and global progress so far, by discussing challenges and opportunities, and sharing best practices and lessons learned.

ICPD +20

To mark the twenty year anniversary of the adoption of the PoA, UNFPA, UN member states and other relevant organizations took part in an operational review of the implementation of the PoA so far. This review consisted of

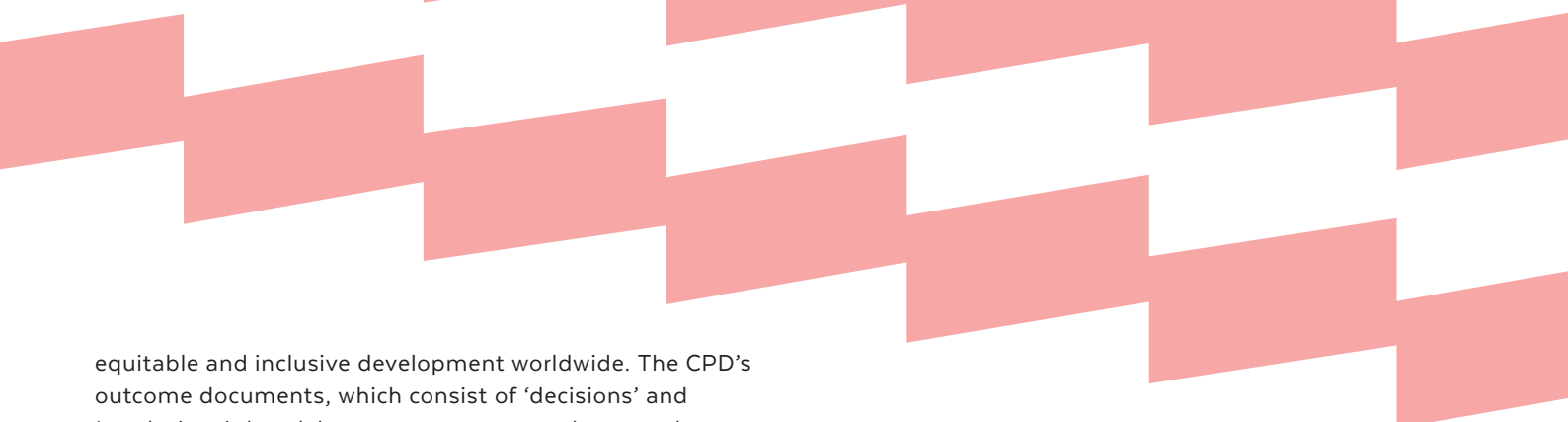
a global survey, regional conferences, thematic meetings, and briefings and consultations, and resulted in a Global Report containing a wealth of information (see the additional resources section). The operational review showed that significant progress has been made towards achieving the PoA, for example, between 1990 and 2010 the number of people living in extreme poverty worldwide dropped from 47% to 22%. At the same time the review found that progress in some areas has been unequal (e.g. while more people have access to family planning, certain groups, such as young people, persons living with disabilities, sex workers, and LGBTI persons still experience difficulty in accessing sexual and reproductive health services) and that new challenges in population and development have emerged over the years such as the impact of climate change, the global financial crisis, increased numbers of refugees and displaced persons etc. which require new ways of working. In addition, the outcomes of the regional review conferences in Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Asia and Asia and the Pacific, which were generally progressive when it came to SRHR, aim to guide the regions on how to follow-up the PoA for the coming years.

THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

The ICPD PoA is the steering document for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which is a UN agency that supports countries to implement the PoA, by providing programs, funding, and technical support. In this sense, while the UNFPA and CPD both work towards achieving the ICPD PoA, the UNFPA works on a more local and national level, and does actual implementation, whereas the CPD has a more advisory role and serves as an international forum to discuss key issues. The UNFPA also supports civil society's participation at the CPD by hosting expert meetings, and special briefings during the annual session.

WHY IS THE CPD IMPORTANT?

Firstly, the annual session is a valuable opportunity to review national, regional, and global progress towards implementing the ICPD PoA. It is also an important space where member states come together to re-confirm their commitment to achieving these goals, and set (new) global standards, norms, and policies that promote sustainable,



equitable and inclusive development worldwide. The CPD's outcome documents, which consist of 'decisions' and 'resolutions' that delegates agree upon at the annual session, guide the priorities of the international community on these issues. It is therefore important that advocates continue to try and influence the language used in the outcome documents to ensure that they reflect a more inclusive and progressive agenda that reflects the needs and realities of all people.

Secondly, the CPD's outcome documents are important advocacy tools because they contain so-called agreed language - language that was negotiated and agreed upon, and that UN member states have publicly committed to. Agreed language can therefore be used to hold governments accountable to the commitments that they have made. Note, however, that some states put reservations on certain parts of the text, meaning that they will not implement this part of the agreement. [for more information on UN language advocacy and how to influence it check out our UN language resource!]

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE CPD?

Every year the CPD hosts a five-day session, usually in April, where UN member states (who send delegations to represent their country) and civil society (citizens and organizations outside of the government and private sector) gather at the UN headquarters in New York to discuss key issues related to population and development. Each year a new topic from the ICPD PoA is selected and reviewed in detail as a "special theme" (e.g. 'adolescents and youth' CPD 2012, or 'fertility, reproductive health and development' CPD 2011). During the five days experts, delegates, and civil society come together to discuss the progress, gaps, challenges, and evolving trends around this theme, as well as the implementation of the PoA more generally.

By the end of the session UN member states will also have negotiated a series of action-oriented outcome documents in the form of decisions and resolutions (although note that in exceptional cases, such the CPD 2015, consensus cannot be reached and no outcome documents will be adopted). While civil society is not able to take part in the negotiations of these texts (unless they are invited to be a member of a delegation), they are still able to influence the process by advocating with different delegations to include their issues in the text. Many civil society representatives act within so-called caucuses, for example the Youth Caucus and Human Rights Caucus) where they can strategize and coordinate their work. The resolutions and decisions that come out of the CPD provide a useful record of the progress that has been made in implementing the PoA since 1994. Once adopted the outcomes and recommendations of the annual session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow up.

The yearly CPD session is divided into two parts: the so-called formals which are open to all attendees, and the informals which are open only to member state delegations. In addition to the formals and informals, governments and civil society organizations will also host so-called "side-events" (e.g. panels, expert discussions, presentations, dialogues, exhibitions, film showing etc.) that delve into the special theme.

Formals

The CPD has several plenary sessions, known as the formals, which are open for all CPD attendees, and can be followed live via UN TV. The formal segment of the CPD includes a 'general debate', where delegates, experts, and civil society representatives gather to discuss (1) the annual special theme, and (2) the implementation of the ICPD PoA more generally, and to share progress, challenges, best practices and lessons learned. During this time UN Member States are invited to provide updates on their progress in implementing the PoA in their country, and representatives from civil society can provide short oral statements. The outcome documents will also be formally adopted in a plenary session where UN member states are able to provide oral statements to express their support of a certain issue or to put a 'reservation' on parts of the text.

Informals

In contrast, the informals are only open to UN member state delegations, who spend the majority of the five days negotiating the outcome documents (the 'decisions' and 'resolutions') behind closed doors. These outcome documents are important tools for advocacy, as they are formal agreements that can be used to hold governments accountable for actually putting their words into action. For this reason it is vital that the outcome documents accurately reflect young people's needs and realities.

Because delegations are ultimately the ones with the negotiating power, they are an important entry point for advocacy - if a delegation is willing to fight for your issue(s), you have a much higher chance of them making it into the final outcome document(s) of the CPD. Before the CPD starts, delegations have the opportunity to provide input on the first versions of an outcome document, so it is important to find out if there are any opportunities to share your feedback and standpoints ahead of time. [For more information on how to do UN language advocacy see our UN Infographic and UN Language Tool.]



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INVOLVED?

First and foremost, we young people have a fundamental right to co-decide on issues that concern us directly, as is guaranteed under articles 12 and 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). International agreements, such as those made at the CPD, have extremely important implications for the day-to-day realities of young people worldwide, in the sense that they (in theory at least) guide our government's priorities and policies. For these agreements to effectively address young people's key issues, it is essential that we are meaningfully involved in their design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation; after all, no one understands the challenges young people face better than young people themselves!

Furthermore, the ICPD PoA has quite a strong focus on SRHR and young people's sexual and reproductive health and is, therefore, an important space to advocate for more progressive language and stronger implementation at the national level. However, in spite of this young people's SRHR continues to be a highly controversial topic at the CPD. Young people are more often discussed in terms of population trends, like the 'youth bulge' or 'youth dividend' (the phenomenon whereby young people make up almost half of the world's population). While this topic can serve as a useful entry point for advocacy, it is important to emphasize that we need to meaningfully involve young people because it is our human right, and not just because there are so many of us!

"Youth should be actively involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development activities that have a direct impact on their daily lives. This is especially important with respect to information, education and communication activities and services concerning reproductive and sexual health, including the prevention of early pregnancies, sex education and the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases."

ICPD PoA, 1994

Finally, young people's exclusion from these key decision making spaces means that our leaders (often) prioritize their own beliefs and political gains above representing the needs and realities of young people back home. For this reason it is more important than ever that a diverse and international group of young people are enabled to become meaningfully involved in UN processes like the CPD. Below you can find some ways for you to start advocating for your issues at the CPD - be sure to also check out our other advocacy resources at choiceforyouth.org!

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

The Top Five things you can do!

- ✔ Collect evidence on the special theme, and the ICPD PoA in general, and how they affect young people (e.g. create factsheets, reports, campaigns), and distribute this widely amongst the general population, relevant ministries, youth advocates, delegates etc.
- ✔ Advocate for the meaningful consultation and inclusion of young people at the CPD (including their participation in delegations)
- ✔ Advocate with delegations to include your issues and proposed language in the outcome documents of the CPD (for more information on how to do UN language advocacy please see our other UN resources and tools at choiceforyouth.org/)
- ✔ Document and share the commitments made at the CPD as widely as possible to increase national awareness and commitment
- ✔ Engage with your government and offer support to help implement the agreements, and monitor and evaluate their progress (e.g. by tracking policies and budget spending, but also by holding focus group discussions and interviews with young people to measure the impact)



NOT GOING TO THE CPD? YOU CAN STILL BE INVOLVED!

Even if you are unable to physically go to New York you can still play an important part in ensuring young people's voices are heard at the CPD. To begin with, you can play an active role in the preparations:

- ✔ if your government or national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) host them, you can attend the civil society briefings and rally up support for key youth issues;
- ✔ create factsheets and reports which can be shared widely amongst CSOs, youth advocates, delegates and your government;
- ✔ meet with your delegation and advocate for young people's issues and for their meaningful participation in the process (for example, through the meaningful consultation of young people ahead of the Commission, and by having a youth civil society representative on the delegation).

While the CPD is taking place you can follow developments online (through listservs, email groups, WhatsApp, UN TV etc.), and support the advocates who are there on the ground:

- ✔ by providing them with text suggestions, and data and evidence;
- ✔ by continuing to lobby with your government and the relevant ministries to steer your delegation in the right direction;
- ✔ if your government is unresponsive, you can also try to use the media and the general public to apply greater pressure on your delegation to support your issues.

You can also play an important role in the follow-up and implementation of the commitments made at the CPD:

- ✔ by creating youth-friendly factsheets for the media, general public, and for relevant ministries explaining what your government has agreed to and what this means for the national context;
- ✔ by engaging with your government and offer the relevant ministries technical assistance and support in implementing the agreements, for example, by advocating for them to meaningfully consult the young people who would be impacted by them;
- ✔ by monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these commitments;
- ✔ and of course you can also work on implementing these agreements yourself!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CPD Website <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/index.shtml>

CPD Decisions and Resolutions: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/resolutions/index.shtml>

UN TV <http://webtv.un.org/>

ICPD Programme of Action: http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/programme_of_action_Web%20ENGLISH.pdf

ICPD Beyond 2014 Report: <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/framework-actions-follow-programme-action-international-conference-population-and>

UN DESA Review of CPD Resolutions from 2014

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/policy/Compendium/Volume%20I/Vol.%20I%20Full%20report.pdf>

ICPD+20 Review for Africa <http://www.unfpa.org/events/regional-conference-population-and-development-africa>

ICPD+20 Review for Asia and the Pacific <http://www.unfpa.org/events/sixth-asian-and-pacific-population-conference>

ICPD+20 Review for Europe

<http://www.unfpa.org/events/regional-icpd-review-europe-and-central-asia>

ICPD+20 Review for Latin America and the Caribbean

<http://www.unfpa.org/events/regional-conference-population-and-development-latin-america-and-caribbean>

ICPD+20 Review for Western Asia <http://www.unfpa.org/events/regional-conference-population-and-development-arab-states>

ICPD Review: Bali Global Youth Forum: <http://www.unfpa.org/resources/icpd-review-bali-global-youth-forum-declaration>

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

CRC in Child Friendly Language <https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchillfriendlylanguage.pdf>

THINKING OF GETTING INVOLVED IN UN ADVOCACY?

CHOICE supports partners and youth advocates attending UN processes to ensure that young people from around the world are meaningfully participating and claiming their rights; thinking of getting involved? Contact us at info@choiceforyouth.org to see how we can potentially collaborate!

CHOICE RESOURCES

This fact sheet forms part of a series of resources aimed at demystifying international advocacy processes and making them more accessible to young people:

"SO YOU'RE GOING TO THE UN?" INFOGRAPHIC

A visual guide for youth advocates who are attending a UN process in New York.

UN LANGUAGE ADVOCACY TOOL

A tool that explains what UN Language is, why it is important, and how to get involved in UN Language Advocacy.

CHOICE SRHR GLOSSARY

A glossary that provides short and youth-friendly definitions of key SRHR terms.

For more youth-friendly resources, check out our website at choiceforyouth.org!

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

We appreciate your input! CHOICE places a high value on being inclusive and participatory; if you feel like anything in this factsheet is not accurate, or that we are missing something important, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@choiceforyouth.org.

Please share your feedback on this resource!



This Factsheet was created by CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality as part of the Right Here, Right Now! alliance.



For sexual and reproductive health and rights



FOR YOUTH & SEXUALITY

