

WHO congratulates UNECE and UNFPA for the assessment of progress on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and for producing the thorough analysis of the situation as documented in the report. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health services is critical if all people everywhere are to be able to fulfil their right to the highest achievable standard of sexual and reproductive health, and for countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly goals 3.7 and 5.6.

The UNECE/UNFPA report highlights the ***WHO Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive health: towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in Europe – leaving no one behind***, a landmark achievement when Member States approved the plan at the 2016 Regional Committee meeting. The ***Action Plan*** provides a framework supporting countries to ensure that people are achieving their full potential for sexual and reproductive health and well-being. The plan requires adaptation by countries in accordance with national legislation, capacities and priorities, and the development of country-specific policies and plans for reducing inequities in sexual and reproductive health and rights within and between countries, and in achieving universal health coverage for sexual and reproductive health.

The plan has three broad goals:

- To enable all people to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and ensure that their human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled;
- To ensure that all people can enjoy the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health and well-being; and
- To guarantee universal access to sexual and reproductive health and eliminate inequities.

Two years have now passed since the Action Plan was endorsed. In September this year, WHO's Regional Office for Europe collaborated with UNFPA's Regional Office, and with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, to convene a meeting of member states to explore the progress and challenges in implementation of the Action Plan, and their implications for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The meeting attracted more than 80 participants from 21 countries, which reflects the strong interest from Member States in accelerating implementation of the Action Plan.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- to review the progress towards achieving the goals and objectives of the Action Plan;
- to discuss triggers and barriers in implementation of the SRH Action Plan at country level and national SRH monitoring mechanisms;
- to highlight the main SRH challenges in countries and discuss possible solutions, including decreasing inequalities in SRH outcomes; and
- to identify areas for further technical support to accelerate progress in achievement of better SRH.

The meeting generated a rich set of recommendations for prioritizing actions that would accelerate progress towards national SRH targets. In brief, some of these priorities include:

- Improving access to a full range of effective contraceptives;
- Ensuring that all adolescents can benefit from comprehensive sexuality education;
- Establishing standards for youth-friendly SRH services;
- Sharing country experiences and developing common monitoring and evaluation instruments for use by all countries;
- Advancing men's sexual and reproductive health through improving the information and services available and also ensuring their meaningful engagement in SRH programmes;
- Setting up or improving screening and prevention services for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; and
- Intensifying a focus on closing the inequalities in access to SRH services between urban and rural areas.

The report from this meeting will be available soon.

To further support countries in implementing this Action Plan, WHO has initiated a series of comprehensive assessments and a rigorous comparative analysis of efforts and trends to achieve universal access to SRH services in the health systems and trends; the assessments for the first eight countries will be available in February 2019 and these will be undertaken in the majority of European countries.

WHO is also committed to the production of timely and reliable evidence in response to national SRHR policy needs, and we invite countries to discuss their research needs in this regard.

WHO notes that national policy-makers are increasingly looking for ways to transform their health systems to secure efficiencies and minimize threats to fiscal sustainability. This can be a positive development by moving away from hospital-centric models of care and directing resources instead towards more integrated and people-centered primary care models. Policy dialogue is needed, however, to shape national UHC models so that they include comprehensive, integrated SRH services as essential health services in national UHC packages.

The vision for this Action Plan is that Europe is a region in which all people, regardless of sex, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic condition, ethnicity, cultural background and legal status, are enabled and supported in achieving their full potential for sexual and reproductive health and well-being; a region where their human rights related to sexual and reproductive health are respected, protected and fulfilled; and a region in which countries, individually and jointly, work towards reducing inequities in sexual and reproductive health and rights. The report presented and discussed at this conference indicates mixed progress by countries in fulfilling this vision, and WHO remains ready to provide support to member states for determining the best course of action to accelerate progress.