

## **PAA 2013**

### **Achieving the London FP Summit Goal through Adhering to Voluntary Family Planning**

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#### **Extended Abstract**

Through the Family Planning (FP) Summit, held in London on July 11, 2012, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have teamed with DFID and other donors and governments to provide resources to support programming to reach 120 million new family planning users in 69 low and medium income countries by 2020, with an emphasis on 22 priority low income countries. To reach this ambitious goal, access to family planning will need to be greatly expanded, as will programming to address barriers to family planning use.

While family planning has been one of the most successful development strategies over the past half century, such growth in family planning users would be unprecedented. The theme of rights was emphasized throughout the FP Summit, evoking the principle from the 1968 Tehran Proclamation from the UN Human Rights Conference that has guided family planning for over 40 years: the right of individuals and couples to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and the information and services to do so. This principle was reinforced by country signatories to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) for voluntary family planning in the context of reproductive health – with no resort to coercion or control.

Despite this firm global commitment to voluntary, rights-based family planning programming, instances of coercion have occurred. While China's so-called One-Child Policy, instituted in 1979 and still in effect over thirty years later, is the most egregious example, other instances in India and Peru, and allegations in others, including Bangladesh, Indonesia, Tunisia, and Uzbekistan, have made some wary of the potential for coercion to reemerge in family planning policies and programs. A recent court ruling in Namibia has highlighted the pressures faced by HIV-positive women to stop childbearing, reminiscent of experiences in the West of targeting disabled women with contraception. It is important to understand each situation and how it occurred to develop approaches to ensure that these experiences are not repeated.

Based on a systematic review of the literature and interviews with experts involved in family planning programming in relevant countries, the paper develops framework to examine instances to coercion in family planning to understand the context, the type of coercion, how it was uncovered and how it was addressed. Using these examples, the paper offers recommendations for policy and program steps to ensure voluntarism in family planning as countries scale up programs to reach the ambitious goal of FP2020.