

What is the 15andCounting campaign?



In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, 179 countries forged an inspiring and visionary plan that integrated a wide range of population, development and human rights issues into a 20 year programme of action.

Through the ICPD Programme of Action, governments committed to achieve a range of development goals by 2015 that placed individuals and human rights at the centre of development. At the heart of the ICPD programme are the commitments to attain universal access to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning; to ensure everyone has access to the information, education and services they need to make decisions about relationships, sex and reproduction that are right for them; it also seeks to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

The ICPD programme acknowledges the central role of women and young people in the development process, the need to empower women and young people as powerful agents of change and affirms the human rights of all people.

2009 marks the 15th anniversary of the ICPD but with only five years remaining to meet their commitments many governments are failing to make progress against these goals, particularly in meeting the needs of all young people.

The ICPD programme emphasises the centrality of sexual and reproductive health — defined as 'complete physical, mental and social wellbeing'. The often overlooked importance of this was recognized by the addition of universal access to reproductive health as one of the Millennium Development Goal's



targets. The Millennium Development Goals are a set of eight interconnected development goals with the ultimate aim of eradicating extreme poverty. Fulfilling the ICPD Programme of Action is essential to achieving these goals.

People born at the time of ICPD in 1994, are now 15 years old and are part of the largest cohort of young people the world has ever seen – some 1.5 billion. The ICPD was written to address the needs of young people and it is critical that governments fulfil their ICPD commitments if young people are to be able to attain their rights.

The 15andCounting campaign is calling on governments to meet their commitments on sexual and reproductive health and for a review of the progress of each country against the ICPD goals. 15andCounting seeks to highlight the specific needs of young people who will be most affected by the failure or success of their government to achieve these goals. 15andCounting aims to partner with and connect young people from around the world to collectively demand their rights to health, knowledge and wellbeing.

- See the Supporting Materials section for more information on the International Conference on population and Development
- to see if your government is a signatory to the International Conference on population and Development
- for more information on the Millennium Development Goals
- to find out about sexual and reproductive health / What are sexual and reproductive health and rights?
- to find out about the benefits of sexual and reproductive health and rights/why we need them

So what are we asking people to do?

We invite people to sign the Count Me In: Sexual Rights for All petition that will be presented to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and advocate for governments to promote, protect and fulfil their promise to provide better access to sexual and reproductive health services and information for all young people