



High-level Political Forum 2015 (under the auspices of ECOSOC): Keeping science involved in SDG implementation

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Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Estelle Wagner, and I am speaking on behalf of IPPF/WHO and the WMG. Science plays an essential role in achieving the targets (3.7 and 5.6) which encompass sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights and gender equality. One example is comprehensive sexuality education, is an age-appropriate, evidence-based, culturally relevant approach to teaching about sex and relationships by providing scientifically accurate, realistic, non-judgmental information.

Evidence shows that a combination of comprehensive sexuality education and access to birth control decreases the rates of unintended pregnancies and STIs among teenagers, and delays the age of the first sexual encounter for both boys and girls—whereas abstinence-only education is found not to be effective in changing behavior.

CSE is crucial to the long-term success of government initiatives and policies that tackle violence against women and girls, female genital mutilation, and early and forced marriage. It encourages positive behavioral change such as condom use, helps fight stigma, and reduces HIV and STI prevalence rates. Research has found that where gender issues are covered in sexuality education, there are marked improvements in reproductive health outcomes. It is vital for young people throughout the world to complete a quality-assured, scientifically accurate, evidence-based CSE program if we are to achieve the SDG targets on sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights and gender equality.

We would like to ask the esteemed panelists their thoughts on what we, as civil society, can do to facilitate the science-policy-practice dialogue with policy-makers at the national level when it comes to implementation of the SDGs?

Thank you.