



## DSW and RH supplies

### Supplies critical for poverty eradication

#### Supply shortages endanger lives

Shortages of critical reproductive health (RH) supplies around the world are undermining progress towards achieving the Programme of Action established at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the poverty reduction targets included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Recent estimates by UNFPA show contraceptive costs to increase from \$532 million in 2005 in donor recipient countries to \$639 million in 2015. Under such shortages, millions of men, women and children suffer unnecessarily from maternal and infant deaths, unintended pregnancies, induced abortions and deaths due to HIV/AIDS.

#### Supplies on the European and global agenda

DSW has been actively engaged in key initiatives around supply shortages since 2001. Combining its project experience with advocacy expertise in Germany and Europe, DSW was the only European partner in the first phase of the Supply Initiative. This three-year global advocacy project was successful in forming a donor co-ordination forum at the global level - the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) - and played the central role in assuring that RH supplies are highly prominent on the global donor agenda.

In addition to that, DSW is a member of the “group of ten”, the ten leading RH advocates in Europe, which are keeping supplies on the European Union agenda. In 2005, DSW - together with KfW Development Bank, USAID and Deliver - organised a workshop on RH supplies in East Africa, attracting participants from regional governments, donors, civil society and social marketing organisations.



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### Strengthening advocacy in the South

The global level dialogue on RH supplies has made impressive progress in the past five years, e.g. by 2004 (the year of most recent available data), bilateral and multilateral donor support for contraceptives had increased to \$203 million and the issue is now firmly on the global agenda. However, the need for supplies continually outstrips available funding and the crisis is far from resolved.

In the context of a world where developing countries are increasingly the drivers of poverty reduction efforts and development assistance priorities – the MDGs, the Paris Aid Declaration, the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategies, the European Union's Country Strategies, to name but a few – strengthening southern civil society advocacy capacity in general and on RH supplies in particular, is of paramount importance.

DSW's work with the RHSC is guided by the principle that in order to achieve RH supply security, recipient country governments need to prioritise and gain ownership of causes and solutions to supply shortfalls. Led by DSW's country offices and working at a regional level, DSW's advocacy activities rest on two pillars, namely to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to campaign around RH supplies and secondly to establish and nurture relationships with key regional policy and decision-makers.

In this role, DSW has already entered into consultations with East and West African regional actors and networks, including ECOWAS, WAHO and the EAC. In addition, DSW has been closely working with the Global Fund, having identified and nominated two regional African representatives from East and West Africa.

In combination with the heightened global awareness, advocacy efforts at developing country level promise to finally ensure that we attain tangible financial and political commitment to sustainable RH supplies. The reason is simple - without supplies, no reproductive health programme can be successful.

For more information, visit [www.rhsupplies.org](http://www.rhsupplies.org)



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