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PRESS RELEASE

Health and Rights Advocates Mobilize Across Globe to Demand Female Condoms

CHICAGO, IL--On September 16, sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice advocates from around the world will take part in the third annual Global Female Condom Day (GFCD), a day of education and advocacy dedicated to increasing awareness, accessibility, and use of female condoms worldwide. This year, individuals and groups will join a "Dance4Demand" campaign to show the world that people want access to female condoms. Participants will rise and dance in their communities, record their moves and advocacy messages, and share their experience through social media (#Dance4Demand, #GFCD2014, #femalecondoms).

"This coordinated day of international action shines a light on a highly effective but little-known safer sex option," said Beatrijs Janssen, Communications Officer with the Universal Access to Female Condoms (UAFC) Joint Programme. This year nearly 200 organizations from 60 countries are dancing and mobilizing to advance a worldwide agenda to marshal increased attention and resources for female condom programming while signaling a broad and growing base of support for the method."

An array of exciting Dance4Demand events is planned. For example, PATH country offices in China, Kenya, India, South Africa, and Zambia are organizing activities including university dance competitions, specially choreographed dance sequences, and a rooftop salsa party. And in the United States, dance actions are planned at local hotspots in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Seattle, and Washington, DC, where community leaders, health service providers, students, and young people will participate.

The female condom is the only prevention option against HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy that is woman-initiated and currently available. Yet awareness and availability of female condoms are still poor in most parts of the world. Billions of male condoms are distributed globally each year, but only 60 million female condoms were distributed in 2012. According to the United Nations Population Fund, only one female condom is available for every 36 women worldwide.

"We can help make female condoms more widely available by advancing gender equality in prevention efforts," said the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) President Serra Sippel. "Female condoms give women the opportunity to negotiate condom use for protected sex. They're an essential part of a strong gender strategy to end HIV/AIDS and expand access to lifesaving contraceptives."

There are many compelling reasons to increase female condom availability and access worldwide. Numerous studies show that female condoms are acceptable among both men and women in diverse populations. As several studies demonstrate, adding female condoms to male condom distribution efforts leads to increases in protected sex because couples have more choices for protection. Female condoms can be cost-effective when part of a well-planned prevention program, as shown by mathematical modeling conducted in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States. Finally, female condoms give receptive partners a tangible tool to initiate protection, which is especially important when male condoms cannot or will not be used.

“Though classified as a ‘female’ condom, this tool offers people of any gender a way to take greater control of their health,” said Jessica Terlikowski of the National Female Condom Coalition (NFCC). “Options for receptive partners (male, female, transgender) are limited, making them more vulnerable to HIV and STIs. Gay men and other men who have sex with men around the world are disproportionately impacted by HIV. They want and need a variety of options to protect themselves and their partners. Female condoms help meet this need.”

“Women and men across the globe have an urgent need for dual protection that could be addressed by female condoms. Today’s actions amplify the diverse voices clamoring for these tools and send a clear message to decision-makers at every level that female condom access must be expanded to achieve sexual and reproductive justice and turn the tide on the HIV epidemic,” said Kimberly Whipkey, Advocacy and Communications Specialist at PATH.

More information

Website: www.femalecondomday.org

Video of GFCD Dance4Demand kickoff in July: <http://vimeo.com/103256301>

Social media: #Dance4Demand, #GFCD2014, #femalecondoms

About the Global Female Condom Day organizing partners

National Female Condom Coalition

The National Female Condom Coalition (NFCC) is a partnership of United States and US-based advocates, researchers, health departments, and community-based and national organizations that advances a mission to increase awareness, acceptance, access, and use of female condoms. Coordinated by the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, the NFCC advances a coordinated national agenda for female condoms through advocating for full integration of female condoms into sexual health, STI and HIV prevention, and family planning programs in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; for programming and policies to scale up female condom access; and for research, development, and approval of receptive partner-initiated barrier methods that can be worn vaginally or anally. Learn more at www.nationalFCcoalition.org.

Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme

The Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme (UAFC) is a Dutch consortium consisting of Rutgers WPF, Oxfam Novib, I + solutions, and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UAFC started in 2009 with the aim of making female condoms accessible, affordable, and available for all. Together with local partners in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Mozambique, UAFC works on demand creation,

international and national advocacy and communication, and supply chain management. Learn more at www.condoms4all.org

PATH

PATH is the leader in global health innovation. An international, nonprofit organization, PATH saves lives and improves health, especially among women and children. Accelerating innovation across five platforms—vaccines, drugs, diagnostics, devices and system and service innovations—PATH harnesses its entrepreneurial insight, scientific and public health expertise, and passion for health equity. By mobilizing partners around the world, PATH takes innovation to scale, working alongside countries primarily in Africa and Asia to tackle their greatest health needs. With these key partners, PATH delivers measurable results that disrupt the cycle of poor health. Learn more at www.path.org.

CHANGE

The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) is a US-based, nongovernmental organization whose mission is to promote the sexual and reproductive health and human rights of women and girls globally by shaping the development and implementation of US policies. CHANGE envisions a world where sexual and reproductive health and rights are universally recognized and where comprehensive, integrated sexual and reproductive health services are accessible and available to all, free from coercion, violence, and discrimination. Learn more at www.genderhealth.org.

Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) AFRH is a national, nongovernmental organization headquartered in Ibadan, Nigeria. ARFH's mission is to initiate, promote, and implement developmental HIV and AIDS sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and family planning programs and interventions for young people and adults through capacity-building, technical assistance, operations research, and evaluation to improve the quality of life in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. These programs focus on mobilizing people for behavioral and attitudinal changes that promote best SRH practices in order to reduce disease burdens particularly for STIs, including HIV and AIDS, and malaria and tuberculosis. Learn more at www.arfh-ng.org.