



Pakistan's progress on MDGs targets dismal

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Islamabad -- With barely five years remaining to meet targets set in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and Millennium Development Goals MDGs, Pakistan's progress in a number of goals remains dismal.

This was stated at a ♦National Youth Forum on ICPD+ 15 and MDG+ 10 organised by World Population Foundation (WPF) to highlight the significance of these international agreements on population development. Members of various youth organizations, representatives of civil society and media attended the event. Federal Secretary for Ministry of Youth Affairs Hifz-ur-Rehman was the chief guest on the occasion.

The ICPD was a milestone in the history of population and development where 179 countries agreed that population and development are strongly linked and that empowering women and meeting people's needs for education and health are necessary for both individual and national development.

On the other hand, the MDGs are the centrepiece of development efforts around the globe. Although, the 18 global targets and 48 indicators adopted in year 2000 have been translated into 16 national targets and 37 indicators keeping in view of Pakistan's specific conditions, real progress in terms of visible impact still leaves a lot to be desired for.

Providing an overview of these agreements, Advocacy Officer, WPF, Netherlands, Hilde Kroes, emphasized the need for involving young people in development initiatives to ensure holistic economic, social and political development of any country. She felt that this was especially true for Pakistan, since more than 64% of its population comprised of youth.

Project Manager WPF, Fahd Shafiq said that that ICPD and MDGs could not be realized in their true spirit until and unless attention was paid to the realization of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of the population.

The forum devised a ♦Call to Actions at the end, which urged the government for the allocation of sufficient resources to implement ICPD Plan of Action. The year for achieving ICPD goals is 2014.

The call also asked the government to invest in the development of National Youth Task Force and other youth networks and include the participation of young women in polices and programmes. It also demanded investment on creating awareness on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) care to ensure access to SRH services and ensure gender equality in information and provision of services.

It demanded allocation of resources for reduction in infant, child and maternal mortality, include life skills curriculum and information on reproductive health in the text books of middle and high schools and device strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to monitor the implementation of ICPD Plan of Action.

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