



Issue - 36 21 May 2014

## Population | Family Planning

### **Global Leaders Recognizes Afghanistan New Initiative in Reproductive Health**

The Global Leaders Council for Reproductive Health (GLC) honored the government of Afghanistan with a Resolve Award for their leadership in expanding access to essential reproductive health services. The Honorable Dr. Suraya Dalil, Minister of Public Health of Afghanistan, accepted the award at a ceremony celebrating the Resolve Award recipients during the 67th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. The Special Mention recognizes Afghanistan's efforts to prioritize reproductive, maternal and child health. The Ministry of Public Health has worked to engage other Ministries, Parliamentarians, community and religious leaders to increase their attention to women's reproductive health needs. "Mullahs' wives have trained as health education champions who teach in their homes to raise issues of sexual and reproductive health and family planning for women," (Khaama Press)

### **Smartphone app Teaches Reproductive Health in China**

A new smartphone app on reproductive health targeting women working in the manufacturing industry was launched in China. It provides women in the industry access to information related to reproductive health, as well as lets them share their views and experiences and answer questionnaires on the subject. Jeremy Prepscius, vice-president of Business for Social Responsibility in the Asia-Pacific region, said, "The number of female workers in China using smartphones is increasing." He said about 2,000 female workers would benefit from the new project in the next 18 months and workers from Guangdong province would use the new app first. (Chinanews.com)

### **Family Planning is a Matter of Choice, not Religion or Money**

Women have proved yet again that family planning is an individual choice that has little to do with religion, according to conclusions made last week at a conference in Nairobi.

During the three-day conference at the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC), medical workers presented evidence from Nairobi to Nandi to Garissa indicating majority of pregnancy complications have no religious boundaries. It also emerged that the free maternity project may only have a limited impact on reducing maternal mortality because money is not the main reason why many women like to deliver at home. The health workers identified the traditional birth attendants and arrogance among the reasons why most women are still giving birth at home. (Standardmedia)

### **Population Boom Worries Tanzanian Government**

TANZANIA needs to control the current population growth rate which hampers the fight against poverty and exerts pressure on existing resources, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Government relaunch of a refocused programme on maternal health, the official said that calling for large families without adequate measures to guarantee the increased population of quality lives and employment will be a recipe for 'a Tanzanian disaster' in the long run. The current annual growth rate of 3 per cent, which is one of the highest in the world, does not correspond with the economic growth and cutting it would influence the direction of the fight against poverty. Presently at an estimated 44.5 million, it is projected to grow to 65 million in just 14 years from now. (Dailynews.co.tz)

### **Youth Reproductive And Sexual Health Study In Sarawak (Malaysia)**

The Women, Family and Community Development Ministry will carry out a study on the Risk Factor and Protection Against Youth Reproductive and Sexual Health in Sarawak. Its minister, Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim said that based on information obtained from a similar study carried out in the peninsula in 2011, her ministry had received empirical information on the reproductive and social problems faced by youths currently. "The objective of the study is to find out the prevalence of unhealthy sexual behaviour among youths, identify risk factors pertaining to their sexual and reproductive health, and identify protective factors pertaining to sexual and reproductive health among youths," (BERNAMA)

### **Beijing Braces for Baby Boom**

Beijing is set to experience a baby boom as a result of the revised family planning policy which allows couples to have two children if either parent is an only child, according to the Beijing Morning Post's Saturday report. A 2014 Beijing Municipal Maternal and Child Health working meeting held on Friday decided to increase the number of beds in obstetrics departments, strictly control caesarean deliveries, and improve referral and consultation for high risk pregnancies so as to reduce neonatal and maternal mortality. The report said beds within the maternity ward of the Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital were all fully booked for the second half of this year by the end of April. The hospital is unable to accept new patient files for pregnant women until 2015. (CRIEnglish)

### **Ayatollahs' Insistence on Large Families in Iran**

The Iranian policies that have been well regarded by the world community. One rare

example, though, was the birth control policy that Iran implemented in the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq War. Until about two years ago, Iranian men who wanted them were provided with free vasectomies as a means of family planning. The policy was actually lauded by family planning advocates, and it helped to keep Iran's birthrate under two percent and prevented many families from being overburdened by large families in a nation with a legacy of sanctions and a reputation for severe economic mismanagement and corruption. Today, not only has the policy been revoked, but the leaders of Iran have actually returned to encouraging citizens to have babies at the highest rate possible. Throughout the country, education programs and government facilities have changed to accommodate the renewed conservative outlook on family planning. "We don't accept less than five," Ayatollah Mohammad Hosseini Ghazvini said on Velayat TV, encouraging the audience to have "five, eight, 12, and 14" babies, and to reverse the population control trend of the previous three decades. (Iran news update)

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## Message for Leaders

**“Why no political party, Civil society, women group and population related NGOs raise the issue of family planning during elections in India” FLI**



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