



UNFPA VIEWS ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Among other issues, the Sixth Session of the OWG on SDGs will be devoted to discussing science, technology and innovation. The world will not be able to achieve sustainable development if science, technology and innovation are not deployed, shared and used to help solve the most pressing issues of today.

Progress in science, technology and innovation (STI) will be critical for the achievement of the Post-2015 development agenda. National and global investment in STI must be scaled up. There must be special emphasis on ensuring that STI progress benefits every person in an equitable way and richer countries transfer STI to poorer countries to contribute to their sustainable development. Through national government budgets and ODA there must be a special focus on STI investments in areas that are not currently commercially viable, but where significant improvements in human development can be achieved. One way is to promote public/private/NGO partnerships such as the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition which aims at ensuring that all people in low- and middle-income countries can access and use affordable, high-quality supplies to improve their reproductive health.

While generally a force for good, STI must be accompanied by strong legal frameworks to prevent that technology is used in a way that raises privacy concerns or is incompatible with human rights, such as enabling harmful and unethical practices regarding female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, which is rooted in discrimination against the girl child due to son preference.

From 1990 to 2010 globally there has been a 47% decline in maternal mortality and a similar reduction in child mortality (MDGs 4 and 5). But these declines fall way short of the MDG targets. Looking forward, progress can be rapidly accelerated and supported by the use of STI- driven approaches, including product

innovations that can be used in low-income settings. **STI for women's health is increasingly saving lives and the huge potential it holds must be embedded in the Post 2015 development framework as part of the broader STI solutions.**

STI is not only important for making available better products such as low cost and technologically appropriate medical devices and health commodities for low-income settings. It is equally important for improvement in processes; service delivery techniques; health information recording, transmission and dissemination; field based diagnostics; behavior change communication, community mobilization, social policy changes and enhanced skills trainings of service providers.

Recent innovations and advances in technology are unprecedented opportunities to enhance progress in sexual and reproductive health (SRH), including maternal health and family planning, HIV elimination, frontline health-worker trainings, elimination of fistula, adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health information and services, ending gender based violence and female genital mutilation/cutting, generating data for development, knowledge-sharing and management. Technology offers immense opportunities for capacity building through improved programmes and product design, outreach, scale up, implementation, behaviour change communications, community mobilization, monitoring and enhanced accountability.

Considering the above, in the process of framing the Post-2015 agenda, UNFPA is calling for significant investments in STI initiatives to:

Improve cost effectiveness and enhanced health service delivery

Recent examples of breakthrough and evolutionary technological advances in products include: Non-pneumatic anti-shock garments for post-partum hemorrhage, that health experts hope can delay the fatal effects of postpartum hemorrhage, which is the leading cause of maternal mortality; single use injectable contraceptives; improved birthing simulators; new types of female condoms to increase consumer choice and user-friendliness; improved condom and lubricant technology; anti-retroviral drugs as prophylaxis to prevent HIV acquisition and many other examples. These products are simple, cost effective, easy to use and have been developed for low-income settings.

New technologies are also in early stage of development for a biodegradable contraceptive implant that does not require removal, for low-income and distant communities where women may not have easy access to trained health workers.

STI to disseminate health education and information

Young people are at the vanguard of using the internet and a myriad of forms of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. The potential for the use of social media to health prevention is enormous. Using social media and mobile technology can widely disseminate life-saving information, i.e. on preventing HIV; adopting safe behaviours; and spreading messages on sexual and reproductive health and gender equality; mobilizing communities to eliminate female genital mutilation and cutting. Mobile phone technology already is helping HIV positive persons with taking their antiretroviral medications on time.

Track data and record using mobile technology

Mobile technology can be used to track maternal and newborn deaths (as it is being done in Mali, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Madagascar and Cambodia) and successfully conduct maternal death surveillance and response programs. For instance in Nigeria, as part of Government efforts to strengthen the health workforce to prevent maternal death (particularly in reporting and recording), an SMS-based data collection platform is used to send monthly reports on maternal morbidity, birth, and immunization registry system by midwives.

Mobile phones are being used to track fistula patients, get payments to them for transport and support the fistula advocates and survivors in reintegrating within communities.

Improved forecasting and stock-out reporting of family planning commodities and essential life-saving medicines are already done through information system technology and mobile phones. An example is the Tupange SMS Commodity Tracking System in Kenya where mobile phones and SMS are used to track and fulfil needs for redistribution of commodities between and among facilities and are also used to improve RH commodities forecasting and in averting stock-outs.

Enhance skills trainings and assessments of health workers

UNFPA, in collaboration with Intel, Jhpiego and WHO, has launched an innovative partnership to bring 21st century skills to health workers. Innovative multi-media e-learning modules that offer an offline access and customization according to country context will be used to train and assess frontline health workers in all essential basic life-saving midwifery skills.

To learn more about UNFPA's position and key asks in the post-2015 development agenda, we invite you to review UNFPA's paper "**Empowering People to Ensure a Sustainable Future for All**".

<http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/news/2013/Post%202015%20Position%20Paper.pdf>