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Emergency Campaign: The Global Health Consensus on Reproductive Health XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand

In July, public health experts, research scientists, physicians and activists gathered in Bangkok, Thailand for the biennial meeting on the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. Douglas Gould + Co. was proud to return to this important conference and draw media attention to the cultural, economic and social conditions that make women most vulnerable to infection. With 2004 marking the 10th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), we expanded our partnerships with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Population Action International (PAI) to bring the latest thinking on reproductive health and HIV prevention to an expanding global audience.

To raise awareness of the need for increased, consistent flows of contraceptive supplies, particularly condoms to the developing world, we counseled PAI to release an updated version of their well-received 2002 report *Condoms Count*, which reveals the degree to which donor countries are failing to supply condoms. At a press conference held before a packed house of international media outlets, Amy Coen, president of PAI, was joined by Catherine Hankins of UNAIDS and Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA), the only member of Congress to attend the conference. The speakers emphasized the importance of U.S. policies that encourage the global provision of condoms and reflect the realities of women's lives, as opposed to unproven "abstinence-only" programs. These messages were connected to the importance of economic, social and political development-core principles of the ICPD. To ensure that reporters based in the US were able to follow the news from Bangkok, Douglas Gould & Co held an Audio News Conference which also featured Bill Smith, director of public policy at the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

Douglas Gould + Co. also continued its work to promote women-centered HIV/AIDS prevention strategies with UNFPA and the newly-formed Global Coalition on Women and HIV/AIDS. The Global Coalition, which includes UNIFEM, released a new report on the feminization of AIDS. We were able to secure several high level interviews with

editorial writers and reporters for Thoraya Obaid, executive director of UNFPA, who seized the opportunities to promote the ICPD Programme of Action and its call for universal access to education and reproductive health as central solutions to the HIV/AIDS crisis.

Our services and the combined efforts of our partners were highly successful and rewarding with outstanding international attention in media outlets from CNN to The *Boston Globe* to MTV News.

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Town Meetings On Population, Environment And Development Provoke Exciting Discussions

Ten years ago, at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the global community promised to reduce poverty and make basic reproductive health services available to all by the year 2015.

To commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the ICPD, community forums centering on the theme "Countdown to 2015" were recently held in America's heartland. Douglas Gould + Co., Inc. brought leaders in population and development together to stimulate interesting discussions on the ICPD. These talks focused on progress made so far and what still needs to be done to create a healthier, more hopeful world. Held on college campuses, these forums created an opportunity to engage the public, particularly young people, and to garner media attention.


The first town meeting was held on September 28 at the University of Minnesota. Speakers included **Jill Sheffield**, President of Family Care International (FCI); **Allie Stickney**, Vice President of International Programs at Planned Parenthood Federation of America; **Stephen Mills**, Director of Sierra Club's International Program; and **Judith Bruce**, Director of the Gender, Family and Development Program at Population Council. **Arvonne Fraser**, a fellow emeritus of the Humphrey Institute and former U.S. Ambassador to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, moderated the event.

The second meeting on September 30 was held at the University of Pittsburgh. The speakers were Jill Sheffield; Allie Stickney; Adrienne Germain, President of the International Women's Health Coalition; **Amy Coen**, President/CEO of Population Action International; and Larry Fahn, President of Sierra Club. The moderator was **Carolyn Ban**, Dean of the Graduate School of International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh.

In connection with the Town Meetings, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune ran an excellent editorial on ICPD+10. View it [here](#). A report card showing comparative data on global health and rights is available at:

http://www.populationaction.org/news/press/news_083104_ReportCard.pdf

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 on my radar**Its time to change the message on Abortion**
by Douglas Gould

For too long, pro and anti-choice groups have been squared off in opposite corners of the public's consciousness. They are seen as polar opposites in a debate that has no end game, and the public is paying less and less attention. Despite the high stakes in the U.S.-with the pending elections that will determine the future composition of the U.S. Supreme Court-many on the pro-choice side have hewed to a message that no longer resonates. It only reinforces their isolation from "mainstream" America.

Many quotes from pro-choice leaders express their frustration with the new generation of women who take access to legal abortion for granted. Of course they do. All of us take the accomplishments of our forbearers, no matter how hard fought, as facts of life. We move on.

But the threats to reproductive freedom are real and demand constant vigilance. It is time to look for new ways to make old realities come alive-not by harkening back to the bad old days, but by helping people connect abortion to issues that are really important today.

Over the last several years we have tried to better understand what cognitive linguist George Lakoff would call the big "level one" issues that best support discreet policy objectives. When it comes to abortion (and all reproductive health and rights issues for that matter), we need to start the conversation with the public with something bigger than procedures and pills. In the 60s abortion de-criminalization was about health. In the 70s it was about justice between men and women. In the 80s it was about privacy. All of these were big emotive concepts that were top of the mind and used to frame major debates of the day. Today, this issue, I think, is detached from any big idea and is out there all alone. As a foundation program officer recently said during one of our training sessions, "progressives always start the argument where they want to end up." To me keeping abortion legal is both the start and finish of an argument that people increasingly don't see as important to their lives. Like electricity, it's simply there when you turn on the switch.

To make abortion relevant, pro-choice advocates, particularly a new generation of young leaders, need to tether the issue to something that really matters, like self-determination, or family. They need to do it fast.

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 and another thing**The Global Roundtable**

Leaders from 106 countries gathered in London in late August for a three-day roundtable on sexual and reproductive health to mark the 10th anniversary of the historic 1994 International Consensus on Population and Development (ICPD) and to chart a course for the next 10 years. Participants examined the sweeping scientific, cultural and political changes since 179 countries adopted the 20-year plan of action that called for universal access to reproductive health care, and lower infant, child and

maternal mortality rates by 2015.

At the Countdown 2015 Roundtable, a new report card measuring the progress of nations around the world on women's health and human rights was released. Expert scholars, youth advocates and global health pioneers used this information to set an agenda to reach the 2015 goals. A US policy-focused press conference featuring UN Foundation leader Timothy Wirth delivered sharp criticisms of Bush administration's Global Gag Rule, defunding of international family planning and other dangerous policies.

Douglas Gould + Co. developed messages, worked with reporters from all over the world, oversaw media room operations and a media staff of 30, coordinated press conferences, and trained key spokespeople for the Global Roundtable. Seven-hundred advocates from key non-governmental organizations around the world and 50 members of the press attended the Roundtable. Media coverage was extensive. News and opinion pieces appeared in the New York Times, Boston Globe, Reuters, National Public Radio, Los Angeles Times, Associated Press, Inter Press Service, BBC, Times (UK), Independent (UK), Pravda (Russia), Seattle Post Intelligencer, Oregonian, Detroit Free Press, Voice of America, and others.

Ipas, a leading international organization that works to increase women's ability to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, got extensive international coverage of a report on unsafe abortion after we helped them stage a press conference, deliver strong remarks, and distribute their materials to the media. Coverage appeared in several media outlets, including a featured Reuters story that was distributed to readers from Peru to Thailand. For more information on Ipas' work and news, please see <http://www.ipas.org>.

For more information on the Roundtable and other ICPD +10 events, please visit <http://www.planetwire.org>.

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Resources on the topic of reproductive health and rights

Online

- www.planetwire.org--PlanetWire: information about reproductive health, rights, and services; maternal and child health; equality in education; women's empowerment; youth participation; and a healthy environment
- www.unfpa.org-United Nations Population Fund: since 1969, UNFPA has worked with governments and non-governmental organizations in over 140 countries, at their request, and with the support of the international community. UNFPA supports programs that help women, men and young people plan their families and avoid unwanted pregnancies, undergo pregnancy and childbirth safely, avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs) - including HIV/AIDS, and combat violence against women.
- www.familycareintl.org-Family Care International: FCI is dedicated to improving women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in developing countries, with

a special emphasis on making pregnancy and childbirth safer. Their work encompasses family planning and preventing unsafe abortion and gender violence, and they place particular emphasis on safe motherhood and adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

- www.popact.org-Population Action International: PAI is an independent policy advocacy group working to strengthen public awareness and political and financial support worldwide for population programs grounded in individual rights. They foster the development of U.S. and international policy on urgent population and reproductive health issues through an integrated program of research, advocacy and communications.

Off line

- ICPD at Ten: Where Are We Now? Is a report card showing significant progress in 23 countries since the 1994 conference and little or no progress in 17 countries. http://www.populationaction.org/news/press/news_083104_ReportCard.pdf
- Countdown 2015 Magazine: Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights for All Published by Family Care International, International Planned Parenthood Federation and Population Action International, this magazine is a collaborative effort to publish articles dedicated to improving sexual and reproductive health rights worldwide. <http://www.countdown2015.org/UnmanagedFrame.aspx?ID=1033&ifHeight=1400&srcIF=http://www.populationaction.org/2015/magazine>

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