Weekly News Roundup – 3 Mar 2017

The “She Decides” conference and its success in raising €181 million to counter the Trump Gag Rule dominated the week’s news. In addition to previous announcements, Canada stepped up with a $20 million pledge. While many in the UK urged a contribution, the government was in an awkward position of not wanting to seem “anti-Trump” and announced no new aid.

The real-life effects of the ban will be harsh for the poorest women, with examples in articles from Malawi and Kenya. One report in Kenya looked at how funding FP can change the lives of women, even in remote and impoverished areas.

The anti-FP voices called the Brussels conference “New Colonialism”, saying that the West was forcing abortion on an unwilling population. A counterpoint was an article by the head of the International Rescue Committee, who said her work in the field, actually listening to women, showed a huge, unmet desire for more access to FP.

Belgian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander De Croo had his hands full with the organization of the She decides conference, but also found time to launch a new “e-tutorial on sexual and reproductive health.” In other tech news, more than 300 developers will spend the weekend at an Abortion Access Hackathon in San Francisco. In Nairobi, 14 social entrepreneurs completed GE-sponsored training to model new approaches to maternal and child health, including affordable telemedicine and electronic health records systems. In Nigeria, Marie Stopes International, using funding (while it can) from USAID, supplied 70 phones in Edo state for prompt data recording. In South Africa, a guide to safe abortion is now available in an app, which so far only covers Gauteng.

In the Lusophone world, Portugal supported “She Decides”, Angola decriminalized abortion in some cases, and Mozambique received $5 million for a safe abortion program.

Research released this week includes a study that says a drug to combat malaria during pregnancy, sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP), also prevents STIs. A Maternal Health Task Force paper suggests the key to filling the maternal health worker gap is task shifting. Advance Family Planning released three papers about advocacy and FP gains in Africa.

The Buzzfeed element: Check out 10 truths for Trump, 6 ways the world is closing the health worker gap, 5 reasons to support the Women’s Health Protection Act, 5 health investments countries can make, and 4 abortion stories you may have missed.

Finally, the tragic and the bizarre. The “Shero” featured as one of Time magazine’s people of the year – The Ebola Fighters – died in childbirth. And a Zimbabwean senator urged people to have more babies, so the country could attract more investment.
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