



## Weekly News Review – 7 July 2017

### A round-up of the week's most important, Africa-focused Family Planning and Reproductive Health reporting

#### Ethiopia

This week coming to you from Addis Ababa, where we are looking at the implementation of family planning curricula and service delivery. For more on CIRHT's activities see [our website](#) and a [video](#) about the program at Bahir Dar University in northern Ethiopia. CIRHT is building on the work of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the new Director-General of the WHO, when he was the country's health minister. A commentary in Devex urges him to [apply the lessons learned in Ethiopia to the global stage](#): "Ethiopia is a success story that highlights how, in a short time and with limited resources, strategic introduction of legal abortion integrated with contraceptive counseling and service delivery can produce significant public health benefits."

#### World Population Day/London Summit

July 11 will mark [World Population Day](#), with the theme "Family Planning: Empowering People, Developing Nations". The [London Family Planning Summit](#) also marks the day. Much of the discussion will continue to try to clarify and prepare for changes in global family planning funding, thrown into question by the [Trump Global Gag Rule](#). The [state of the world in family planning](#) can be examined in an excellent database released by FP2020/UN Foundation. The statistics, from Guttmacher, are clear: [214 million women in developing countries want to avoid pregnancy](#) but—for a variety of reasons—are not using a modern method of contraception. CARE sums up the [barriers to rights-based family planning](#): "power dynamics and unequal social and gender norms, global human workforce shortages, the increasing number of humanitarian crises and situations of chronic instability, and space for civil society is shrinking so that women and girls still struggle to be heard." The report does conclude optimistically: "We believe, however, that these barriers can be overcome and results can be achieved."

Among other international initiatives, including those from [PSI Impact](#) and [Women Deliver](#), the [Dutch government](#) has committed another €15 million to the She Decides fund, while the Australian government, which has [halved its support for family planning](#) and is being [urged to reverse course](#) at the summit.

At the country level, the week saw increased family planning access campaigns in [Cameroon](#), [Ghana](#), [Nigeria](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [Tanzania](#), [Tunisia](#), [Uganda](#), [Zambia](#) and [Zimbabwe](#).

#### Legal framework

Access requires a receptive legal framework. France celebrated the life of [Simone Veil](#), the Holocaust survivor who pressed for abortion rights as a government minister. Teen Elle reminded readers of [the danger of illegal abortion in the US before 1973](#), when 20-30 women per day were being admitted to US hospitals because of unsafe procedures, profiling "Jane", an action group. "From 1968 to 1973 they helped an estimated 11,000 women receive safe

abortions back when the procedure was illegal and often deadly, with the death rate for women of color receiving abortions significantly higher than that of white women.” In the UK, the [BMA took a stand for abortion access](#), leading to some [doctors to boycott “termination on demand.”](#) Again in the US, the [new head of the CDC, Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald](#), may not be as strident an anti-choice advocate as others in the US administration, according to STAT news. “She was on the record in the early 1990s as saying while she opposed federal funding of abortion and favored some restrictions, the final decision should be left to a woman and her doctor.” Because of anomalies in the US law, medical abortion may soon be [“available on Amazon.”](#) In Kenya, Supreme Court Justice Njoki Ndungu [wants the laws changed “to give more women access to safe abortion.”](#) And in El Salvador, strict enforcement of a strict law has seen [a teenager jailed for 30 years](#) for what she said was a miscarriage she suffered after being raped.

The debate in Tanzania about allowing teenage mothers back into school continues. Femnet calls it a setback to the [basic right for girls to have education](#). The Ynaija blog makes an important point: [“This law doesn’t find and expel the fathers of these](#) children along with the mothers. They are allowed to continue their education and graduate while the mothers of their children are punished and ostracised.”

More generally, expanding the legal framework for reproductive health and justice saw proponents in [Ghana](#), [Malawi](#), and [Uganda](#).

#### Medical news

A brief look at relevant medical news: An [untreatable gonorrhoea superbug](#) is spreading around the world, according to the WHO; warnings in Kenya about [dangerous sanitary pads](#) and in Ghana about [excessive use of emergency contraception](#). Regarding diets: [going low-carb increases fertility](#) five time, and [vegetable protein delays menopause](#). Finally, a disturbing report that some [teenage girls are having genital surgery](#) “to look more like Barbie.”

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