

International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion

28TH SEPTEMBER2012 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR THE DECRIMINALISATION OF ABORTION REPORT OF ACTIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD



The history

28th September originated in Latin America, and the Caribbean where women's groups have been mobilizing around September 28 the last two decades to demand their governments to decriminalize abortion, to provide access to safe and affordable abortion services and to end stigma and discrimination towards women who choose to have an abortion. The original name of the campaign in [Latin America and the Caribbean is Campaña 28 de Septiembre por la Despenalización del Aborto](#), which continues up to this day growing in force and commitment on the part of women's rights activists in the region. The date – September 28 – was chosen in commemoration of the abolition of slavery in Brazil which is now remembered as the day of the "free womb" demanding for safe and legal abortion for all women. (<http://www.september28.org/herstory/>)

The International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion was launched in April 2012. Its first major activity was to build towards the 28th September, Global Day of Action for the Decriminalisation of Abortion, and to support and promote activities all over the world. Alongside the 28th Septiembre campaign and WGNRR, the International Campaign used its own network of supporters to encourage activities in dozens of countries across six continents. This report aims to capture the number, range and geographical spread of events to provide a record, but most importantly to provide inspiration, for campaigners all over the world. We hope that in 2013 even more activities will take place and that those activities will stimulate and generate support for ongoing campaigns in countries where women are still endangered by unsafe abortion, threatened with criminal punishment, and subject to stigma in the absence of legal abortion or progressive laws that recognise safe abortion as a fundamental human right.

Activities in 2012

Activities ranged from information workshops, to marches, to demonstrations outside government buildings, to public meetings, to drama workshops, to surveys to art exhibitions. Some activities were carried out by established campaigning groups, some saw groups address this issue publicly for the first time, including groups with a focus on equalities or HIV/AIDS, or saw the formation of new groups. Their focus was different in each instance: calling for legislative change, clarification of the law, or demanding that the law be implemented properly, increasing access and improving services. Some activities took place in areas where abortion is routinely debated, others where it is barely spoken of, where simply promoting the event with abortion in the title was in and of itself a step towards destigmatisation of abortion and breaking the taboo that surrounds it.

However and wherever the day's activities took place, they were underpinned by the knowledge that safe abortion saves lives and the overarching purpose of ensuring that women have access to safe abortion, wherever they live in the world. It is significant that in many countries where legislative change is a long way off, many of the activities focused on how to make illegal abortion safer – disseminating information about how to access and use misoprostol, and promoting safe abortion hotlines. Others highlighted the availability of services to manage complications of unsafe abortion and called for more of these.

Many of the activities got press coverage in national newspapers – helping to reach a wide audience with the message that safe abortion is a necessity and a right. What is clear from the list of activities and the map of where in the world these took place is that people are no longer prepared to wait for

the small incremental changes that their governments may have promised, but seem not to have materialised. Nor will they continue to sit by and watch as their rights are stripped away. They will not be silent as another woman dies, another girl – pregnant as a result of rape – is denied an abortion, or another woman, parent or doctor is imprisoned for breaking punitive anti-abortion laws.

Despite the urgent need for change, and the seriousness with which we are campaigning, it is uplifting to see the creativity, and humour of campaigners shining through. The activities captured here are those that made contact with the International Campaign. We are sure there are others and would love to hear from you all.

The 28th September has proved to be a fantastic focal point for campaigners, the International Campaign aims to maintain that energy across the calendar year, building the capacity of groups to campaign in their countries and regions, to build effective coalitions and bring about real change. Countries where activities took place:

- Latin America & Caribbean – Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Chile, Uruguay, Haiti, Uruguay
- Africa – Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe
- Asia – India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan
- Middle East – Lebanon
- Europe – Russia, Poland, Macedonia, Ukraine, Armenia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, UK
- Australasia – Australia, New Zealand
- North America – Canada, United States

Visual reports of the campaign

Report of 28 September activities in Latin America and the Caribbean, prepared by the 28 September

campaign:http://issuu.com/lorenaespinoza/docs/declaraciones_y_actividades_ok?mode=window&backgroundColor=%23222222

WGNRR slideshow of events:<http://prezi.com/i37b7fra0uo/september-28-global-day-of-action-for-access-to-safe-and-legal-abortion/>

The success of this Day of Action would not have been possible without the collaboration and involvement of hundreds of groups and individuals who are working for women's right to safe abortion around the world. The International Consortium for Medical Abortion, Campaña 28 Septiembre in Latin America & the Caribbean, and Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights worked together to promote activities and call for action for 28 September internationally.

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ACTIVITIES – A GLOBAL PICTURE



Africa

'We do not want only paper work and statistics but action'

Cameroon

Yaoundé

Cameroon Grassroots Global Network – Neighbourhood 7

Event: Action for Minorities

A meeting for minorities who are excluded from society - people living with disabilities, people having special sexual orientations, women facing or who faced rape, violence in their homes, and women seeking acceptance of their rights.



Bafoussam

Cameroon Grassroots Global Network

Event: Women and young people asking for services, information, access to safe and affordable abortions:

- a local radio broadcast
- an awareness raising activity
- a cultural event and workshop/training event to demand services
- information and access to safe and affordable abortions

The events will involve traditional and medical doctors, women's groups, youth groups

Parliamentarians and church members to raise awareness of the consequences of unsafe abortion.

Young people will be mourning the loss of young women to unsafe abortion.

Kenya

Nakuru

Dandelion Kenya /WGNRR AllianceKenya

Event: Public event about the current maternal health situation in Kenya, including abortions, and in perspective of MDGs, maternal health.

- speeches from a human/reproductive/sexual rights perspective including facts and figures, a speech from a gynaecologist/obstetrician and finally a speech from a lawyer
- workshops in groups around themes such as legal-illegal abortions - rape/sexual assault and abortion - young women and abortion - HIV/AIDS and abortion - the right of the woman vs. the right of the unborn child (legal and ethical perspectives)
- short theatre performances highlighting the issue of unsafe abortion by the local theatre group.

Nairobi

Reproductive Health and Rights Alliance (RHRA)

Event: Public Awareness Media Campaign

Print

- news Feature on Standard Newspaper on medics experience dealing with abortion crisis in Kenya.
- news Feature on Nation Newspaper on how the Health Bill- drafted by a taskforce at the Ministry of Health- that limits women access to safe abortion services.
- opinion piece on The People Newspaper women denied safe abortion despite it being their right.

Online

- An article on how ignorance of the law still results in unsafe abortion, on Africa Science News website

Malawi

Muzuzu

Centre for Girls and Interaction (CEGI) Muzuzu

Event: Demanding Legal Reform - Safe Abortion for Women!

Awareness raising workshop focusing on the consequences of unsafe abortion, promote the right to safe abortion, and youth advocacy for accessible SRHR services in Malawi.



Blantyre

Centre for Social Concern and Development [CESOCODE]

Event: Safe Abortion Free Life for All Women

An awareness raising event including:

- public talks, songs,
- traditional dances
- and drama performances all about the importance of safe abortion
- including performances from young people
- women's meeting

lessons learned

- more civic education, advocacy and raising campaigns about safe abortion are needed for women in the community to equip women with safe abortion information.
- donors need to support the organisations that promote safe abortion programmes and all organisations that participated in the September 28 event should be listed and pasted on September 28 Global web site so that the donors may prefer to provide support to them.

'We faced major challenges during this event including an electricity blackout, women travelling long distances to attend, and limited funds'

Mozambique

Pathfinder Mozambique

Publication: a report back on ongoing work to push for legislative change

Nigeria

Lagos /Owerri

National Coalition for Safe Abortion Advocacy

Event: Forum for Owerri and Rally for Lagos

Organised with the involvement of young people, advocates of safe abortion will gather wearing T-shirts and poster with various inscriptions, aimed at reducing stigma and correcting misconceptions about abortion. A letter sent to government ministers and media coverage.

Rwanda

Kigali

Rwandese Association for Family Welfare (ARBEF)

Event: A call to address the unmet need for contraception, improve post abortion care and most importantly broaden the access to legal and safe abortion

Distribution of factsheets and a presentation during a consultative meeting with African Parliamentarians on ICPD and MDGs, beyond 2014 and post-2015, hosted by IPPF Africa Region and the government of Rwanda, and participants of UN agencies and civil society organisations. The organisers will promote a revised law broadening the grounds for legal abortion and set out the benefits of safe abortion services.

South Africa

Cape Town

Wish Associates/WGNRR/HBS

Event: A meeting with other human rights organisations working on Health and Sexual and Reproductive Rights for a dialogue on ways to combine our efforts in the promotion of a culture of Human Rights in South African society.

Tanzania

Mbeya

Activists for Ethics and Societal Rights in Tanzania (ACESOTA)

AND Network of Young People living with HIV/AIDS

Event: Access to Safe and Legal Abortion

A talk about the benefits of safe abortion and consequences of unsafe abortion aimed at women, men and young people. Leaflets, articles and information posters on safe abortion, distributed.

Dar-es-Salaam

Network of Young People living with HIV/AIDS

Event: Awareness raising forum on the importance of advocating for safe abortion

A youth-led forum to talk about the importance of safe and legal abortion. It targets policy makers, human rights activists and religious leaders. The forum will address the following issues:

- culture and traditions since they oppose abortion
- religious beliefs
- national laws and policies that prohibit abortion

Kigoma

Women's Promotion Centre and Tanzania Safe Abortion Advocacy Network

Event: Stop Unsafe Abortion! It kills our daughters

A joint awareness raising activity aimed at raising awareness of the consequences of unsafe abortion in Tanzania, its links to restrictive laws, the grounds on which abortion is permitted, the draft Reproductive Health bill, and the importance of advocating for safe and legal abortion in Tanzania.

Uganda

Mukono District

Kyetume Community Based Health Care Programme

Event: Advocacy for post abortion care for women's Health

Community march and public rally to raise awareness of post-abortion care services in the community, call for improvements in post-abortion care, family planning services and unrestricted safe abortion to protect a woman's health.

Kampala

Uganda Management Assistance Programme (UMAP)

Event: Presentation of petition to Parliament

Kampala

Uganda Management Assistance Programme (UMAP)

Event: Safe abortion for women: a right or not?

Training workshops on safe abortion and performances by drama groups

Zimbabwe

Harare

Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA) Zimbabwe AND ROOTS (Real Open Opportunities for Transformation Support)

Event: Gender Challenge Initiative Launch

A theatrical performance on the importance of access to safe and legal abortion - including 120 civil society, community members, young people and policy makers and aimed to initiate community dialogue about access to safe and legal abortion and post-abortion care.

Asia

'The need of the hour is to adopt a rights-based approach'.

India

Online

Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP)

Event: A range of online actions:

- a two hour tweetathon during which Tweeters are encouraged to get together online, join @asiapasia and share tweets calling for safe and legal abortion around the world
- posting blogs on access to safe abortion across Asia
- a video series to observe the 10th anniversary of decriminalization of abortion in Nepal
- testimonials on safe abortion from the ASAP archives

Lebanon

Nasawiya

Event: publication of a position paper on women's right to safe and legal abortion in Lebanon.

Every woman has the right to life, bodily integrity, the highest level of reproductive health, privacy, self-determination, dignity, personal liberty, and the right to live free from violence, discrimination, and torture.

Nepal

Kathmandu

Event: 'Protect Women's Reproductive Health and Rights Promote Contraceptive Use, Prevent Unsafe Abortion' 10th Anniversary of Abortion Law Reform in Nepal: Achievements and Remaining Challenges

A meeting of 100 health professionals, clinicians, legal experts, academicians, researchers, media community and rights based organisations looking at the impact of legalising abortion in Nepal where maternal mortality due to unsafe abortion has been halved. The meeting also addressed the lack of affordability of abortion and the need to raise awareness of safe abortion, especially in rural areas.

Kathmandu

Youth Action Nepal

Event: Safe Abortion Day events including:

- publication and dissemination of a safe abortion leaflet
- press conference at 'Reporters' Club' Kathmandu
- policy dialogue at Ministry of Health and Population, Kathmandu
- country fact sheet preparation and distribution
- media campaign
- district level events
- roundtable meetings with District Public Health Offices (DPHO) in Jhapa, Bara, Palpa, Dang and Kailali districts



Pakistan

Karachi

The Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre

Event: '890,000 abortions take place in Pakistan every year'

A networking meeting to address issues of unsafe held with the support of the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), attended by several organisations and individuals. Including a screening of a short film "Baitiyan" and a talk on the work of the Pakistan Alliance for Post Abortion Care (PAPC).



Baluchistan province

Peace Foundation

Event: A gathering involving youth , to discuss the ethical and societal rights of women and girls in Pakistan and to hear from staff on the safe abortion hotline. Publication of 500 wall posters inviting readers to highlightthe reproductive rights of women;and 2500 stickers advertising the abortion hotline phone number, set up by Aware Girls with the support of Women on Web, that gives information on how women can self-induce early medical abortion with misoprostol.

Indonesia

Yogyakarta

PKBI DIY (Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta)

Event: "Protection for Women Facing Unwanted Pregnancies"

A range of activities including to promote counseling services and other programmes, including:

- radio talk shows
- community meetings with school youth, rural youth, couples, street youth and women sex workers

Samsara in collaboration with other community organisations

Event: Using Mass Media to Promote Safe Abortions

Video – One demand: for safe legal

abortion <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg4hEmC6aE4&feature=plcp>

Broadcast on local radio

Bomber – Samsara and street artists in Jogja create a mural with the theme of safe and legal abortion and unintended pregnancy

Case histories and stories of hotline clients published on WGNRR

Japan

Space Allies

Event: A meeting on WHO's 2012 Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems, which we are translating into Japanese.

Planning for a campaign for decriminalisation of abortion, in time for the upcoming UN Universal Periodic Review procedure, expected to be held in Japan this October. Addressing two main issues related to abortion. One is how to defend abortion rights in the climate of backlash against gender equality and reproductive rights. The other is how to realise social justice in having an abortion.

Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur

Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance of Malaysia (RRAM)

Event: Press conference on the Global Day of Action aimed at health professionals, NGOs, policy makers, the media and women, NGOs will be presenting a strong statement on the realities of abortion, addressing misconceptions about abortion and advocate for action.

'In Malaysia, religious fundamentalism is increasingly becoming a barrier for the sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and adolescents'

Australasia

Australia

Melbourne

Reproductive Choice Australia

Event: Flashmob against abortion stigma

Online: national pledge campaignin which people will swear not to shame women around abortion, or stand silent when others engage in abortion shaming –open to all Australians. .

Sydney

Women's Abortion Action Campaign

Event: 40th anniversary of the Women's Abortion Action Campaign and celebration of 28th September International Day of Action. An evening event including speakers on abortion and reproductive rights , and a chance to meet colleagues old and new.

Online: awareness campaign on facebook

Canberra

TEDX

Event: A talk in the lead up to 28 September on abortion stigma. Video at:

<http://tedxcanberra.org/talks/leslie-cannold-i-had-an-abortion-or-maybe-i-didnt/>

"Silent women can't ask for support."

"Silent women can't share information."

"We won't be silent any more!"

"I had an abortion... Or maybe I didn't. What does it matter?"



Victoria

Women's Health

Event: a media release focussing on the accessibility of abortion in Victoria.

New Zealand

Auckland

ALRANZ, Women's Health Centre and other pro-choice groups

Event: A presentation and workshop on abortion in New Zealand and the need to update abortion laws

Europe

Armenia

The Women's Rights Center, Armenia

Event: Medical abortion awareness-raising

- A street action distributing provide much needed information about medical abortion has been practiced in Armenia since 2007
- Distribution of information for gynaecologists on how to provide safe medical abortion.

Belgium

Brussels

Party of European Socialist (PES) Women

Event: PES passes September 28th resolution 'My body, my rights: equal sexual and reproductive rights for all women in Europe'

LUNA: the collective of Abortion Centres in Dutch-Speaking Belgium

Event: A best-practice forum for LUNA workers to identify key skills for women working with pregnancy prevention and an opportunity for its employers to show pride in their necessary, unique and valuable work.

'an excellent opportunity for its (Luna's) employers to gather and show some pride for the necessary, unique and extremely valuable work they are involved in'.

Denmark

Danish All-Party Parliamentary Network on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Event: 28th September opinion piece in national newspaper

Article voiced support for legal and safe abortion for women around the world. At:

<http://www.etik.dk/artikel/480134:Debat--Politikere--Afkriminaliser-abort-globalt>

Online

Organisation: Danish Family Planning Association

Event: Activities via social media and the webpage raising awareness of the campaign.

France

Online

Le Planning Familial (Family Planning Association, France)

Event: A series of social media events on consecutive days addressing:

- challenges regarding access to contraception in France and around the world.
- solutions and recommendations for better accessibility to contraception in France and around the world.
- obstacles to abortion rights and services and the consequences for women, with a focus on France and Spain and information on abortion legislation in Europe.
- International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion and focus on Ireland and their march on September 29.
- recommendations for improving access of women to abortion services in France.

Ireland

Dublin

United Left Alliance, Unlike Youth Defence and others

Event: March for Choice - A celebration of being pro-choice! A day of being pro-choice and proud, speaking up and speaking out, making our voices heard.



Italy

Padua

Padovadonne – woman's association

Event: Flashmob to support the global day of action for safe and legal abortion
An organised dance to 'Think' by Aretha Franklin in a public square.

Macedonia

Skopje

XERA (HERA)

Events: Choose life – You have a right to choose a series of events to mark the International Campaign for Safe and Legal abortion including:

- Press releases to mark the day, highlight the importance of safe and legal abortion as part of sexual and reproductive rights for women in Macedonia, and a call for action for the registration of medical abortion drugs in Macedonia
- Distribution of 28th September posters
- Social media campaign highlighting the campaign.

Netherlands

Online

Women on Waves organised an online banner campaign providing virtual banners to overlay over photographs of the Vatican and 82 other religious and government buildings around the world. The banner's slogan was "Abortion Pills, A Gift From God". The banner included instructions on how to do an abortion yourself safely with a medicine called misoprostol. Women on Waves promoted the action widely using the slogan -Vatican occupied by abortion rights activists!

Poland

Warsaw

Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning

Event: a series of events to mark the day including:

- Panel discussion of SRHR and film screening at the 4th Polish Congress of Women, highlighting the problems caused by restrictive laws and access to sexual health services, especially its impact on young women
- Press conference on the day of action
- 28th September banners carried on the monthly Critical Mass cycle ride.

Portugal

Event: Declaration of a manifesto and campaign for the rights and dignity of women around the world
A declaration signed by a broad coalition of organisations who campaigned for legal abortion in Portugal, including: **Associação ComuniDária, Associação de Mulheres contra a Violência (AMCV), Associação para o Planeamento da Família (APF), Comissão de Mulheres da UGT, Ilga Portugal, Médicos pela Escolha (MPE), não te prives - grupo de defesa dos direitos sexuais, Panteras Rosa - Frente de Combate à LesBiGay Transfobia, Plataforma Portuguesa**

para os Direitos das Mulheres (PPDM), Sociedade Portuguesa de Contracepção (SPDC), SOS Racismo, União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta (UMAR), Mulheres Socialistas.

Lisbon

“Rede 8 de Março” (March 8 Network)

Event: flashmob in front of the Spanish Embassy in solidarity with people fighting proposed abortion restrictions in Spain.

Russia

Russian Association for Population and Development (RAPD) pro-choice coalition

Event: A series of events for September 28th including:

- A workshop on the right to safe and legal abortion with the former, long-standing and new members and supporters of the "Rowan Bunch" Reproductive Choice Coalition
- News report on the Global Day of Action to be published on our websites, the Coalition social media pages and sent to regional branches service providers
- Publication of videos on the topic of access to abortion as a human right in Central and Eastern Europe

Spain

‘Spain could cross the line that separates it from those countries in which women risk their lives and health by undergoing unsafe, illegal abortions.’

Barcelona

Xarxa de Dones per la Salut – Women’s Health Organisation

Event: March for the International Day of Action



Online

Event: An online petition was launched to protest against threats to abortion rights in Spain:

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/892/997/181/spain-let-women-choose/?z00m=20377081>

ACAI – Association of Accredited Abortion Clinics

Event: Press release of a statement to Government Ministers

A warning that proposed abortion legislation will deny women their rights, condemn doctors to permanent legal uncertainty, and may result in the denial of abortion in the case of fetal anomaly.

Spanish Platform on Defense of Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Event: Call for Action and Platform Manifesto launched and signed by 200 groups

The manifesto says that the Right to Decide is a fundamental human right: Not a single step backwards in our civil rights! For a law on abortion that respects women’s rights.

Switzerland

Online

SVSS USPDA

Event: Launch of campaign for the right to abortion

To defend women's equal access to safe and legal abortion and stop any backward movement!

Turkey

Online

Event: A testimonial from a leading women's rights activist in Turkey about current moves to remove the right to safe abortion was published to mark September 28th. Don't Turn the Clock Back on Women's Lives: A Testimonial From Turkey : <http://asap-asia.org/blog/dont-turn-the-clock-back-on-womens-lives-a-testimonial-from-turkey/>

Antalya

Antalya Women's Counselling Center and Solidarity Association

Event: The action will take place in a boat travelling down the coastline displaying a banner.

Fener-Balat, Istanbul

Mavi Kalem Association

Event: a meeting to discuss the global importance of the day, a history of abortion around the world and in Turkey. The current abortion agenda in Turkey and demands for legal, accessible, safe abortion.

Ukraine

Kiev

Reproductive Health Partners Group

Event: Roundtable discussion on reproductive health commodity security

The Ministry of Health, members of the Ukraine Parliament and the media are all invited.

United Kingdom

Derry, Northern Ireland

Alliance for Choice

Event: A series of events

1. Film and live music
2. Public meeting building towards the March for Choice in Dublin
3. Street action installation

London

Central American Women's Network (CAWN)

Event: Publication of 'Maternal Health, Reproductive Rights and the Criminalisation Of Abortion In Central America'

CAWN calls for the decriminalisation of abortion in Central America, and for safe and legal access to abortion.

London

Amnesty International

Event: What's so special about 28 September? How the Day for Decriminalization of Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean went global

A meeting addressing: what has abortion got to do with human rights; what's the current global picture on abortion from the human rights perspective; what barriers do women and girls face in accessing safe and legal abortion; what is the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion?

London

UK Feminista

Event: Coathanger protest at Department of Health

UK pro-choice activists protest against the Health Minister's support for reducing the the abortion time limit. Six hundred coat-hangers were delivered to the Department of Health. After dumping the coat hangers on the floor one of the protestors proclaimed "We are sending Hunt a reminder of what happens when you restrict abortion rights. It becomes illegal and unsafe."

[[Watch the video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJz3jS0Hq9k&feature=player_embedded#!]]

London

Abortion Rights

Event: Action on Abortion, demonstration

Demonstrators assemble outside Parliament and listen to speakers talk about the International Day and current threats to abortion access in the UK.



London

Voice for Choice the UK pro-choice coalition

Event: Taking Abortion out of the Criminal Law

The meeting will explore the situation in the UK: the vulnerability of doctors to prosecution and threats to women's access to abortion under the 1967 Abortion Act, the situation in Northern Ireland and in other countries.

Latin America & Caribbean

"Dominican women are still denied the freedom to choose and access to safe and legal abortion, thereby transgressing, bodily autonomy and reproductive rights"



5 Latin American countries

Campana de 28 Septiembre

Event: A letter sent to the Embassies of 5 Latin American countries where abortion is completely illegal. The letters explain the effect of criminalisation and call for the governments of these countries to:

1. Reform legislation without delay in order to ensure that all women have access to safe and legal abortion
2. Take all measures at their disposal to ensure full respect for the ability of women to decide independently about their sexuality and reproduction, especially on abortion
3. Take action to avoid the interference of fundamentalist, religious and ultra-conservative groups in the implementation of public policies on health and sexual and reproductive rights.



Campana de 28 Septiembre

Event: A letter sent to Spanish Embassies in Latin America advising the Spanish government of the importance of its abortion law and policy as a reference point for other countries, and calling on it to withdraw proposed legislation which would restrict the rights of women to access abortion.

Cladem, The Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean for the rights of women,

Event: Cladem publishes a statement on the right of women to reproductive autonomy, safe abortion and safe maternity, and that it is a violation of those rights to restrict therapeutic abortion.

Argentina

Buenos Aires

National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion

Event: A day of debates about legal abortion in relation to legal and health implications, the new civil code and WHO technical guidance on safe abortion. A delegation to the National Congress will demand a congressional debate on the proposed law.

Bolivia

Coordinación colegiada de la campaña 28

Events: Production of the campaign posters to stick around the city at night

- Stage with performances in the main squares
- A Call for Action
- Establishment of the memorial for all women who have died as a result of unsafe abortion and to the illegality that mobilizes the action

Brazil

Londrina Paraná

Feminist Health Network and Center for Gender Studies at UEL

Event: workshop on women's health, sexual rights and reproductive rights

For leaders of the women's movement of Londrina and city councillors

Event: evening lecture on sexual rights and reproductive rights in Latin America, advances and retreats

Rio Grande do Sul - Porto Alegre

Feminist Network, Partnership with the World March of Women, Campaign for a Convention on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Women's Forum, Women's Collective Plural, Ile Women, Feminist bloggers - Campaign 28 September

Event: performance with direct action, a flashmob - leafleting on Brique_da_Redenção, the main market area

Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir – Brasil

Event: Catholics for the Right to Decide – Brasil launch of a campaign on secular states.

Chile

Latin American & Caribbean Women's Health Network, Santiago, Chile

Event:

- Open letter to democracy, questioning those preparing to preside over the country. Dissemination in the media, social movements and among parliamentary representatives.
- Dialogue with organisations working on the topic of abortion with the objective to draft a common strategy and actions.

Colombia

Bogota

La Mesa and civil society organizations

Event: a demonstration in front of the parliament building calling for parliamentarians not to re-elect the Inspector General, who has represented a serious threat to reproductive and sexual rights; and distributing campaign leaflets and post cards from La Mesa's campaign, "se aborta por una razón, no por falta de razón" (women abort for a reason, not for no reason).

Bogota

Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir (Catholics for the right to decide)

Event: a launch of the book Despenalizar las conciencias. Argumentos socioculturales y religiosos para hablar del aborto inducido (Decriminalize the conscience, sociocultural and religious arguments to talk about induced abortion)

Dominican Republic

Santo Domingo

Colectivo Mujer y Salud

Women and Health Collective

Events: Abortion yes, abortion no, its time for me to decide!

- women call for the Dominican State to promptly amend domestic legislation criminalizing abortion in order to ensure that all women have access to safe and legal abortion.
- a committee of associations defending the rights of women gave letters to the embassies of Chile, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, where abortion is also prohibited. They also delivered a letter to Spanish embassy expressing their concern over the proposed reform of the abortion law.

"We are still second-class citizens and our lives supervised by male hierarchies that dominate political parties, churches and Congress,"

Ecuador

Frente Ecuatoriano por los Derechos Sexuales y Derechos Reproductivos, Coordinadora Juvenil por la Equidad de Género, Organización Ecuatoriana de Mujeres Lesbianas (OEML), Centro de Promoción y Acción de la Mujer-Guayaquil, ACDemocracia, Azucena Soledispa, Gayne Villagómez, with support from Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Family Care International

Event: Alternative report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and health of women in Ecuador, for the 49th Session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The Women's Health Collective

Event: A forum - "Misoprostol, my decision." To demystify certain about the use of misoprostol for termination of pregnancy, and to publicize the work experience of the Abortion Hotline .



La Coordinadora Juvenil

Event: national women's mobilisation for access to safe abortion in the country including a festival of symbolic artistic and political actions

El Salvador

SRHR activists in El Salvador

Event: "Yo pongo mi rostro por la vida de las mujeres":

- Press conference: demanding the response to the letter and announcement of activities dedicated to commemoration of September 28 day of action (distribution on radio and social media Dissemination of radio programmes "15 minutes for the life of women").
- Conversations with women in public institutions. "What is being done for the life of women?"
- Film and forum in Centro Cultural de Las Dignas. Film screenings of: " 4 months, 3 weeks, 2 days" and "Revolutionary Road"
- March for Women's Life and street theatre.

Guatemala

Guatemala city

Tierra Viva

Event: press conferences, radio programmes and workshops to raise community awareness.

Haiti

SOFA

Event: submission of declaration to the Ministry of Health with demands including replacement of the article 262 of the Penal Code; press conference and reflections workshop "Barrio Popular" on access to safe abortion

Mexico

Mexico City

Event: "Let's dance for our right to decide"

Various dance companies, Aztec, Arabic, contemporary, and more invite everyone to unite around the song "I decided" played by its writer. Women organized around the Pact for Life Liberty and the Rights of Women invite all age groups to dance for our right to the body, demanding the decriminalization of abortion in Mexico and throughout Latin America; and to denounce the serious setbacks in the region for reproductive rights and the criminalization of women exercising reproductive self-determination.

Mexico City

Foro Aborto en México y América Latina

Event: Presentation at Commission on Human Rights

Mexico City

Alianza Nacional por el Derecho a Decidir - Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, Equidad de Género, GIRE, Ipas, Population Council

Event: Workshop with Doctors of the World Promoting sexual and reproductive rights and exchanging experiences and strategies to improve access to safe legal abortion services.

Católicas por el derecho a decidir – Mexico

Event: release and television broadcast of the second season of animated short films "Catolicadas" about criminalisation of women that decide to abort.

Several states

Red por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos en Mexico (DDESER)

Event: Public gatherings in public squares where information on the importance of decriminalisation of abortion will be distributed; and round tables will be held with the participation of public authorities with the objective of increased awareness on decriminalisation of abortion and the impact it has on women's health and lives.

Nicaragua

Sí Mujer

Event: Demonstrators hold banners with these slogans:

"Illegal abortion = state violence"

"Abortion: women decide"

"Safe, legal abortion"

"In Nicaragua, 1,453 girls aged 10-14 years old were raped and forced to give birth in 2011. I accuse the Supreme Court of Justice of putting the life and health of women at risk by denying them access to therapeutic abortion."

Peru

An alliance of SRHR organisations, Centro de Mujeres Flora Tristán, Movimiento Manuela Ramos, Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, PROMSEX, CLADEM-Perú and Demus

First event:

- Working towards the right to information on sexual health and abortion
- Distribution of information about medical abortion.

Second event:

- Launch of a Campaign for decriminalisation of abortion on grounds of rape and collecting signatures on a petition

Puerto Rico

Taller Salud, La Juntilla X and the Gender Committee of Amnesty International

Events in response to changes in the new criminal code adopted in Puerto Rico, which women who have abortions on the island with three years imprisonment.

a creative action on the steps of Capitolio, the Legislative Assembly building, to reclaim women's right to decide;

- an artistic demonstration
- a radio programme Radio programme on the radio Momento X: Sin Tabu Abortion from the perspective of young people
- "Yo aborté y estoy en paz" (I had an abortion and I'm fine) Taller Salud chose five different stories of women who made a conscious informed choice to have an abortion and are at peace with their decisions.



Uruguay

MYSU and Coordinadora por el Aborto Legal

Events:

Lobbying and advocacy at the legislative branch of the government for the passage of the proposed law on voluntary interruption of pregnancy that is being put to vote at the end of September. A mobile LED screen will broadcast the spots made by MYSU and the Coalition for Legal Abortion in various public spaces – city squares, city centre, Parliament and other public places in order to draw attention to the discussion of the law and to encourage people to join the. "MIENTRAS ELLOS PONEN LAS CONDICIONES, NOSOTRAS PONEMOS EL CUERPO" performance by women with painted bodies in the gardens of "Palacio Legislativo".



North America

Canada

Windsor, Ontario

Riot Grrrl Tuesdays

Event: Night of Action: Benefit Show for Accessible Legal Safe Abortion

A benefit show to raise funds to defend, protect and fulfil women's right to accessible, safe and legal abortion. A night full of music, speakers, and those from the feminist community.

Ottawa

Event: A letter written to the Ottawa citizen to express regret that the Minister for women and the Minister for International Development voted to debate fetal rights, and calling on the government to uphold the rights of women all over the world to Safe Abortion



United States

Warren, Michigan

Riot Grrrl Tuesdays

Event: night of Action: Benefit Show for Accessible, Legal, Safe Abortion, fundraising for an abortion clinic in Detroit

'We don't all have vaginas but we think they rock'. Raising money to donate to Planned Parenthood to keep providing affordable and easily accessible procedures, literature and sexual education for the community.

Ibis Reproductive Health, USA

Event: Ibis launches '10 facts for ten years' – research that shows using misoprostol to induce abortion can save lives.

Centre for Reproductive Rights

Event: Call on governments across the globe to take measures to protect women's fundamental human rights and abolish laws criminalizing abortion.

International

Ipas

A twitter campaign linking to stories highlighting the impact of illegal abortion.

IPPF

A statement on September 28th calling for safe legal abortion for all.

International call of young feminists: MY BODY IS MINE!

Along with other young feminists from various countries, we wrote an open letter to defend abortion rights at an international level, especially during forthcoming UN negotiations (Cairo + 20, post-MDGs,

It is your duty to make our voices heard, support our call, and recognize that each woman has the right to proclaim that "My body is mine!"

International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion

Public statement for: 28 September International Day of Action for the Decriminalisation of Abortion

Decriminalisation of abortion: a public health and human rights issue

In spite of increased attention to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and particularly to maternal mortality, in spite of the development of effective technologies to make abortion very safe, and in spite of the growing involvement in women's health issues on the part of UN agencies, many governments, and a large number of NGOs – as well as women's health advocates – pregnancy-related deaths and unsafe abortion remain a major public health problem in large parts of the world. Most countries that allow women to die in childbirth also allow them to die and suffer from unsafe abortions. Why? Because they do not value women's health and lives, including when they are pregnant. This is what makes women's right to safe abortion a public health and human rights issue.

There have been improvements for women in some countries, as global data show. The number of maternal deaths has declined substantially globally between 1990 and 2008, while the number of deaths from unsafe abortion has fallen to 47,000 per year in 2008. However, the proportion of all maternal deaths due to unsafe abortion has not been reduced but remained at 13% of all maternal deaths in that period. In 2008, of the 43.8 million induced abortions globally, 21.6 million were unsafe, 98% of them in developing countries. (Sedgh et al, Lancet 2012) And an estimated 5 million of those 21.6 million women each year had to be hospitalised for treatment of complications of unsafe abortion, (Singh et al, Lancet 2007) putting a heavy burden on scarce hospital resources (up to 50% of hospital maternity beds in some countries).

The number of unsafe abortions among total abortions has increased by about two million since 2003, mainly due to the increasing numbers of women entering reproductive age in developing countries, and without an accompanying decline in unsafe abortions of any significance. (Shah, RHM May 2012)

Adolescent girls suffer the most from complications of unsafe abortion and have the highest unmet need for contraception. More than 40% (8.7 million) of the 21.2 million unsafe abortions in developing countries in 2008 were in young women aged 15–24 years. Of these, 3.2 million were adolescents aged 15–19 years, and 5.5 million were aged 20–24 years. (Shah, RHM May 2012)

What is an unsafe abortion?

The following clinical, legal and social determinants of health all characterise what we mean by "unsafe abortion":

- Illegal or legally restricted
- Dangerous method
- Untrained/unskilled provider
- Unsafe conditions

- Self-induced without help or information
- Incorrect usage (of pills)
- Little or no access to treatment for complications
- Stigma and fear and isolation
- Violence, rejection (by family, school, work) and murder, including of doctors providing abortion care
- Threat of prosecution
- Prosecution and imprisonment

"I am 20 years old and... have been in Karubanda prison since 2007 for committing abortion. I am the 3rd born in the family and the only girl. I was raised by my dad after my mum died when I was still young. I was in the 5th year of my secondary education when a teacher at my school started dating me. I needed school materials and since I could not afford them, I allowed to have sexual intercourse with this teacher at that tender age. With limited knowledge on contraceptive use, I got pregnant and had to drop out of school since it's against school regulations. I decided to have an abortion and my elder brother out of fear reported me to the police. I am supposed to serve a period of 9 years of which I have so far completed 3 years." Crying she says: "I have lost hope and this is the end of my life". (Abortion and young people in Rwanda: a collection of personal stories about abortion. Family Planning Association of Rwanda (ARBEF), ARBEF Youth Action Movement Rwanda (YAM), Rutgers WPF)

But, yes, the situation has improved substantially in many countries over the past 30-40 years. The majority of women now live in countries where abortion is permitted on at least some grounds, and many countries are allowing some safe services to be provided on the quiet, reforming their laws to some extent or allowing existing grounds to be interpreted more broadly. But five countries still do not permit abortion on any grounds at all, and the fear of treating complications even of wanted pregnancies (in case it causes premature delivery and is perceived as abortion) in these countries has led to women's deaths. Meanwhile, very few countries allow abortion for social, family planning or economic reasons, let alone on the request of the woman. Even when abortion is available on request, it is usually only in the first trimester of pregnancy, which means safe second trimester abortions may remain unattainable. Although legal does not equal safe, the more grounds on which abortion is permitted, the fewer the complications and deaths of women. (WHO data) And to date, only one country in the world, Canada, has completely decriminalised abortion, and that was in 1988. (van der Graff, http://www.ontheissuesmagazine.com/2012fall/2012fall_Graaf.php) No other country has yet followed their lead.

Induced abortion with (manual) vacuum aspiration or medical abortion pills is one of the safest and most common medical/surgical procedures. Yet mifepristone, one of the two medical abortion pills that should be taken in combination, has not yet been approved in the great majority of developing countries, while the other pill, misoprostol, which is far more effective when used in combination with mifepristone, is mostly obtained over the counter to self-induce abortion in countries where abortion is legally restricted. Indeed, use of misoprostol is rapidly replacing many more "traditional", dangerous, often invasive, abortion methods, and making clandestine abortions far less unsafe than they used to be. On the other hand, far too many medical professionals providing treatment for post-abortion complications in developing countries are still using outdated methods, particularly D&C, which makes abortion care in hospital settings less safe than it needs to be. Why? Because they have never had access to training in the safer methods.

Why safe abortion is a women's human right

Unsafe abortion is a major public health issue, acknowledged by almost all governments in 1994 in the ICPD Programme of Action. Public health reasons may be the best way to win over doctors, policymakers and politicians, as they are responsible for the public health, but:

"Dealing with abortion as a health issue does not necessarily lead to asserting a broad human right to abortion, although it may lead indirectly to asserting a right to health. Law is not just about rights -- it is most often about giving legal effect to policies that will bring about desired outcomes." (Reed Boland, 19 July 2010)

About one in three women will have an abortion in her lifetime, even in countries with very high contraceptive prevalence. Access to contraception must also become universal, but contraception has never been sufficient in itself, and abortion will always remain necessary for women. When pregnancy happens and is unwanted, however the pregnancy started, there is only one reason why women seek an abortion: "I cannot have this baby. I cannot."

If the right to life and the right to health are human rights, then abortion is every woman's human right. Addressing the public health dimensions of abortion is crucial, but arguing for safe abortion as a human right is the only way to argue that it is a universal right, no matter how sensitive or controversial, and notwithstanding any arguments against it, even for cultural or religious reasons.

In L.C. v. Peru, a 13-year-old girl, a victim of sexual abuse for many years, was denied a therapeutic abortion and jumped out of a window. She survived the jump, but because she was still pregnant, she was denied an operation on her spine because it might have caused a miscarriage. As a result, she was left paralysed, and she had a miscarriage anyway. CEDAW, considering this case, said: "The State should guarantee access to abortion when a woman's physical or mental health is in danger, decriminalise abortion when pregnancy results from rape or sexual abuse, review its restrictive interpretation of therapeutic abortion and ... ensure that reproductive rights are understood and observed in all health care facilities." (Kismödi et al, RHM39, May 2012)

The CEDAW judgement wasn't respected in the Dominican Republic earlier this year, however, where the law on abortion is interpreted to mean abortion is not permitted for any reason. A young woman there who was pregnant and had leukaemia was denied not only an abortion, even though the pregnancy represented a serious increased risk to her life, but also denied chemotherapy, because it might have caused a miscarriage. Thanks to national protests, with the whole country watching, she was finally started on chemotherapy, but by then she was very ill, the chemotherapy did not help, she did miscarry and began to haemorrhage, and died.

(<http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/18/world/americas/dominican-republic-abortion/index.html>)

These were gross violations of women's right to life and health. Much of this suffering could have been prevented. The word "unsafe" is completely inadequate to describe what can and does happen on a daily basis to women when they are denied a safe abortion.

Women are denied abortions even when laws are liberal

In the UK, this month, a 35-year-old woman, who only confirmed she was pregnant at 30 weeks of pregnancy, was refused an abortion by two clinics because the law says she would need to have exceptional mental or physical health grounds to be permitted an abortion after 24 weeks. At 39 weeks of pregnancy, in a state of mind that must surely be recognised as extreme desperation, she

apparently took enough misoprostol, purchased on the internet, to cause the baby's death and to bring on labour. She then delivered the stillborn baby by herself at home and buried it, and has refused to say where in order not to incriminate herself further. She was pursued by medical professionals, who wanted to know where the baby had gone, and they then reported her to the police, who have treated her like a criminal. Now, two years later, she has been sentenced by a judge who belongs to an anti-abortion organisation to 8 years in prison. Yet she has clearly had very difficult problems with recognising and dealing with the fact that she is pregnant and trying to terminate her pregnancies.

Her need not to continue her pregnancy and her actions illustrate the depth of what women feel and mean, and what they do when they say: "*I cannot* have this baby. *I cannot*". Millions of women every year, with or without help and support, are doing whatever it takes, even at the risk of loss of their own lives, to have an abortion. This woman, like the young women in prison in Rwanda, should be freed immediately. She, like the young women in Peru and the Dominican Republic and millions of other women like them, should never have been denied a safe abortion, let alone any other medical treatment because it might cause a miscarriage.

International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion

This is why representatives of several dozen NGOs from all world regions, consulted and called together by the International Consortium for Medical Abortion in 2011-12, decided to launch the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion in April 2012, which after only a few months has been endorsed by more than 620 groups and individuals all over the world.

This is why we have called for action in every country in support of 28 September, the International Day of Action for the Decriminalisation of Abortion and are organising public meetings, press conferences, demonstrations, debates, information days, solidarity campaigns, parliamentary lobbying, street theatre, flash mobs, discussion groups, tweetathons, blogs, reports, book launches, radio and TV programmes, films, videos, festivals, values clarification workshops, creating artwork and selling bags/shirts/hats with slogans on them, distributing informative newsletters and leaflets, and holding local and community-based awareness-raising activities in the days around 28 September this year. In every world region, abortion rights groups, SRHR and human rights groups and other NGOs, and national coalitions , are organising one or more events and actions in their countries.

Here are some of the aims and objectives of the International Campaign:

- To build an international campaign to promote universal access to safe, legal abortion as a women's health and human rights issue.
- To support women's autonomy to make their own decisions whether and when to have children and have access to the means of acting on those decisions without risk to their health and lives.
- To make the impact of unsafe and illegal abortion on women's lives visible.
- To increase public awareness of women's need for safe abortion, in order to increase public understanding and support.
- To commit ourselves to the protection of women having abortions and health professionals providing safe abortions, including in legally restricted settings.
- To promote the evidence-based guidance on abortion in the World Health Organization's *Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems*, 2012.

And these are our guiding principles:

We believe in and advocate for safe and legal abortion as a woman's human right. Women must be able to take decisions about their own bodies and health care free from coercion: this includes the

decision to carry a pregnancy to term or seek an abortion. No woman should be obliged to continue an unwanted pregnancy.

- Women's human rights should be respected, protected and fulfilled.
- No woman's health or life should be placed at risk because safe abortion services are not available to her.
- Abortion should not be restricted, prohibited or criminalised.

We invite everyone who supports women's right to safe abortion to join us:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CHH62F5>