

LSE Research Online

Rishita Nandagiri

Post-what? global advocacy and its disconnects: the Cairo legacy and the post-2015 agenda

Book section

Original citation:

Nandagiri, Rishita (2017) Post-what? global advocacy and its disconnects: the Cairo legacy and the post-2015 agenda. In: Harcourt, Wendy, (ed.) Bodies in Resistance: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Age of Neoliberalism. Gender, Development and Social Change. Palgrave Macmillan UK, London, UK, pp. 235-249. ISBN 9781137477798

© 2017 The Editor and The Author

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68617/>

Available in LSE Research Online: December 2016

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

This document is the author's submitted version of the book section. There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

Post-What? Global Advocacy and Its Disconnects: The Cairo Legacy and the Post-2015 Agenda

Rishita Nandagiri

The world has changed drastically since the transnational and international advocacy (primarily at the United Nations) of the 1990s, and it is now much easier it is to organise actions across geographies and time. The advent of e-mail and instant messaging, and the vastly improved telecommunications channels, have left behind the days of using up a few thousand reams of paper to fax each other strategies, updates, and language recommendations.

As a feminist researcher working on reproductive justice, abortion rights, and feminist organizing I have been involved in writing and formulating policy and development positions including for the ICPD Beyond 2014 and the post-2015 frameworks. My aim has been to produce advocacy and policy papers on abortion within the framework of reproductive justice, on the intersectionalities between HIV/AIDS and SRHR, as well as on positioning SRHR and gender equality within the new development frameworks. In an attempt to understand and reflect on ‘The Cairo Legacy and the post-2015 agenda’ⁱ – or as I refer to it in confused exasperation and with my tongue-firmly-in-cheek, ‘the Post-what?’ – I have penned three letters personal reflections addressed to older generations of feminists from the movements I am a part of and that are a part of who I am.

To Everyone Who Has Ever Said, ‘When I was in Cairo...’:

Thank you!

I am so grateful for the decades of organising, debate, discussion, and determination that fuelled the writing and creation of the Programme of Action at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD PoA), or as it’s commonly/affectionately referred to, ‘Cairo Consensus’ⁱⁱ. The PoA broke new ground with the essential paragraph 7.3 that defined reproductive rights for the first time *ever*, changing not just the discourse of health and development, but expanding our understanding of human rights by upholding the bodily integrity and autonomy of women and young people. The ICPD’s paragraph 8.25 is also a hard-won fight for directly addressing unsafe abortion as a major health concern that must be addressed. The paragraph’s emphasis on

access to safe abortion is weakened by the caveat of ‘where legal’, making accessibility dependent on national law and policy. This is only slightly mitigated by the call for access to safe post-abortion care in all circumstances.

Another important aspect of the PoA is the affirmation of the ‘evolving capacities’ⁱⁱⁱ of young people within the PoA, linking it to the Convention on the Rights of Child and underscoring the necessity and ability of young people to make informed decisions about their bodies and their lives, as well as participate in all decision making related to them.

Thank you for bravely taking on and ignoring the vocal opposition, including the Holy See and the very specific brand of ridiculous that they and some governments bring to these spaces- it cannot have been easy^{iv}. Thank you for the spirit of the ICPD PoA- for imbining it with the sense that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) do not work in isolation, that it is foundational to every other aspect of our lives- our political rights, our economic rights, our labour rights, our right to freedom, our right to health, our right to safety, to our very autonomies and agencies. Thank you for instilling that intersectionality, that understanding of the importance of context into the ICPD PoA. Thank you, also, for an acronym that continues to confuse most people and refuses to just roll off the tongue!

I was only eight years old when the ICPD PoA came into being. The PoA was something to be achieved by the time I was a fully functional adult. (Of course, neither of those things has come to pass.)

I grew up and came into my own within the feminist movement, mentored and guided by those who have walked these paths before me; smoothed it a little for me. I came into my own with an inheritance of mapped agendas: Rio, Vienna, Cairo, Beijing. Often referred to by the cities they were held in, these four conferences collectively shifted the broader discussions on development and rights; creating a vocabulary and language that allowed advocates to articulate a new vision for the world^v.

The ICPD PoA is one of the legacies of my movements, the compass pointing ‘due north’ in my work. It was handed down to me over cups of tea with a side of stories of lobbying and organising across cities and continents, barely contained anger over the herstories of rights violations and population control programmes (Merrick, 2002) that form the backdrop of this activism, exasperated eye-rolling over the still-persistent ‘family planning’ language (Wilson, 2013), and posters and articles from

the late 1980s charting the cartographies of women's resistance. I felt that *this* was what my generation of feminists and advocates was tasked with- to remember these lessons learnt, to take forth these legacies, to see them to fruition, to charge onward; onward.

But very quickly I realised that the world has changed dramatically since 1994. As I tried to reconcile this 'mission' with the world I witnessed and experienced, I understood that everything is impacted even more by globalisation, corporatisation, fundamentalisms (religious and other manifestations), and the constant threat of co-optation. My generation came into being in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 (our realities and worlds are shaped by being the 'post-9/11' generation), posing new threats; new challenges; new barriers to navigate and this is especially evident if you live in *certain* countries and in *certain* parts of the world.

This schism was most obvious to me at the global level. Sitting at the UN, watching these power struggles and negotiations play out; I wish that over all those cups of tea about the PoA, someone had thought to tell me a few simple truths:

- 1) None of this is actually about SRHR or women's rights or any other development goal. It is in reality about trade agreements, negotiations with each other about oil or military bases
- 2) This schism is not just evident in negotiation rooms for Commissions at the UN, but in the approaches and positions we take within 'progressive' SRHR spaces, within the women's and feminist movements. I wish someone had told me that our allyship is fragile, that it is fraught with decades of tensions and herstories and backstories. That the realities and privileges that we experience and embody and hold, bump up against each other in most unexpected of ways, that tensions about words and languages and years-old arguments exist and that you *will* trip over them and land flat on your face... a few hundred times. That power struggles and power dynamics aren't just external, they live within and manifest in our movements too.

If I take a step back and look at all this in terms of 'global advocacy'- the PoA attempted to connect many different issues together and contextualise it, but I increasingly feel that we've lost a lot of that. The PoA, by placing human rights at the centre of the discussion on development, connected sustainability, the environment, education, poverty, and health; calling for a more holistic approach to development interventions.

In the post-2015 discussions, however, I think we find it difficult to connect SRHR to other issues, and have ended up living in a bubble world of continuing to trumpet SRHR without making much of an effort to nuance our demands. This lack of connecting issues has also to do with how little SRHR is contextualised these days. SRHR has evolved in the last twenty years, taken on new hues and shades; influenced by new forms of militarisation, economic priorities, environmental degradation, and technological advances; to name a few. *Of course* SRHR is relevant across time and space and will continue to be so forevermore, but it's obvious and known that for any real- 'sustainable' impact SRHR has to be cognisant of the realities of the space it functions in- we cannot continue to champion SRHR without also questioning and critiquing just *how* do we do that.

All this post-2015 malarkey has thrown into stark relief how much ground SRHR has lost- given up- over the years: old allies, the solidarity that had been painstakingly built, the gains around language and legislature. This is also evident for me in how difficult it has been to mobilise support for SRHR in the Major Groups^{vi}- also because we do very little to support them! I don't mean to sound as though it is some strange Manichean framework of 'us and them' that can never- and is never- overcome, but for all the talk of not working in 'silos'- that is exactly how we work. We work on specific issues and themes- as though our realities are carefully crafted boxes labelled 'sustainability', 'economic', 'social', 'cultural', 'political' and never overlap or connect.

I'm torn about how little global advocacy connects to national and local levels- for all the sleepless nights that I have spent roaming the halls of the UN, I'm not entirely sure of how relevant it really is. Within this 'post 2015' framework, we talk of the universality of issues- to paraphrase from the Rio document, Agenda 21- 'common but differentiated'. The principle of 'common but differentiated' recognises historical differences in the contributions of developed and developing States to global environmental problems, and differences in their respective economic and technical capacity to tackle these problems and contribute to a global solution. It includes two fundamental principles, (i) the common responsibility of States for the protection of the environment, or parts of it, at the national, regional and global levels, and (ii) the need to take into account the different circumstances, particularly each State's contribution to the evolution of a particular problem and its ability to prevent, reduce and control the threat (Centre for International Sustainable Development Law, 2002).

This position of ‘common but differentiated’ is true not just for the ‘development challenges’ we all face, but for the responsibilities we shoulder for them. Sometimes this devolves into a ‘saviour narrative’- to ‘save’ the Global South from itself, to protect ‘brown women from brown men’ (Spivak, 1998)- that is still prevalent in these spaces, in the discourse, and so, in the strategies employed. Saviour narratives- no matter how well meaning- are not empowering. *Solidarity* is not ‘saving’. *That* is not how solidarity manifests, and there is a desperate need to rethink these ways of working.

The 2015 Commission on Population and Development (CPD)^{vii} (for the first time ever) did not adopt a resolution because there was no agreed text. Many people I’ve spoken with- seasoned advocacy specialists- told me that this was better than adopting a bad or weak resolution. Some see it as an omen of things to come in the post-2015 agendas and indicative of what September 2016 will bring, perhaps reflective of how much this space has regressed and shifted for SRHR since Cairo.

Perhaps that’s true- there is a definite sense that spaces for progressive discussion have shrunk and are threatened by increasingly conservative elements and contexts. Civil society engagement has also taken on a very specific shape, where UN spaces such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the CPD, and other UN meetings have claimed the legitimacy of ‘where advocacy happens’. These spaces can be an extremely inaccessible for smaller organisations and collectives, not just due to the strict requirements and costs, but also due to the copious amounts of jargon and dense language.

The shifts in ‘SRHR language’ have also been drastic since Cairo- evolving to include more issues and communities. Yet, I sometimes wonder if ‘SRHR’ is too artificial a construction to fully capture and reflect the nuance and complexity of all the aspects of sexuality today. For example, the Bali Declaration^{viii} posits a new understanding of ‘family’ itself, broadening the scope beyond heteronormative or nuclear families to include child or women-headed households among others. SRHR has also been challenged to rethink constructions of gender and of ‘woman’, pushing it beyond the binary and understanding how it connects to health services, rights, and autonomies. Perhaps the conversation right now should not be about the ‘post-Rio’ or ‘post-Cairo’ or ‘post-Beijing’; but should tackle what our *current* Rios, Cairos and Beijing agendas are, irrespective of whether they’re ‘post-2015’ or not. Perhaps it is time to rethink this entire framework, this entire construction

and create something new.

In these global advocacy spaces, I find myself doing a tightrope dance of identities- balancing my feminist identity with my other identities- young, Indian, from the Global South- and trying to grapple with all that it brings with it- the positioning, the privileges, and the panic! I am sometimes stymied by not knowing how to navigate this, how to be aware of my own privilege in my own context, and the way it plays out on the global stage. I'm aware that I check a lot of boxes that fits certain agendas: English speaking, young, brown, female-presenting, 'Southern'. I struggle with the responsibility of tokenised representation, with my own ambition, my own goals, my own politics and how they collide with each other. Can I co-opt an already token space? Can I break out of a convenient checkbox?

On some days, I feel bogged down by this legacy mired in herstories and tied up in decades old tensions. On some days, I feel that the battle lines were drawn years before I stood here and that they will endure years after I have gone and that they will not have moved an inch; that we will remain divided by the pluralities rather than stay united, that our political positions will cause us to fracture rather than hold strong. That the sticking points of our arguments- the scars of population control programmes, 'family planning', testing of contraceptives on Global South women, sex work as work, the always looming shadow of our still-recent, still-raw colonial pasts and how that affects our analyses and positioning- that these will continue to keep us on squarely parallel paths.

I have struggled with this a lot- the 'difference', that we are not united for *one goal*, that we disagree too much, that we would never find common ground. I think about this a little bit differently now. Around March 8th 2015, '*India's Daughter*', a documentary about Nirbhaya- the December 2012 gang rape victim, was released^{ix}.

The documentary caused bitter and vociferous debates in the women's and feminist movements in India, calling into question some of the basic tenets of Indian feminist politics, such as the right to a fair trial, including the full process of appeal, and informed consent and freedom of choice. It also brought up crucial questions about freedom of expression in the context of continued censorship and increased policing of viewpoints and expression, especially under the current conservative government.

Nivedita Menon, a highly respected feminist and academic, aptly marked Women's Day by commenting on the debate. Her comments reflect on

the consistent challenging, questioning, and disputing around this documentary, showcasing many different viewpoints and approaches; in addition to a healthy debate. She noted, with pride, the

‘deeply contested terrain that we call feminism in India, in which no claim goes unchallenged, no issue is undisputed (and some might say, no good deed goes unpunished!) In which over the decades, every stand and every understanding on practically every issue, has been painfully rethought and reformulated in the face of intense questioning from newer claims and voices.’ (Menon, 2015)

For me, that is reflective of a mature space- and I do think it’s true for the larger, global spaces- where dissent is possible, where disagreement is encouraged, where nuance and questioning is the norm. And I think this is where we take Cairo and the other agendas- to a place of dissent, a place of questioning, a place of newer claims and voices.

To Everyone Who’s Ever Said, ‘Young Feminists Today Are So Depoliticised’^x:

I keep coming up against the idea that young people today- young feminists, in particular- are depoliticised, that young feminist organising is lacking a political lens. This puts my back up quite quickly, especially because everyone who tells me that tends to begin by going back to how in the 1970s they were so political and that you don’t see anything like that these days.

It may be true that movements no longer see the kind of activism that was present in the 1970s, but that might be because the political lenses today are different, the contexts and challenges are different, and thus; the strategies are different. I think there is a deep well of discontent amongst young people today, and it is evident in the student protests in Amsterdam, London, Santiago, Mexico City, and Delhi around education, in the demonstrations for labour rights and better jobs in Nairobi, and importantly, in who the core base of any political movement is- if you slice it sideways, the core is almost always young people.

In India again, the ‘Shuddh Desi Romance’^{xi} (Pure Indian Romance) protests against right-wing groups’ moral policing of Valentine’s Day 2015 is one example of young people organising and actively dissenting. The Hindu Mahasabha, a right wing group, threatened to marry any couples seen holding hands, claiming that this was ‘against Indian culture’. ‘Shuddh Desi Romance’, organising over Facebook and Twitter,

called on people to gather in front of the headquarters of the Hindu Mahasabha wearing elaborate wedding wear, with a traditional *baraat* (a music band), and even managed to bring a priest along; demanding that they conduct these marriages as promised! They challenged not just the moral policing and intimidation, but the institution of marriage and the value placed on specific kinds of marriage- heterosexual, same-caste/religion. Given the context of the re-criminalisation of homosexuality and reinstatement of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code^{xii}, many LGBT couples also participated in the march; asking for the right to marriage. A similar thread of protest can be seen in relation to inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. The event was marred by arrests and police violence, but reflected a refusal to accept continued policing of one's lives, desires, and agencies.

'Shuddh Desi Romance' follows a series of similar actions such as the Kiss of Love^{xiii} protests from 2014, and the Pink Chaddi campaign^{xiv} of an earlier Valentine's Day fracas. Given the rise in moral policing, 'love jihad'^{xv}, and the reinstating of Section 377, the pushback against conservative attitudes has seen an upswing. These events rely on a sense of humour and a mocking tone as they challenge and subvert authority. 'The sheer liberty of having fun' as they dissent is a newly emerging flavour of organising. While criticisms around this tone exist, it is no less depoliticised.

Part of the 'viral' nature of these events and ability to mobilise lies in its mocking tone and cheekiness, but it is abetted by the convenience of the Internet and how quickly and easily it lends itself to a space for sarcasm through 'memes' or 'mock ups'. The almost real-time documentation of the protests, the crackdown, and the continued protests in detention lent itself to a new kind of support space- one that is not constrained by geography. The rest of the country continued to keep tabs on the protests through continuous updates over social media, which; in turn; saw an immediate response from people across the country as well.

The role of the Internet and social media platforms has taken on greater significance over the years and has led to an evolving understanding of the medium and its impact on movement building. The December 2012 Nirbhaya protests in India, for example, allowed protestors to organise and acted as a receptacle and expression of the collective anger and outrage of a country (Islam & Bhusan Das). They not only sparked vociferous debate and collective action, but also allowed people across the country- irrespective of their political alignment or presumed apathy, to display solidarity through a black dot in place of their Facebook and

Twitter profile pictures. Similarly, the December 2013 judgement around 377 saw the Indian social-mediasphere react immediately, organising protests nation-wide, and launching a global campaign- The Global Day of Rage against 377^{xvi}.

The nature of the Internet enables immediate reactions and a conversation to unfold in real-time. The ability to easily share and disseminate information has often led to a campaign going 'viral', exceeding expectations of who a campaign is able to reach. Social media has reached out to young people, often outside of traditional movement spaces, allowing them to (no matter how passively) follow conversations and keep abreast of campaigns and initiatives around social issues. These efforts and platforms have also expanded what we understand as 'mobilising' by attracting groups and individuals to new spaces and to have new conversations.

In the course of this, a striking feature of 'online organising' has emerged. A number of campaigns and 'reactions' to current events have taken on a tone of sarcasm and mockery. The ability to use multiple mediums also creates a new way of engaging with constituencies. Music videos or repurposed posters, for example, often go 'viral' because of their ability to connect with multiple groups of people through popular culture or a cultural reference point. The use of irreverent '.gifs' (a moving picture) from films and television series to react to current events are also common, showcasing new ways of reflecting disagreement.

A lot of the people who attended these events or participated in these campaigns are not drawn from the traditional pool of activists, but are individuals who may not hold a political lens or position; but feel compelled to register dissent or challenge the status quo in one way or another. Such events are able to reach out to groups of people who are just 'fed up' with how things are. They may not have a political lens and may not have the political nuance of those who have been raised in political movements, but this is a key base to engage with- to tap that 'well of discontent'. It is clear that older social movements- including the feminist movement- have been unable to do this, leading to dwindling numbers and the constant concern of 'where have all the young feminists gone' - and indicator that our vocabulary needs to shift, and our ways and spaces of engagement too!

It is also important to recognise the Internet as a space for connection- it has allowed a new vocabulary and new awareness to emerge, especially amongst previously unreached groups. It has also allowed previously

silenced and unheard groups- trans, disabled, young people, for example- to create safe spaces to connect, to explore, to discuss their issues, strategies, and organise themselves. In the aftermath of the reinstating 377, many LGBT persons took to the Internet to connect to each other as many felt that public spaces were no longer safe. The Internet, in some ways, acted as a way to continue to connect to the larger community in a safe(r) environment. To discount its power- no matter how overwhelmingly urban-centric- would be short sighted.

Looking at all this, I believe that the strategies and styles of organising today are different. They are still emerging ways of working but we ought to explore this within our spaces and voices now, and question how we integrate this mocking, openly defiant, humorous tone in our work; and how we work with and utilise the Internet in our campaigns. I believe that this a hope-filled moment- that our language of pleasure, of lust, of passion- is finding a way to dissent, to resist, to celebrate- to bring in the sheer liberty of having fun.

To Everyone in the Feminist Movement:

I sometimes want to look at the amazing, wonderful, incredibly intimidating feminists in my life and say, very gently, “Please take me and my work seriously. Please give me space to be here too- I want to sit at the table too.”

It is difficult to talk about because it feels a little like betrayal- we stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us, have worked before us, and continue to pave a path for us. And yet, it sometimes feels like an unwelcome space for younger feminists.

There seems to be a general and pervasive opinion of young feminists being 'depoliticised' or not having a political lens and constantly needing to prove themselves as 'feminist enough'. It takes a real toll and is beginning to damage the movement- I have had too many conversations with too many disillusioned (and hurt!) young feminists who are walking away from progressive movement spaces because they feel devalued. It's a huge drain- not just because we aren't building and constructing new worlds together but because, however unthinkingly, something is breaking.

There is a legacy to hand down and create together, but the handing down actually *needs* to happen. With that comes the necessity to create space, which sometimes means stepping down and stepping out, which is never

easy. How do we create a space where there is a sharing, where there is a connecting, where there is a continued link? That's a difficult conversation to have given that a lot of older feminists have dedicated their lives (and livelihoods) to this space- how do we ensure that they too are in a safe space- that they too are 'taken care of' as younger feminists yearn to be 'mentored', have their contributions valued and share their own knowledge?

I struggle with this a lot- what shape does this mentoring take, how does it manifest, how does power play out in this space? I don't have an answer for this- or any of the other thoughts or questions I've shared- but I think these are issues that need to be raised, pondered, and addressed?

These aren't just questions I grapple with for the larger movement, but as I begin to step out of youth spaces- to attempt to create space- I have been wondering about how to do this myself. I think back to how I have had multiple people mentor me over time- how thoughtfully they created a space where learning was mutual, where support was a given. It was a nurturing space where I never felt that I could not ask a question- no matter how silly, or how basic. I never felt that there was a thought I could not share because of how it would be received. They created a safe space, acted as a 'go to' for that terribly awkward, naïve, achingly idealistic 22-year-old who nervously stepped into these movements- and that is essential to 'mentoring'. It's something I hope I'm doing as I step out of youth spaces, that I'm contributing to a space for asking a question, to pondering a thought, to posing a counter-point, to being questioned, to being challenged.

These are my meandering and fumbling attempts to connect multiple threads into a more cohesive tapestry- one that is hard to create because so many threads are wound through so many hands over decades and decades of feminist organising and movement-building that so many tapestries have been created and shared over the years. But I am so infinitely grateful for these tapestries- for the many years of work that this is connected to and builds on, that the pictures (plural) may be contradictory, may cause dissent and disagreement, debate and sometimes, a rather serious feminist existentialist crisis, but that this is where its strength lies: to look, to question, to ponder from different angles, to tug at a thread and see where it leads you- to know that perhaps there is no one single answer, and that perhaps sometimes there is no answer at all- only questions.

References

- Centre for International Sustainable Development Law. (2002, August 26). *The Principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities: Origins and Scope*. Retrieved May 31, 2015, from Centre for International Sustainable Development Law: http://cisdl.org/public/docs/news/brief_common.pdf
- Islam, B. K., & Bhusan Das, B. (n.d.). *Social Media in Protests and Policy Change: From Tahrir Square to Gezi Park*. Retrieved May 31, 2015, from Indian Institute of Management Kashipur: www.iimkashipur.ac.in/hi/academic/centers-of-excellence/public-policy-government/research/social-media-in-protests
- Menon, N. (2015, March 8). *Indian feminists, 'India's daughter', and sexual violence: The issues at stake**. Retrieved May 31, 2015, from Kafila: <http://kafila.org/2015/03/08/indian-feminists-indias-daughter-and-sexual-violence-the-issues-at-stake/>
- Merrick, T. W. (2002, March 1). *Population and Poverty: New Views on an Old Controversy*. Retrieved May 31, 2014, from Guttmacher Institute: <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/2804102.html>
- Narayanan, N. (2015, March 12). *'India's Daughter' sparks 50 online petitions demanding end to ban*. Retrieved May 31, 2015, from Scroll.in: <http://scroll.in/article/712968/Indias-Daughter-sparks-50-online-petitions-demanding-end-to-ban>
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak?. In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (pp. 271-313). Macmillan Education UK.
- Wilson, K. (2013, July 11). *Challenging Neoliberal Population Control*. Retrieved May 31, 2015, from Open Democracy: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/kalpana-wilson/challenging-neoliberal-population-control>

End Notes

ⁱ 'The Cairo Legacy' refers to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that was held in Cairo, Egypt in 1994. The ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) was indefinitely extended beyond its twenty-year mandate and the women's and feminist movements have been heavily involved in the 'ICPD Beyond

2014' discussions. The 'post-2015 agenda' refers to the high-level discussions on the 'Sustainable Development Goals' a global framework widely expected to replace the Millennium Development Goals. Many women's and feminist groups have been engaged in the discussions to ensure that women's rights issues are not overlooked or minimised within the new framework.

ii The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) is hailed as a ground-breaking conference for its resulting Programme of Action (PoA) that shifted development discourse from a population control focus to respecting and upholding human rights. The shift to placing people at the centre of development interventions was seen as a key 'victory' for women's transnational organising. A consensus document agreed to by 179 governments, the ICPD PoA outlined a twenty year framework to increase access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), universal education, and reduction in maternal mortality, amongst other issues.

iii 'Evolving capacities' is a principle introduced within the Convention on the Rights of Child, recognising that as children acquire enhanced competencies, there is a diminishing need for protection and a greater capacity to take responsibility for decisions affecting their lives. It also recognises their capacity to make informed decisions and their right to participate in all processes and spaces impacting their lives.

iv The Vatican, holding a permanent observer position at the UN, was represented by H.E. Archbishop Renato R. Martino during the 1994 conference. The Holy See's statement reflects the divisive positions on abortion and reproductive rights that influenced the final text. *Martino, Renato R. (1994, September 7). Statement of the Holy See. Retrieved from:*

<http://www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/gov/940908193315.html>

v The four conferences dealt with specific areas or themes but overlapped with each other not just because of the intersectional approach within each document, but also due to the intentional connections made between the documents. 'Rio' refers to the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development, 'Vienna' to the 1993 Conference on Human Rights, 'Cairo' to the 1994 Conference on Population and Development, and 'Beijing' to the 1995 Conference on Women.

vi The concept of 'Major Groups' comes from Agenda 21 (part of the Rio Declaration), which enabled civil society to participate in discussions and influence negotiations. The nine Major Groups are: Women, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, Trade Unions, Local Authorities, Science and Technology, Business and Industry.

vii The Commission on Population and Development is tasked with monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the ICPD PoA at the national, regional and international levels.

viii The Bali Global Youth Forum Declaration was the outcome of the Global Youth Forum, organised as part of the ICPD Beyond 2014 Operational Review. The recommendations contained within the Declaration were made by young people from across the world. The Declaration is available at:

http://icpdbeyond2014.org/uploads/browser/files/bali_global_youth_forum_declaration.pdf

^{ix} In December 2012, Jvoti Singh Pandey (named 'Nirbhaya'- "fearless"), was brutally gang raped and left for dead in Delhi, India. She succumbed to her injuries after identifying her rapists. The attack and her death saw multiple protests erupt across the country, as well as a passing of a new rape law.

^x This letter contains some research and reflections from a commissioned, as yet unpublished paper written in May 2015, co-authored with Vinita Sahasranaman.

^{xi} Organised online via a Facebook Event, 'Shuddh Desi Romance' took place in Delhi, India to protest moral policing on Valentine's Day, 2015.

^{xii} Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code criminalises sexual activities 'against the order of nature', primarily used against the queer community. It was read down by the Delhi High Court in July 2009 (Naz Judgement), but was reinstated by the Supreme Court of India in December 2013 (Koushal Judgement).

^{xiii} The 'Kiss of Love' was a series of events organised across India that called on people to oppose moral policing and limitations imposed upon peoples' sexualities and autonomies by staging public 'kiss in's. Many protesters across cities in India were arrested.

^{xiv} The Pink Chaddi campaign (Pink Underwear) was organised online in response to a right leader who, in response to the beating and assault of women who had gone to a pub with male friends, called them 'loose' and 'pub going women'. It claimed the identity of 'loose, pub going women' and called for people to send the right wing leader 'pink chaddis' as a form of protest on Valentine's Day. He received over two thousand pieces of underwear. The campaign is remarkable not just for claiming a 'reviled' identity- of 'loose' and 'pub going' women, but for turning to a mocking tone to respond.

^{xv} 'Love jihad', a concept floated and supported by Hindu right wing groups in India, alleges that young Muslim men 'con' young non-Muslim women into marrying them as part of an ongoing effort to convert them to the faith by feigning love. The concept speaks to many of the religious tensions and prejudices in the country.

^{xvi} The Global Day of Rage was a series of protests organised across the world in response to the reinstatement of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.