

ICMC Congress, Paris May 7, 2018

**Gender Equity and Justice
in the Development and Delivery of a New Male Contraceptive**

John TOWNSEND

Population Council, New York, NY, USA

Issues of rights, gender and reproductive justice are intrinsically linked to the call for investment in new male contraception. Currently women's contraceptive use represents approximately 80% of total contraceptive use globally (62%); nevertheless about 99 million pregnancies were unintended in 2014, representing 44% of all pregnancies, an increase of 6.6% over 2010. Although unmet need fell from 16% in 1990 to 12% in 2014, given population growth 225 million women are still unprotected, that is do not want to become pregnant but are not using a contraceptive. To ensure that most pregnancies are wanted, we need to engage men in contraceptive use and decision-making in ways that support women's reproductive choices. Given that all individuals have the right to decide on the number, spacing and timing of births, and that we all share the right to the highest standard of care and benefits of scientific progress, our goal should be the pursuit of gender equality and social systems that enable men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behavior. Using illustrations of the rights principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, this paper highlights the opportunities, potential benefits, implications and potential challenges in the development of a new male contraception from a human rights perspective.

The conclusions acknowledge that human rights have been recognized and grounded in national laws and international standards making the framework universal in nature. The focus on gender equality and reproductive justice greatly enhances the case for development of male contraception among both policy makers and civil society. In prevailing regulatory contexts, alliances with rights advocates are likely to be critical for global support and national registration. However, a rights-based approach must be linked with the business case for product development and delivery to achieve its goals of successful market introduction.