



For Immediate Release

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UNFPA Introduces Tools to Help Countries Manage Their Reproductive Health Commodity Supplies

Caribbean governments are now better equipped to forecast and estimate national reproductive health commodity needs and so avert potential shortfalls and stock-outs. At a three-day workshop on reproductive health commodity security (RHCS), now on at Jolly Beach hotel in Bolans, Antigua and Barbuda, UNFPA introduced participants to two computer based commodity management tools: the Country Commodity Manager and CHANNEL.

“At the touch of a computer key, countries can track their stocks as well as shipments”, said Joseph Abraham, Technical Specialist in the Commodity Management Branch at the UNFPA headquarters in New York. “This means that they can identify possible shortages and therefore be in a position to replenish stockpiles in a timely manner.” This he added was essential in ensuring reproductive health commodity security, which is achieved when all individuals can obtain and use affordable, quality reproductive health commodities of their choice, whenever they need them.

Fulfilling the commitment of world leaders to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015 is highly dependent on countries’ ability to achieve security in commodities. In this regard, UNFPA has been instrumental in developing, promoting and introducing tools designed to increase national capacity to achieve reproductive health commodity security.

“I think it is a very useful tool to assist us in our work. It could help us to manage and forecast commodity needs based on consumption”, said Executive Director, Directorate of Gender Affairs, Antigua. These sentiments were echoed by Frederick Cox, Executive Director, Guyana Responsible Parenting Association who added that these tools would help to “ensure efficient management of contraceptive data and guarantee proper control of the supply of contraceptives throughout the country”. For one of the representatives from Trinidad and Tobago, the attractive feature of the tools is its user friendliness. “I consider it a good start and importantly, it can be adapted for other programmes, example, anti- retroviral”, said Dr. Violet Duke, Programme Director-HIV/AIDS Coordinating Unit, Ministry of Health.

These tools are already being used by over 90 developing countries and it is hoped that Caribbean governments will take advantage of this new opportunity to improve the management of their reproductive health commodity programmes.

Participants in the three-day workshop from October 22-24 were drawn from Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua & Barbuda, St. Lucia, Suriname, Belize, Guyana and Jamaica.

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