



## News Release

**Not intended for U.S. and UK Media**

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### **Bayer Supports World Contraception Day to Help Young People Build Awareness for Contraception**

- “Framework for Action” plan calls for empowerment of young people through better access, information and education
- International survey reveals that 43.8% of young people report having sex with a new partner without using contraception

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**Berlin, September 26, 2014** – On the occasion of today’s World Contraception Day (WCD), Bayer supports the publication of the WCD Coalition “Framework for Action” plan calling on individuals, governments and organizations to address the alarming number of unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) worldwide. More than 41% of the 208 million pregnancies that occur globally each year are unplanned. Nearly half of those unplanned pregnancies end in abortion.<sup>i</sup> An estimated 33 million unintended pregnancies each year are a result of contraceptive failure or incorrect use,<sup>ii</sup> so it is important that young people are well-informed about the different methods of contraception available.

The WCD Coalition – eleven organizations dedicated to increasing access to and availability of family planning services and education – have united to underline the importance of empowering young people to learn about contraception from reliable sources, talk about contraception with their healthcare providers and partners, and build contraception into their future plans.

“Contraceptive choice is an important choice, and it needs to be an informed one,” said Katja Iversen, CEO of the global advocacy organization Women Deliver. “Contraception is a game changer that can make it possible for young people to live their full potential. But they need the opportunity to learn about all available contraceptive options so they can make informed decisions about exactly what suits them best”.

"Being able to make self-determined decisions is an integral part of every person's freedom – but this freedom is dependent on the availability of information and choices", said Scott Sherriff, Head of Women's Healthcare, Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals. "As a leading company in family planning that has been active in this field for more than 50 years, we have a responsibility to make our contribution to comprehensive sex education for young people worldwide."

The WCD Coalition's "Framework for Action" looks at the key areas of unmet need in terms of enabling young people everywhere to benefit from access to high quality sexual and reproductive health advice and services. It examines the perspectives and experiences of young people who have had an unplanned pregnancy and of NGO and GO field workers, highlighting the need for accurate, unbiased information to be widely available and accessible. It calls on governments, organizations and individuals to empower young people to build contraception into their plans for the future by focusing on four priorities:

- 1. Knowledge is power.** Addressing the lack of knowledge of contraceptive methods available – from short-acting methods to long-acting reversible methods – by improving age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education and information for young people and making the information more widely available.
- 2. Practising safe sex saves lives.** Ensuring that young people have access to high-quality, confidential sexual and reproductive health services so they are equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to make smart, educated decisions about their sexual health care.
- 3. Sex is not just about reproduction.** Addressing myths and misconceptions about sex and contraception to empower young people to talk to their healthcare providers and partners about sex and to use contraception without fear of prejudice or disrespect.
- 4. Equality and empowerment are key.** Tackling gender inequality and empowering and educating young women and men about their sex and family planning rights and responsibilities.

The WCD Coalition aims to improve awareness of all contraceptive methods available to enable young people around the world to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and prevent unplanned pregnancies and STIs.

New data from WCD's global "Youth Love Check" survey underline the need for action on contraception for young people. A worrying 54.9% of survey respondents – young men and women from around the world – know a family member or close friend who has had an unplanned pregnancy in the last few years.<sup>iii</sup> In addition, 43.8% of respondents have had sex with a new partner without using contraception. This figure was as high as 74.3% in Turkey, 58.1% in Mexico and 56.3% in South Africa. The survey also revealed variations in the sources of information most trusted by young people seeking knowledge about contraception. While some rely on their doctors, others put most trust in information they obtain from their friends or the internet.<sup>iv</sup>

For more information including the WCD "Framework for Action", please visit the newly re-launched WCD website: <http://www.your-life.com>.

### **About World Contraception Day (WCD)**

World Contraception Day takes place on September 26 every year. The worldwide campaign centers on the vision of a world where every pregnancy is wanted. WCD's mission is to improve awareness of all contraceptive methods to enable young people to make informed choices on their sexual and reproductive health. The WCD website, [www.your-life.com](http://www.your-life.com), contains accurate and unbiased information on contraception to help young people, in discussion with their healthcare provider, choose which option is right for them.

WCD is supported by a coalition of 11 international NGOs/GO as well as scientific and medical societies with an interest in sexual and reproductive health. It is sponsored by Bayer HealthCare. The partners involved in WCD are:

- Asian Pacific Council on Contraception (APCOC)
- Centro Latinoamericano Salud y Mujer (CELSAM)
- European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health (ESC)
- DSW (Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung)
- International Federation of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology (FIGIJ)
- International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
- Marie Stopes International (MSI)
- Population Services International (PSI)
- The Population Council
- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- Women Deliver (WD)

### **About “Youth Love Check” survey**

The “Youth Love Check” data was collected between November 2009 and June 2014, online, via the interactive *Youth Love Check* survey hosted on [www.your-life.com](http://www.your-life.com). A total of 13,986 people participated in the study from 35 countries, 81.1% female and 18.9% male, and aged 10-30, with most respondents being 16-18 years old (n=4,122). Visuals can be found on [www.your-life.com](http://www.your-life.com).

### **About Bayer HealthCare**

The Bayer Group is a global enterprise with core competencies in the fields of health care, agriculture and high-tech materials. Bayer HealthCare, a subgroup of Bayer AG with annual sales of EUR 18.9 billion (2013), is one of the world’s leading, innovative companies in the healthcare and medical products industry and is based in Leverkusen, Germany. The company combines the global activities of the Animal Health, Consumer Care, Medical Care and Pharmaceuticals divisions. Bayer HealthCare’s aim is to discover, develop, manufacture and market products that will improve human and animal health worldwide. Bayer HealthCare has a global workforce of 56,000 employees (Dec 31, 2013) and is represented in more than 100 countries. More information is available at [www.healthcare.bayer.com](http://www.healthcare.bayer.com).

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### References:

<sup>i</sup> Singh, S., *et al.* Unintended pregnancy: worldwide levels, trends, and outcomes. *Stud Fam Plann* 2010, 41(4): 241-250

<sup>ii</sup> WHO, *Unsafe Abortion—Global and Regional Estimates of the Incidence of Unsafe Abortion and Associated Mortality in 2008*, 6th ed, 2011

<sup>iii</sup> Data on file

<sup>iv</sup> Data on file

**Forward-Looking Statements**

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