



SupplyInsider October 2016

The 17th General Membership Meeting

In this meeting of “firsts”, 330 participants from 43 countries gathered in Seattle for five days to hear 108 speakers:

- Quantify the gap between the amount of contraceptive supplies needed by women in 2020 and the levels of public and private funding required to procure them.
- Understand how the supply chain struggles faced by corporate giants like Starbucks and Microsoft offer lessons for the developing world.
- Identify barriers that hinder the delivery of supplies to the last mile and suggest strategies for overcoming them.
- Illustrate the transformational role accurate, accessible, and connected data can play in ensuring RH commodity security.

Participants remained unfazed by media warnings about a storm brewing in “Rain City”, and were prolific in their outputs and engagement: meeting-themed Tweets reached nearly a million accounts and, for the first time, young people’s confident voices rang out

in plenary. [Blogs](#) were written by longtime partners and new friends alike, and FPVoices used the event as a base to interview 25 experts from 11 countries for their online [gallery of profiles](#).



Watch the two-minute video and relive the unique memories from [#rhsupplies2016 – Seattle 2016](#).

Commodity Gap Analysis launched in Seattle

- What will it take to ensure commodity security for the unprecedented number of women who will rely on modern methods of contraception in the year 2020?
- How much is currently spent on contraceptive supplies, and what are the relative contributions of donors, governments, and individuals?
- How much additional spending will be required to keep pace with demand? And if donors fail to increase (or at least maintain) their spending on contraceptive supplies, what will be the impact on countries' domestic resources and on individuals?

The Coalition's groundbreaking [Global Contraceptive Commodity Gap Analysis](#) addresses all these questions and more. Wide-ranging consultations with 43 donors, manufacturers, advocates, and technical experts, representing 24 agencies and organizations, fed into the analysis, which presents estimates for 135 low- and middle-income countries, as well as subsets of the 69 FP2020 countries and the 11 GFF countries. At the Seattle meeting,

John Skibiak and [a panel of experts](#) from Avenir Health and CHAI [addressed these huge questions](#) in plenary.

Responding to members' directives; sharing a vision with FP2020

The heads of the Coalition and of FP2020 [addressed the membership jointly](#). Coalition Director John Skibiak, in his [State of the Coalition address](#), described to a packed plenary hall how the Coalition had acted upon the directives delivered last year in Oslo: greater attention to the needs of young people; expanded engagement in maternal health; and greater access to quality-assured, affordable supplies for safe abortion. He pledged commitment to the Coalition's strong and lasting relationships with UNFPA Supplies, the Global Financing Facility, USAID's PSM Project, and, in particular, the critical lifesaving work of FP2020.

Beth Schlachter, FP2020's Executive Director, [said](#), "Today FP2020 and the Coalition must continue to focus on the synergies and cooperation between our groups. The one cannot work without the other. Our stakeholders are the same and our goals are the same: to give women worldwide the opportunity to plan their families and their futures."

A [joint op-ed](#) in Devex, co-written by Ms. Schlachter and Mr. Skibiak, acknowledges a shared commitment to leveraging the power of partnership to achieve an ambitious shared goal.

Key plenary perspectives

How many of us had ever walked into a Starbucks and discovered they were out of milk—be it cow, soy or almond? The Gates Foundation's Perri Sutton asked this leading question to a captive audience at the start of a groundbreaking opening panel "[No Product No Program](#)", in which supply chain experts from corporate giants Microsoft, Expeditors, and Starbucks unpacked supply issues they themselves had faced, making the all-important bridge to the development context and applying lessons in the process.

Supply chains all too often break down at the "last mile"—that critical final lap where it seems that everything that can go wrong often does. A [three-minute video](#) captured the inexorable disasters our partners face in developing countries. And resourceful experts from [Malawi](#) and [Myanmar's](#) governments and civil society shared their successes in overcoming the obstacles to getting supplies into the hands of the women who need them.

Just how important is data? A [panel](#) including speakers from the Ethiopian government,

JSI / Ethiopia, PMA2020 and FPWatch / PSI described their impressive work in data collection and visualization. Ultimately, however, data are only as important as the action they support; and the panel offered ample evidence of the risks of data overload and the need to think and use data more effectively and efficiently.

Thanks to financial support from Women Deliver, we welcomed to Seattle ten young people with diverse expertise in reproductive health. After a [plenary session](#), participants broke up into unconventional [discussion groups](#) seated on picnic blankets, brainstorming strategies for eliminating the barriers that limit young people's access to contraceptives. We also announced the award of four new Innovation Fund grants that will allow youth organizations to harness mobile technology, change hospital practices, teach pharmacists to be friendly and supportive of young people, and sustain access to an innovative menstrual cup to girls in need. Finally, a [hard-hitting blog](#) championed the unique passion and energy that young people can bring.

The meeting was also a good opportunity [for an update](#) on the Coalition's flagship campaign to put an end to stockouts, [Take Stock](#), with an overview of [global commitments](#) and an innovative "Learning Café" in which participants discussed progress made on organizational commitments and innovative ideas being implemented in the field, and made recommendations on how to move the campaign forward.

Through their Eyes

The Seattle meeting attracted considerable social media support. Participants tweeted the meeting hashtag #rhsupplies2016 enthusiastically, with 331 individuals sending out more than 1500 tweets in the five-day period.

The meeting featured in blogs and articles by Village Reach, Johns Hopkins Center for Communications Programs, FP2020 and others. Check in [here](#) for a growing collection of voices.

Didn't make it to Seattle? Virtual meeting experience online

For the first time, the general membership meeting was recorded in a variety of creative formats.

- A real-time graphic recorder sketched the meeting's themes, creating [a rich mural](#) (see banner picture above).
- Plenary panel presentations were filmed and video recordings can be viewed [online](#).

- A [photo gallery](#) captures the spirit of the “family-reunion” feel of the Coalition’s membership meetings and the innumerable conversations between old and new friends.
- PowerPoint presentations are being [collected online](#); keep checking in for new uploads.

In closing the meeting, Karen Finneyfrock, Seattle-based performance poet, novelist, and University of Washington writing teacher, summed up the tragedy of unmet need in a moving poem, [The Horizon, a Poem in Three Parts](#), which she performed to a rapt audience struck silent after five days of discussion and debate.

“Rising before dawn does not make the truck come faster. Sleeping in front of the clinic will not clear the mudslide or clear the traffic or stop the storm from pounding its fists. Worry in the night does not end the strike or stop the bankruptcy of shipping giants, so agency is lost through a series of interruptions.”

A reminder at closing time

As the curtain falls on Seattle, a final word on the importance of Coalition membership meetings comes from Salud Mesoamerica’s Dr. Emma Iriarte, also on the Coalition’s Executive Committee. In a candid [interview](#), she describes the phenomenal progress made in Mesoamerica, and attributes a share of the success to the ideas and networking the Coalition has provided. A champion of the annual meetings, she describes them as a vital networking opportunity for the community, and unlike any other reproductive health supplies meeting.

“I have many contacts,” she says, “but the brokering the Coalition provides? That is priceless.”

In the calendar

16-18 Nov	9th Global Health Supply Chain Summit , Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
28-29 Nov	13th International Inter-Ministerial Conference on Population and Development , Dakar, Senegal
12-14 Dec	Ouagadougou Partnership Annual Meeting , Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire
27-30 Nov 2017	9th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights , Da Nang, Vietnam

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