12. Next Steps

We are well pleased with this thought-provoking dialogue on commonalities and differences between the human rights and public health approaches to reproductive health. However, we are also aware that another “A” word is crucial—action. All of us, individually and together, can make a difference. As Anne Wilson noted: “If you are breathing, you can do something!” We also need to follow-up on Machiavelli’s challenge and do something really dangerous: we need to implement reproductive health programs that address not only women’s needs but also women’s rights.

PATH and the Global Health Council are working with our other partners—CHANGE, CRLP, Columbia University School of Public Health, The Futures Group International, George Washington University School of Public Health, Human Rights Watch, the Pan American Health Organization and the World Bank—and other groups to hold follow-up seminars and to make presentations on reproductive health and rights at professional conferences. We feel it is important to educate Congress on these issues, so we are also organizing briefings on the Hill in collaboration with the Women’s Political Caucus, the Human Rights Caucus and the International AIDS Task Force. [See Appendix D for a list of follow-up activities that have occurred since the dialogue took place.]

This dialogue has been a source of new insights and inspiration. We know that this is just the beginning as we work together to advance reproductive health, gender and human rights issues. We thank all involved, including the more than 160 participants who came from all over the United States and even overseas, and the presenters who updated their papers for this publication.