POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Pakistan Reproductive Health Network
PAKISTAN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NETWORK

POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES
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VISION

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights ensured for all in Pakistan.
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1. The Pakistan Reproductive Health Network (PRHN) is a national network of organisations and individuals committed to promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of the Pakistani population. It was established in 1995 after the 2nd Asia Pacific Social Science and Medicine Conference held in Manila, Philippines. It operates as a network of organisations and individuals without any formal registration with any authority.

2. PRHN defines Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights as follows:

Reproductive and Sexual Health

“Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of reproductive disease or infirmity. Reproductive health deals with the reproductive processes, functions and system at all stages of life.

It implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition is the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate health care
services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.

Reproductive health includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relations, and not merely counselling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases.”1

Reproductive Rights

“Reproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents. These rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence.”2

Sexual Rights

“The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction,

including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences.”

3. The purpose of PRHN is to:
   
i. Enhance the capacity of its members to promote SRHR.

   ii. Advocate and promote effective policies and programs for SRHR.

4. Towards this purpose PRHN will undertake the following strategies:
   
i. Promote the exchange of information and experience between members as well as better practices for SRHR.

   ii. Provide opportunities for training and exposure to improve capacity of members.

   iii. Monitor and evaluate programs and policies of the government; and bi-lateral and multi-lateral development agencies on SRHR with the objective of lobbying for appropriate change.

   iv. Serve as a resource on SRHR for all.

   v. Promote the concept of SRHR at multiple levels.

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SECTION B
STRUCTURE OF PAKISTAN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NETWORK

5. PRHN will be made up of patrons, individual, and organisational members. Individual and organisational members will be associated with chapters hereafter known as PRHN Chapters.

6. PRHN Chapters will be convened and facilitated by a focal person and will consist of all the members at a particular geographical location.

7. Focal persons from each chapter will convene to form the National Working Group (NWG).

8. A National Secretariat (NS) will co-ordinate and provide support to the working of PRHN.

SECTION C
MEMBERSHIP

9. PRHN membership will be of the following categories:

i. **Individual Members**: Individual members will be those members who wish to be involved in an
independent capacity.

ii. **Organisational Members**: Are organisations which are members of PRHN. Two representatives will be identified by the organisation to participate in PRHN activities to ensure continuity. These representatives should have the authority to take decisions on behalf of their organisation. National organisations with more then one office may identify two representatives for their local chapter per office.

iii. **Patron Members**: Are those members who are invited to become a patron member by the NWG in view of their commitment, leadership and contribution to the field of SRHR.

10. Persons or organisations that are interested in becoming a member of PRHN, should familiarise themselves with PRHN’s vision, purpose and its activities. They should then fill out a membership form that should be submitted to the local PRHN Chapter upon which the focal person of the Chapter will invite the applicant to attend the next Chapter meeting to determine their suitability. The Chapter will then confirm their membership based on set criteria at the next meeting convened with a quorum.

11. In case of individuals or organisations that wish to apply from a location where there is no PRHN Chapter, they should send their form to the nearest PRHN Chapter. The focal person of that PRHN Chapter should then invite that person or organisation to participate in a PRHN Chapter meeting at their earliest convenience, after which the Chapter will
confirm their membership based on criteria and majority agreement at the next meeting convened with a quorum. All expenses of attending chapter meetings will be borne by the interested person/organisation applying for membership.

12. A member of the NWG (i.e. chapter focal person) can propose the name of an individual to be nominated as a patron to PRHN. Focal person should share with his/her chapter when nominating anyone. The NWG will then confirm that person based on set criteria and majority agreement of the quorum. The secretariat will then invite the person to become a patron member of PRHN.

13. Criteria for individual and organisational PRHN membership will be as follows:

   i. Commitment to the vision and purpose of PRHN.
   
   ii. Willingness and ability to attend PRHN Chapter meetings regularly.
   
   iii. There will be no restriction on the basis of educational qualification, gender, religion, ethnicity, caste or sexual orientation, etc.

14. Criteria for patron members will be as follows:

   i. Commitment to the vision and purpose of PRHN.
   
   ii. Commitment, leadership and significant contribution to the field of SRHR.
Roles and Responsibilities of individual and organisational PRHN Members

i. Participate in chapter meetings regularly, i.e. attend three meetings in one year. In case of distant members, remain engaged with chapter activities via communication with focal person and participate in meetings whenever possible.

ii. Carry out tasks assigned to them upon the basis of their interest and expertise.

iii. Be responsible for the implementation of the Annual Plan of the PRHN Chapter.

iv. Actively share information, experiences, learning related to SRHR both locally and nationally.

v. Participate and contribute to capacity building activities of PRHN.

vi. Initiate action and assume leadership on issues of local and national importance related to SRHR thereby tapping the potential of the network for advocacy.

vii. Represent PRHN when requested by a local chapter or the secretariat.

viii. Pay annual membership fees unless exempted.

ix. As PRHN is not a registered entity, it cannot raise funds. However, members may raise funds for activities that can be implemented through the network. Accountability for these funds will be between the member that raises the funds and their donor.
16. Terms of Membership

All members will be permanent. However, in case of the following circumstances, membership will be discontinued based on the majority decision of the quorum of the PRHN Chapter to which the person is affiliated:

i. If the member does not participate in PRHN meetings and activities without prior notification to the focal person for more than six months. In case of members who are at a distance to their affiliated chapter their membership will be discontinued if assessed inadequate by the PRHN Chapter.

ii. If a member works against the interests of the vision and purpose of PRHN.

iii. In case of disruptive behaviour by a member.

iv. Non-payment of membership fees (if it is a requirement of the chapter to which the member belongs).

Organisations that wish to change their organisational representation must inform the PRHN Chapter of the names and contact details of the new representatives.

17. Membership Fees

The decision to collect membership fees and its amount will be decided by each PRHN Chapter and subject to periodic revisions. Patron members are exempt from payment of fees but contributions are welcome. The PRHN Chapter may upon its discretion waive the membership fee for individual and organisational members.
SECTION D
PAKISTAN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NETWORK CHAPTERS

18. Creation of a PRHN Chapter

A minimum of 5 individual/organisational members is necessary to form a PRHN Chapter. When 5 organisational members are in agreement to form a chapter, they must submit a PRHN Chapter Application Form to the National Secretariat (NS).

One district may not have more than one chapter. In exceptional cases, where distances are great, more than one chapter per district may be allowed based upon the discretion of the NS.

Once an application is received, the NS will approve the formation of the chapter if required criteria are met.

An orientation of the new chapter will be facilitated by the NS.

19. Role of PRHN Chapter

The PRHN Chapter will:

i. Meet at least once every two months.

ii. Develop and implement an annual plan.

iii. Identify issues and opportunities for advocacy and respond as appropriate.

iv. Support issues of advocacy identified by other PRHN Chapters, the NS or the NWG.

v. Generate human, technical and financial resources required for the activities of the PRHN Chapter.
vi. Approve membership of new applicants following the participation of the new member in one meeting of the Chapter and based upon set criteria.

vii. May invite individuals and organisations to participate in PRHN Chapter Meetings or other PRHN Chapter events.

viii. Elect a Focal Person every two years based on defined procedures (see section D.23).

ix. Approve representation of PRHN by the members, select members for capacity building opportunities etc.

x. Identify a person to maintain accounts if membership fees are being collected or if required for an activity. The PRHN Chapter will determine the process for maintaining and reporting on accounts.

20. Decision Making Process

A quorum consists of minimum 5 individual or organisational members of the PRHN Chapter.

PRHN Chapter decisions including approval of new members, election of focal persons, development of the annual work plan etc. will be based on a simple majority of the quorum.

When a simple majority is not possible then the focal person will have the deciding vote.

If there is a conflict within PRHN Chapters which cannot be resolved amicably by the Chapter members, then the Chapter may invite the NS to come and mediate.
21. Closing of Chapter

A PRHN Chapter will be discontinued in the following cases:

i. When a PRHN Chapter remains inactive for a year the NWG should decide on the validity of the PRHN Chapter.

ii. When the chapter is no longer aligned to the vision and purpose of PRHN.

22. Roles and Responsibilities of Focal Person

The Focal Person will be responsible for:

i. Coordinating all of the activities of PRHN Chapter including opportunities for capacity building of members.

ii. Acting as a liaison with the NS and ensuring that all requests and grievances are sent through the focal person to the NS.

iii. Ensuring effective communication with all PRHN Chapter Members.

iv. Convening bi-monthly PRHN Chapter meetings or as necessary.

v. Setting the PRHN Chapter meeting agenda.

vi. Liaising with the NS, ensuring that meeting minutes are sent and new members are reported.

vii. Supporting the process of application by new members and ensuring that new members are briefed about PRHN.

viii. Ensuring that a database of members is maintained.
ix. Representing the PRHN Chapter in the NWG, including reporting on activities included in the annual plan.

x. Nominating a substitute member from within her or his own organisation to carry out the focal person’s role. Substitute members are encouraged to participate in PRHN Chapter meetings and remain familiar with Chapter activities.

23. Election of Focal Person

The Focal Person will be elected for a term of 2 years, and may be re-elected for one more term.

The NS will monitor elections for timeliness and process. The NS will make a call for elections of Focal Persons to all Chapters in the last quarter of the election year.

PRHN Chapters will form a committee of three members, who do not wish to or are not eligible to stand for elections, to determine and follow due process for election of the Focal Person.

The newly elected focal person will be responsible for informing the NS and the members of the NWG of their appointment.

24. The criteria of the Focal Person will be as follows:

i. They must be an organisational member.

ii. They must have the commitment and resources required to manage the role of the Focal Person for the 2-year term.
25. Discontinuation of Focal Person

A Focal Person will no longer continue in the following cases:

i. If a Focal Person does not call a PRHN Chapter meeting for more than 6 months.

ii. If a Focal Person no longer has the capacity to meet their roles and responsibilities.

iii. If a Focal Person no longer wishes to continue with their responsibilities.

iv. If the NWG requests the PRHN Chapter to change the Focal Person.

Upon discontinuation of a Focal Person, any member of the PRHN Chapter can call a meeting and initiate election of a new Focal Person to complete the remaining term of office.

SECTION E
NATIONAL WORKING GROUP

26. Membership of the National Working Group

Focal persons from each chapter will convene to form the NWG. The NS will be represented by two persons.

27. Role and Responsibilities of the NWG

The NWG will:

i. Convene twice a year.
ii. Develop, review and revise policy for PRHN.

iii. Make decisions regarding closure of chapters, selection of patrons, and other network decisions as and when needed.

iv. Determine strategic directions for the network.

v. Identify and respond to opportunities for national and international advocacy.

vi. Provide a platform for information sharing and exchange of better practices related to reproductive health (RH) between chapters.

vii. Support the NS in conducting major activities of the network as based upon the resources available to the network.

viii. Provide input into international and national laws and policies related to RH.

ix. Make public statements related to RH from the PRHN platform.

x. Not be responsible for fund raising for PRHN.

xi. Be responsible for selection/election of the NS.

28. Decision Making within the National Working Group

Quorum of the NWG will be 60% of the total NWG Membership.

All decisions will be taken by simple majority of the quorum.
The Role of the National Secretariat will be to:

i. Provide a leadership role towards meeting the vision and purpose of PRHN.

ii. Coordinate national level activities of PRHN including the NWG.

iii. Network with national and international networks and organisations working in RH for the purpose of sharing information, opportunities, and possibilities for action with the PRHN members.

iv. Act as a liaison body between the members.

v. Maintain a database of members.

vi. Monitor activities of the chapters.

vii. Provide support and guidance to PRHN Chapters in the implementation of their activities.

viii. Monitor timeliness and due process of election of Focal Persons.

ix. Raise and collect funds for the functioning of the NS, NWG meetings and other national level PRHN activities.

x. Be a central repository for documentation of PRHN and its activities.

xi. Ensure mechanisms are in place for implementation of PRHN policy and guidelines.
xii. Act as a clearing house for dissemination of materials and information.

### Criteria of Selection/Election of Future Secretariats

An organisation interested in holding the office of NS of PRHN should:

i. Have the organisational capacity, including human resources to function as a NS.

ii. Have done substantial work on RH.

iii. Have been a member of PRHN for at least 2 years unless decided otherwise by the NWG.

### Term of Office of the National Secretariat

The NS will have a 3-year term of office and may be re-elected for one more term.

### Election of Future National Secretariats

Six months before the completion of the NS’s term of office, the NWG will make a call to all PRHN organisational members to apply for the position of the NS.

Interested organisational members should state their interest to their local PRHN Chapter, which will nominate up to one possible candidate to the NWG.

The NWG will elect the future NS by simple majority.