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### Commission on Population and Development

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda<sup>1</sup>

**General Debate 3 (a): Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the global, regional and national levels**

**(b) Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

### **Statement submitted by International Planned Parenthood Federation, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council<sup>2</sup>**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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<sup>1</sup> [E/CN.9/2019/1](#).

<sup>2</sup> The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

### **(A) About International Planned Parenthood Federation**

As a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights and a global service provider, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) works through 165 Member Associations and Collaborating Partners in 171 countries to empower women, men and young people in the most vulnerable situations to access life-saving services and programmes, and to live with dignity. We have had general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1973 ([E/2010/INF/4](#)).

### **(B) Introduction**

IPPF welcomes the theme of the 52nd Commission on Population and Development, the “Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” On the 25th anniversary of the ICPD PoA and the 50th anniversary of UNFPA, the 52nd CPD provides a unique and valuable opportunity to review the progress that has been made thus far, identify the challenges to implementation and define the future of the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) agenda for the 21st century. Recognized as a precondition to achieving sustainable development and an essential target in the 2030 Agenda (target 5.6), the implementation and realisation of the ICPD PoA is a more important political agenda than ever; governments, UN Agencies and civil society must come together to explore how to accelerate implementation and ensure that universal access to SRHR is a reality for all.

### **(C) Sexual and reproductive health and sustainable development**

SRHR cuts across the three central dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and have profound implications for human development and economic growth.

At individual, household and macro levels, access to SRHR enables people, particularly women, to participate in social life, to access education and to participate in the formal labour market. In some countries the majority of females are married when they are still girls – 15 years or younger. They have no chance to decide their lives for themselves and it can have tragic consequences. When women have access to sexual and reproductive health care and are able to exercise autonomy over their bodies and reproductive health, they are more likely to delay marriage and pregnancy, and to have fewer children. As a direct consequence of delaying the age of marriage and pregnancy, girls are more likely to enter and stay in education. This, in turn, can have a positive impact on their future earnings and participation in the labour market.

SRHR also play an important role in delivering social equity and environmental protection. For example, access to these services can allow women and men to make informed choices about their own future and the future of their family – including their health, education and finances – essential steps to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty for the most marginalized groups.

Several of the world’s sustainability problems, including those related to the consumption of the world’s non-renewable resources, are related to lack of access to family planning for millions of women and men. It is no surprise that denying families the information and services to make sustainable choices about how quickly they grow their own family can result in rapid population growth rates for communities and

countries that create environmental pressures. Reducing consumption, particularly by high-income countries, is the most effective way to mitigate the effects of climate change. Yet many countries also identify that improving sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education are two factors that could help their efforts to increase sustainability. However, many aspects of SRHR remain under-funded and under-prioritized.

The recognition of the interlinkages between all aspects of sustainable development and SRHR – as reflected in the ICPD PoA – was formalised in the 2030 Agenda through specific targets under the goals on gender equality and access to health:

- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

## **(D) Recommendations**

Guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all is at the heart of the world's response to the challenge of generating sustainable development, but simply affirming this agreement is not enough; we must ensure that the commitments made with the development of the ICPD PoA, all of its subsequent reviews and regional conferences, and reflected in the 2030 Agenda are implemented.

### **1. Reaffirming Success**

Overall, as we move towards the second half of the SDG era, we must ensure that the ICPD PoA and its implementation builds on and expands its understanding of SRHR, the groups that are in most need and how to ensure that no one is left behind; it must be a development and political priority. The last 25 years have seen great progress in the interpretation and realisation of SRHR for all; this upwards trajectory must continue. It is imperative that the 52nd CPD and the ICPD+25 celebrations clearly integrate national and regional reviews through highlighting their findings, gaps and challenges, and noting the regionally-specific plans to further implement the ICPD PoA at all levels. We also look to UNFPA to champion and support the regional review outcomes and the ICPD+25 global agreements, and work to the full extent of its mandate to promote SRHR around the world.

To ensure on-going political support, governments must make clear their support for and leadership of the continuation of the ICPD agenda at national, regional and global levels, and champion it publicly where possible.

### **2. SDG and the ICPD PoA**

To be successful, these two agendas need to be linked and mutually reinforcing; national governments operating at all levels have a key role in this. We look to governments from all regions to ensure that they ensure that the ICPD and its review conference priorities are meaningfully integrated into their work on realizing the 2030 Agenda, including implementation and monitoring and accountability. We ask governments to ensure that their plans for achieving the 2030 Agenda integrate the outcomes of the ICPD PoA, the regional and global beyond 2014 process, and the regional outcomes from the ICPD+25 reviews. We further encourage governments to

ensure that they are linking the regional forums for sustainable development to the ICPD PoA and regional beyond 2014 outcomes, as well as the High-Level Political Forum and SDGs.

### 3. Civil Society and Youth

As key partners in turning the ICPD and PoA from theory to reality, and as key agents of change in programme design, delivery and accountability, civil society organisations, including those that are youth led and youth serving have an essential role to play. The global CPD and ICPD+25 processes must ensure the meaningful participation of civil society at all levels, including young people. Governments should ensure that there is adequate space for civil society participation at all levels and include youth and civil society representatives on their official delegations for the regional reviews and global moments. We express concern about the shrinking space for civil society and call on governments to ensure and legal and social environment that supports sustainable civil society engagement, free from violence, stigma and discrimination and pressure, to allow civil society organisations to contribute to society and policy making. Further, they must ensure in particular the protection of human rights and women and young people human rights defenders to meaningfully participate in the country's public and policy debates and guarantee that their views are taken on board.

We also encourage governments to ensure that global and regional decision-making spaces such as the UN Economic Commissions create space for civil society participation in regional reviews, including through supporting registration for non-ECOSOC accredited organizations and allowing them to participate in the plenary discussions.

### 4. Leaving no one behind

Progress on realizing SRHR and the implementation of the ICPD PoA over the last 25 years has been remarkable. However, much remains to be done to combat inequalities among and within countries and ultimately achieve the goals of ICPD and ICPD beyond 2014. At the same time, Member States should recognise the changing needs of individuals across their life course and develop programmes and policies that reflect the needs of all, from young people to ageing populations and individuals dealing with sub-fertility. There are still populations that, due to stigma and discrimination, are being denied services. For example, stigma towards HIV and people living with HIV is a significant barrier to accessing much needed services, and unmarried young people also face considerable obstacles in accessing SRH services. Likewise, they face unique challenges when seeking abortion services and can be disproportionality affected by abortion stigma. Attitudes, practices and knowledge among healthcare workers affect the quality of SRH services provided to people from diverse backgrounds. For example, a study of Afghanistan healthcare facilities in terms of providing gender-based violence services indicated major gaps in healthcare providers' knowledge and attitudes and their role in helping survivors.

Both the ICPD PoA and the 2030 Agenda affirm that to be considered successful, every individual must have access to the full range of SRH care and have their rights full realized. Any approach or programming that fails to address barriers to SRHR, including stigma, discrimination and gender inequality, or to make SRHR information and services available, accessible, acceptable and of good quality, does not constitute the full implementation either of these agendas.

Governments should enhance their national data systems to support them in recognizing those population that are not able to access services, and – working in

partnership with affected populations – develop specific programmes to reach out to these groups and reduce stigma and discrimination in service provision.

5. Implementation and Accountability

It is imperative that the commitments made by governments are implemented through timely, respectful and quality care and education, including access to comprehensive sexuality education. Governments must ensure that there are national laws, policies, regulations and programmes well-funded by domestic resources to achieve the ICPD PoA. They should also governments should prioritise addressing the gaps on implementation of the ICPD PoA identifying barriers and prioritizing urgent actions to fulfil their commitments on SRHR especially with women, adolescent and youth from underserved and marginalised populations.

Civil society and others have a key role to play in holding governments to account and should be supported in playing an independent oversight role for the realization of the ICPD PoA and ensure that no one is being left behind. To this end, governments should put into place strong, transparent accountability mechanisms, with full and meaningful civil society participation at national levels, to monitor their progress on achieving the ICPD PoA, ICPD beyond 2014 national and regional commitments and ICPD+25 reviews.

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