



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on Population and Development

#### Fifty-second session

1–5 April 2019

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 Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, a non-governmental organization in special 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

In response to the theme of this year's session of the Commission on Population and Development, as an international NGO dedicated to defending women's and girl's rights since 1989, we call urgent attention to the specific issue of the status of women and girls in Argentina and Latin America and the Caribbean, among their reproductive health and rights, as well as women's empowerment and gender equality.

Based on our work regarding the status of women and girls in the region, we call attention to express that in Argentina as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean still remains many restrictions to achieve the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and in the last years we have had some real advances and also some setbacks. Among advances we need to recognize: the increased recognition by the population of their sexual and reproductive rights, despite the fact that in many cases these social changes do not correspond to measures adopted by governments, for example the situation of the backward movement in the legal recognition of the right to safe abortion as in Nicaragua and in El Salvador.

While in Chile it was possible to move forward with a law that recognizes the right in cases according to the risk to women's health and life and violations, in Argentina for the first time a bill to extend the right to abortion was discussed in the National Congress after many years of trying and although it was possible to pass a bill in Deputies that did not prosper in the Senate Chamber, there is a large group of the population that supports this change, especially in the population of adolescents and young people, so this discussion will continue and we will be able to advance soon in Argentina.

About comprehensive sexuality education, progress has been observed in many countries after the Interministerial Agreement on Education and Health signed by all countries in Mexico in 2008, as well as national laws and regulations or developing programs that began to bring comprehensive sexuality education to the students of the schools. However, a minority group of parents has recently been created under the campaign "With my children you are not going" who are trying to take back these key advances in the regional and national level. In the case of Argentina there are high rates of unplanned teenage pregnancy, an increase in general and sexual violence, sexual abuse in childhood perpetrated by relatives to girls and children, rates of sexually-transmitted infections including HIV are still very high, and the need for having comprehensive sexuality education is recognized and expressed very clearly by adolescent and child students of schools in these countries. In Argentina a recent survey by the Ministry of Education of pupils from primary and secondary schools throughout the country indicated that around 75 per cent or more ask to be taught comprehensive sexuality education at school.

For LGBTI populations advances such as equal marriage laws were achieved and even recognition of gender identity approved in Argentina in 2010 and 2012. However, we have seen an advance in recent years of movements that oppose what they call "gender ideology" and reject the perspective of gender. Through this rejection they oppose comprehensive sexuality education. Some countries in the region limit comprehensive sexuality education, as happened in Brazil and Paraguay, based on the opposition to "gender ideology". We should point out that not only that the rights of LGBTI people are violated but it also promotes multiple forms of violence against women and girls by keeping gender-stereotypes that sustain the dependence of women and girls to men, on which violence against women and girls is based. Another aspect that indicates a very serious setback is the increase in

femicides in the region. Argentina is a country where every 29 hours a woman dies because of being a woman or girl.

Poverty and social inequality increase these situations. Taking into account that ICPD Programme of Action was remarkable in its recognition of reproductive health and rights, women's empowerment and gender equality, as cornerstones of population and development programmes, there is a need to follow the key actions on the addressed topics. The Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Agenda 2030 and the ODS will be achieved only if poverty as well as inequality in developing countries that affect mainly women and girls are reduced, especially considering that Latin America and the Caribbean is the region with the greatest inequality in the world and Argentina is a country that has seen rapidly increasing inequality in recent decades.

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