



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
11 January 2019  
Original: English

---

### 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 Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries, International Planned Parenthood Federation (Africa Region), Stichting dance4life, and Stichting Rutgers non-governmental organizations with 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> E/CN.9/2019/1.

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



## **Statement**

Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries, International Planned Parenthood Federation (Africa Region), Stichting dance4life, and Stichting Rutgers – all organizations with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council – as well as CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality and Latin American and Caribbean Women’s Health Network, welcome the theme of the 52nd session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development “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”.

### **Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and the International Conference on Population and Development**

In 1994, 179 governments worldwide met in Cairo, Egypt and adopted the ground-breaking International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, positioning human rights at the centre of sustainable development, and recognizing reproductive rights as human rights, as well as young people and adolescents as rights holders in regard to their sexual and reproductive health. Notable steps have been taken at national, regional, and global levels in relation to these issues; however, these efforts need to be amplified and accelerated. Across different countries and regions, adolescents continue to face numerous political, social, cultural, gender and legal barriers that hinder their ability to realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights, keeping us from achieving the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 agreements, as well as other commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Young people aged 10-24 comprise 1.8 billion of the world’s population, 90 per cent of whom live in developing countries. Approximately 16 million girls aged 15–19 years old and 2.5 million girls under 16 years old give birth each year in developing regions. Differences between fertility rates among groups of countries have never been as extreme as today, leading to faster population growth and posing challenges to sustainable development. Young people will bear the burden of these challenges. Therefore, this is the moment to reaffirm commitments to the Program of Action and provide this generation of young people their sexual and reproductive health and rights in order for them to make their own choices and lead happy and healthy lives.

It is critical that governments not only reaffirm their commitments, but also adopt a proactive, and holistic approach to progressive sexual and reproductive health and rights policy formulation and implementation and increase resources. Reinforced political will and investment are crucial. This approach, moreover, must be undertaken with the meaningful involvement of young people, as part of recognizing them as rights holders themselves, and in order to effectively understand, address and resolve the barriers they face in regard to their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Undertake measures to ensure meaningful youth participation that is representative of young people in all their diversities.
2. Support meaningful youth participation through consultative processes as well as established platforms, such as youth committees and commissions at the

community, national, regional, and global levels, so as to integrate their inputs in policy and programmes.

3. Support youth and youth-led organizations' meaningful participation in national, regional and global policy dialogue and programme development, including through strengthening young people's skills and confidence to engage in policy, programme design, communication, advocacy and research. Invest in young people's capacity-strengthening regarding the 2030 Agenda and International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 frameworks.
4. Provide sufficient and sustainable financing for youth issues and youth-led organizations and movements.
5. Undertake diverse measures to work towards meaningful youth participation, such as through online initiatives, citizens' hearings and community scorecards.

### **Sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people essential for reaching Agenda 2030**

Despite proclamations that youth are at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals, their unique issues are not adequately reflected in the 2030 Agenda. Poverty, discrimination, lack of social mobility and limited access to information are the main obstacles that stand in the way of youth and their right to progress. As an illustration, up to 63 per cent of adolescent pregnancies in Asia-Pacific are unintended, in turn contributing to a substantial, though underreported burden of unsafe abortion. Of the 2.1 million adolescents aged 10–19 years living with HIV worldwide, about 1.7 million (84 per cent) live in sub-Saharan Africa. Femicide rates in Latin America and the Caribbean are the highest in the world. In 2016, 1831 women from 16 countries in the region were victims of this crime.

These numbers and rates should be significantly reduced by 2030 in order for young people to live prosperous lives. Girls who are poor are particularly affected. When young girls are deprived of their sexual and reproductive health and rights it shapes virtually every aspect of their lives. To end poverty in all its forms everywhere it is imperative that the rights of girls are realised. Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including enabling adolescent girls and women to improve their menstrual hygiene and access to contraceptive services, creates conditions that enable young women to enter the labour force and families to devote more resources to each child.

Sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as laid down in the Program of Action are essential to realising Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 5 and 10, and vice versa. First, only with sufficient sexual and reproductive health services can maternal mortality rates be reduced. Second, inclusive and equitable quality education is needed in order for boys and girls to make choices about their sexual and reproductive health. Third, the achievement of gender equality within Sustainable Development Goal 5 is a prerequisite for progress and sustainable development and builds upon the Programme of Action. Finally, inequalities influence the accessibility of sexual and reproductive health and fulfilment of reproductive rights. Often, young people are not able to enjoy these rights. And vice versa, when due to a lack of sexual and reproductive health services families become larger, less resources are available to each child. Next to the above-mentioned goals, Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, and 16: on Peaceful and Inclusive Societies are additionally highly essential to realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights.

For the 2030 Agenda and its ambitious goals to be realised, it is vital that young people are meaningfully involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation

of the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels to ensure that the 2030 Agenda truly “leaves no one behind”. By reaffirming, implementing and budgeting the International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action countries can make progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals as well.

**Recommendations:**

1. Adopt a comprehensive, holistic definition of sexual and reproductive health and rights as proposed by the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission and utilize this definition as the basis for any reviews and/or resolutions related to the International Conference on Population and Development+25 review, future sessions of the Commission on Population and Development as well as the 2030 Agenda.
2. Utilize the commitments made via the 2030 Agenda to synergize and accelerate progress towards the realization of the International Conference on Population and Development vision and agenda.
3. Ensure that commitments to adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services move towards action and that the International Conference on Population and Development+25 review recognizes the barriers in implementation that continue to exist at national level, including restrictions based on marital status or third-party consent, lack of health worker skills and the need for their adequate training, and the importance of addressing taboos around adolescent sexuality.
4. Invest in the rights-based collection and use of disaggregated data, at least according to income, age, gender, marital status, disability, migration and citizenship status, education level, geographic location, ethnicity, and other characteristics relevant in national context, in order to inform decision-making, budgeting, programming, and monitoring of the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action and the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 agreements.