



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 January 2019
Original: English

Commission on Population and Development

Fifty-second session

1–5 April 2019

Item 3 of the provisional agenda¹

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 Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council²

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.

¹ E/CN.9/2019/1.

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

On the occasion of the 25+ Review of the ICPD Platform of Action, we — the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations — want to take the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements that we have witnessed for realising universal sexual and reproductive health and rights. The access to sexuality education as well as to family planning methods has become a reality for many women, enabling them to exercise their health rights and adapt family concepts to their individual lives and circumstances. The implementation of the right to family planning will only be achieved once all people can have the number of children they want, at the time that they want. However, in all parts of the world, this right is still not granted due to barriers such as financial hardship, denial of autonomous decision-making, lack of social and health protection, lack of education, restricting laws or experience of threats and violence.

Although maternal mortality has decreased by 44 per cent between 1990 and 2015, still more than 800 women die every day due to preventable causes related to childbirth and pregnancy, the vast majority of them in developing countries. Young girls are at especially high risk of complications and death resulting from pregnancy and childbirth while their age puts them in a particularly vulnerable situation besides other intersectional barriers.

As young healthcare professionals, we feel a responsibility for the realisation of the promises made at the ICPD. We envision healthcare systems that commit to sexual and reproductive rights not only with promises but with actions. We envision sexual and reproductive health services that are accessible, affordable and inclusive to all people that need it, no matter the age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, language, religion, ethnicity, income or another status. This is a prerequisite for building strong and healthy generations, and it is a prerequisite not only for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 — our dedication to the ICPD Plan of Action will affect the Agenda 2030 in a whole and is a key element to leave no one behind.

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations is committed to advocating for an inclusive and safe world in which every individual is given the freedom to love and be loved, to make free decisions about their sexual and family life, and to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health and wellbeing. Hence, we call on Member States and their leaders to commit to the following actions:

- Integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights in the core of countries' health systems under the umbrella of Universal Health Coverage and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Ensure that needs for contraception are met and that all pregnant women and their newborns receive basic healthcare without increasing out-of-pocket expenditure.
- Implement, monitor and evaluate sexual and reproductive health and rights strategies that include an intersectional gender perspective, support diverse concepts of love, sexuality, and families, and facilitate and support meaningful involvement of civil society actors including youth organizations;
- Leave no one behind. Focus on and invest in programs and activities which aim to reach those whose sexual and reproductive rights are particularly compromised, e.g. through living in poverty, lacking health and educational infrastructure, facing discrimination and exclusion, and those affected by gender-based violence and suppression;
- Increase funding and investments in programs led by youth and for youth, supporting them to actively participate in sexual and reproductive health initiatives, enabling them to make informed and planned decisions about their

own health and lives and providing them with the health services they need in a stigma-free, non-judgemental manner.

Finally, no separate action alone can lead to the full realization of universal sexual and reproductive health and rights. The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations applauds the work of Member States, United Nations bodies and agencies, national and international organizations as well as civil society actors for their continuous work and emphasizes that only interprofessional and collaborative action can lead to the desired outcomes.

The CPD52 is the chance to realise meaningful exchange and participation between the world's leaders, civil society organisations and community voices. We hope that this dialogue will expand beyond these conference rooms and will transform the rhetoric into reality in local and national decision-making.
