Joint Statement on the occasion of: the 50th Commission on Population and Development

On behalf of: Family Planning New Zealand (ECOSOC) and the Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Delivered by: Ann Brassil
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Excellency's, honourable delegates, fellow advocates and activists.

Thank you for the opportunity to read this joint statement, on behalf of Family Planning New Zealand and with the Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, a regional network with 28 members that mobilizes civil society advocacy to ensure accountability for obligations and commitments that aim to realize sexual and reproductive health and rights for all persons.

The theme of this year's CPD is particularly pertinent to our region, Asia Pacific, as the region with the greatest cohort of young people in the world[1].

It is only with enactment of laws, policies and programmes that embody a universal respect for human rights and gender equality, enabling people to reach their full potential, that our region can harness the potential of the demographic dividend and achieve equitable and just sustainable development.

Young people, in particular, must have access to comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, which address barriers including discrimination, stigma and lack of confidentiality.

It also entails addressing inequalities in access, and enabling and recognizing the needs of marginalized populations, including women and girls, people living with HIV, LGBTIQ, sex workers, indigenous peoples and migrants, amongst others.

We wish to emphasize the importance of respecting the outcomes of the ICPD regional reviews, and building on these commitments in the upcoming mid-term reviews in 2018. We call on Member States to enable the meaningful participation of CSOs, and acknowledge the importance of the inclusion of civil society perspectives and data as crucial to the success of the review process.

Finally, we close by commending the leadership recently shown by a number of countries around the globe that have prioritized and made financial commitments to address the denial of access to safe and legal abortion, and to ensuring that women and girls have control over all aspects of their sexuality free from discrimination, coercion, and violence. We call for governments from all regions to join them, and we encourage support for UNFPA.

Thank You.

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[1] Asia Pacific is home to 60% of the world's young people. See: http://www.unescap.org/our-work/social-development/youth