

Oral statement submitted by RFSU, Rutgers, DFPA, Sex og Politikk and IPPF during the 56th session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD56)

Honorable Chair, esteemed delegates, and fellow advocates,

This statement is made on behalf of the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, Rutgers, the Danish Family Planning Association, Sex og Politikk and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

A lack of access to education, information and healthcare services related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, creates extensive barriers and difficulties for all people to live healthy lives.

The information and education that all women and girls and young people **want and need** about their health, is far too often missing.

This, for example, includes basic information **about- and access to** contraceptives. As adolescent pregnancies are a global challenge and complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for girls aged between 15 and 19 years old, we must urgently address the gap in education and information related to SRHR that is missing.

Adolescent childbearing may also interrupt school attendance and impair young women's long-term social and economic mobility and, therefore as a result, their empowerment. Adolescent pregnancy is also recognised as **both a driver and a consequence** of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM).

Denying people the access to basic information and education about sexual and reproductive health, has serious long-term consequences and will only result in further inequality, disempowerment and discriminatory norms and attitudes towards women and girls.

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If we want to commit to empowering all women and girls, realize their right to education and to end discrimination, we must ensure that we can all access the basic evidence-based information and education that we need to live healthy lives.

This includes Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and we urge you to recognize that the provision of CSE, is integral to improving the health and safety, as well as the attainment of rights, of adolescents and youth, **as well as** realizing gender equality and sustainable development.

By recognising that CSE is a critical component of the empowerment of all women and girls, we can shift negative attitudes and social norms that keep women and girls back, create opportunities for all women and girls to stay in school and ensure that their human rights can be upheld and realized.

Thank you.