

CPD47 Oral Statement: International Women's Health Coalition

I am speaking to you today on behalf of members of the Sexual and Reproductive Rights Youth Caucus at CPD47. We represent young people from across the globe and demand our voices be heard.

In the last twenty years, there has been significant progress in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. But, major gaps in implementation remain.

Despite the ICPD Programme of Action and repeated calls from governments, civil society and young people for a sexual and reproductive rights based approach, services remain inaccessible. For young people, and especially young people who belong to the most marginalized and stigmatized populations, many barriers continue to impede the full realization of our sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We as young people are regularly denied our right to comprehensive sexuality education and access to comprehensive, sexual and reproductive health services, including safe and legal abortion, post-abortion care, contraception, including emergency contraception, and HIV prevention and treatment, among others. We are often prevented from seeking help or guidance on sexual and reproductive health issues because of restrictive and punitive laws, stigma, discrimination and the lack of youth-friendly services.

Young people having diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, young people living with and affected by HIV, and young people who engage in sex work, continue to be criminalized. Punitive legislation, together with discrimination, violence, stigma, and harmful norms about what is considered "appropriate" sexual

behavior; prevent young people from accessing quality youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and realizing our human rights.

The 20-year review of the ICPD PoA offers member states and civil society the opportunity to not only assess progress and identify gaps, but to address the urgent unmet need of young people in regards to our sexual and reproductive health and rights.

20 years beyond Cairo, it's unacceptable for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights to be deemed "too controversial". It is deeply disappointing to hear calls from governments for a procedural resolution instead of one that fully elaborates on key issues relevant to our lives.

Starting this week, governments must demonstrate their political commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights by prioritizing the removal of financial and legal obstacles to essential services and discriminatory laws and practices that violate our rights; transformation of weak health systems; and the elimination of social and economic inequalities, violence and discrimination.

We as young people from around the world are hopeful that progress will continue to be made, and that member states will take action toward the implementation of the ICPD Program of Action by validating emerging issues at the highest levels.

We are hopeful that we are moving towards a more just world where all people, including young people with all of our diversity, are able to realize our human rights, including our sexual and reproductive health and rights.