

48th session of the Commission on Population and Development

- Amnesty International oral statement

Your Excellencies,

Amnesty International welcomes this opportunity to engage in a dialogue on the importance of effectively integrating population issues into the new development framework. We must learn from the Millennium Development Goals, and address the gaps and challenges we continue to face with regard to the full implementation of key international agreements reached in Cairo, Beijing and Vienna. While there has been some progress, the overall advancement on these commitments has been slow and uneven, leaving behind in particular women and girls, who are most at risk of discrimination and exclusion. This is particularly worrying given that gender equality and women and girls' empowerment are absolutely imperative for sustainable development. And sexual and reproductive rights play a key role in this context.

Your Excellencies,

The new framework must enable all individuals to participate equally in sustainable development, and to create more just and inclusive societies. The framework must ensure that development policies and programmes benefit all, in particular minorities and Indigenous populations; migrant, refugee and internally displaced people; persons living in poverty or belonging to marginalized groups, including those facing caste-based discrimination. Women and girls must have access to these development benefits without discrimination, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Your Excellencies,

As you reflect on our future development agenda and the place of sexual and reproductive rights therein, Amnesty International urges you to:

- Address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, eliminate gender stereotypes and promote gender equality and human rights for all.
- Respect, protect and fulfill sexual and reproductive rights of all women and girls in all their diversity. Empower and enable women and girls to make autonomous and informed decisions about their sexuality and reproductive lives.
- Provide access to quality, comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive health services, and information to all without discrimination, coercion or violence. In this context, give special attention to the needs of young people.
- Provide comprehensive sexuality education to all children and adolescents, in and out of school, to enable their decision-making and personal autonomy.
- End all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and forced, early and child marriage.
- Ensure that references to culture, custom, tradition or religion are not used to justify human rights violations.
- Recognise and support the growing diversity of the family, and ensure that the human rights of all family members are equally protected and promoted.
- Ensure that everyone can access effective remedies when their sexual and reproductive rights have been violated.
- Enable civil society to meaningfully participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and programs, and to hold governments to account for the

implementation of the sustainable development goals, in line with their human rights obligations.

Your Excellencies,

The post-2015 development agenda is a crucial opportunity to give effect to these aspirations. We call on you to include gender equality, women and girls' rights and their empowerment in the future framework – across all goals, targets and indicators.

It is in your hands to make the human rights of women and girls a reality now.

I thank you for your attention.