

FEMM CPD Oral Statement

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of FEMM. The FEMM Foundation is a knowledge-based health program for women inspired by women's right to be informed participants in their own healthcare and to make voluntary decisions based on options, information, and understanding. We are dedicated to health education, medical research, and improving reproductive health care to improve women's health. FEMM has trained doctors and educated women from around the world.

FEMM welcomes the theme of strengthening the demographic evidence base. Good evidence is essential to ensuring that the policies implemented as part of the Sustainable Development Agenda truly meet the needs of people. As an organization committed to health care, through our patient education and practitioner training programs, we have seen how important evidence is, particularly in the arena of women's health. As Member States finalize the indicators and look towards assessing implementation of the SDGs, it is important to recognize the human side of those assessments.

Goal 3 is health for all, and FEMM's mission is to ensure that women's health needs are met. Health is also connected to education, Goal 4, as education helps people to access healthcare and poor health can interfere with education, which in turn will impact women and girls' ability to achieve their potential. Good education is essential for gender equality, Goal 5, while poor education can hinder it. By helping women and girls be informed patients and actively involved in their healthcare, we will contribute to the realization of these goals.

FEMM urges the Commission to recognize that in order to make their own reproductive health decisions, women and girls must understand their own bodies, in particular the health-

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hormone connection. Research indicates that only three percent of women can identify key signs of health, such as ovulation, and many do not understand the delicate interplay of hormones necessary for good health. Many women also are told that the symptoms they experience, such as weight gain, depression, migraines, pain, irregular bleeding, and acne are “normal.” But while these are common, they are not normal. Many indicate underlying hormonal abnormalities, for which few treatments have existed, most only managing symptoms, until now.

Women and girls who understand their bodies can make informed decisions about their care and work collaboratively with their doctors to improve their health. FEMM also educates doctors to provide care that treats the root causes of women and girls’ symptoms. FEMM’s researchers have used data from studies and patients to increase medical understanding of what various hormone levels should be. Using this data, doctors can pinpoint and treat the underlying hormonal abnormalities.

Informed decisions lead to healthier decisions. The knowledge gained through FEMM can allow women to identify underlying health concerns and to achieve or avoid pregnancy. When people attain the highest level of health they can, they are able to thrive and partake in their communities. Good data is key to understanding where the needs are and what interventions will be the most effective. The FEMM Foundation urges the Commission and Member States to ensure that the evidence base for the demographic of women of reproductive age around the world focus on knowledge so that they can foster empowerment through increased health knowledge. This will enable the Commission to provide targeted interventions which will empower women to be informed participants in their own health care so that they can make decisions on the basis of options, information and understanding. FEMM is prepared to address the needs of women through educational programs and improved medical support.