



Dear representatives, esteemed delegates and colleagues from all over the world.

I am a youth advocate representing the Right Here, Right Now partnership, which consists of ARROW, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, dance4life, Hivos, IPPF Africa Region, LACWHN and Rutgers. We joined forces to improve and promote the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of young people worldwide.

The ICPD Programme of Action highlighted the importance of youth involvement and the need to inform and educate young people on their sexuality, in order for them to experience sexuality in a positive way. The ICPD Programme of Action cannot be implemented fully if the needs and rights of adolescents and youth remain invisible. However, despite being such a large and diverse group, there is hardly any data on the situation of adolescents and youth globally, in particular for the age group of 10 to 14. Filling this data gap, through the disaggregation of data, we will be better able to address harmful and traditional practices, and human rights violations of adolescents and youth.

Adolescents are exposed to early and forced marriage, often have too little or wrong information about sexuality, and are often discriminated based on various grounds, including on the basis of their age, HIV status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

The good news is that comprehensive sexuality education can support in effectively countering these issues. It enables people to experience their sexuality in a more positive and safe way, decreases harmful gender stereotypes, fosters healthy relationships and gender equality, and decreases teenage pregnancy rates.

All individuals have the right to make decisions concerning their bodies, who to fall in love with, and who to marry. This includes the right to access the full range of modern contraceptives and safe abortion. Health facilities and services should be a place for young people to enjoy services in a safe environment, where young people's realities and diversity is respected, the highest attainable standard of services is delivered, and information is handled in confidentiality and anonymized to secure the privacy of young people. Non-judgmental and youth-friendly health services enable adolescents and youth to prevent unwanted pregnancies, protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and find information to make informed decisions.

In conclusion, we want to urge you to not only collect data on adolescents and youth, but also to meaningfully include them in the Commissions Methods of Work and the processes of the years to come. Youth are not only the leaders of the future, we want our rights realized today, because we are Right Here, Right Now!

Thank you.