



Statement by Marianne Haslegrave, Director, Commonwealth Medical Trust

Thank you Chair. The Commonwealth Medical Trust welcomes the opportunity to make a few remarks on the possibilities of strengthening of the Methods of Work of the Commission.

We align ourselves with the written statement of the International Sexual and Reproductive Rights Coalition

Strengthening partnership between CSOs and CPD in accordance with Chapter XV of the ICPD Programme of Action

Civil society organizations have been instrumental in working for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action since the Cairo conference, in accordance with Chapter XV, which recognizes the benefits of strengthening the partnership between CSOs and the CPD. Subsequently CSOs, in accordance with the rules of procedure for the participation of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, have made written statements and oral interventions on a regular basis.

There are, however, refinements that could be made which would allow CSOs to be even more effective in working for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the full integration of its recommendations into the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030. They include:

1 Strengthening the relationship of CSOs with the Population Division, including holding a consultation before the development of the background papers for the Commission sessions. At the moment, CSO written statements have to be submitted before background papers are circulated. Population Division briefings could assist in ensuring that such statements will be in tune with the work of the Commission. Such a procedure would be in line with other parts of the UN system, such as UN Women which hold such briefings.

2 Building a stronger relationship between the Chair and Bureau and CSOs. We greatly appreciate this invitation for CSOs to participate in discussing the strengthening of the methods of work and would request that such a procedure be used regularly in the future. Although CSOs have different perspectives on the recommendations as included in the ICPD Programme of Action, there is a general commitment to working for its full implementation in the context of the 2030 Agenda and discussions with the Chair and / or Bureau would greatly enhance their effectiveness. This is a procedure which again is used in other fora.

3 The creation of a mechanism that would allow civil society access to delegations, expert panels, negotiations and speaking slots virtually, given the decrease in civil society space in UN activities now being experienced. It is unlikely that CSOs will be able to attend meetings in persons as they did in the past, for the foreseeable future. And, it is therefore to be hoped that their participation virtually will be facilitated. It is particularly important where CSOs are participating from countries far distant from the UN Centres to ensure that their grass-roots experiences can be heard.

Thank you, Chair