

International Sexual and Reproductive Rights Coalition (ISRRC)

The International Sexual and Reproductive Rights Coalition (ISRRC) welcomes the special theme of the 55th session of this Commission- “Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth”.

This year’s special theme presents an opportunity to integrate population in development strategies and to address the interlinkages between population, sustained economic growth and poverty. The ICPD PoA makes a strong link between the ‘rights’ and ‘development’ paradigms including health, education, gender equality, population dynamics, urbanization, migration and technology research and development agendas. These critical links help ensure that we reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) inclusively.

Gender equality, women and girls’ empowerment and rights, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) cut across the three central dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Here, recognition and redistribution of unpaid care work remains extremely important to ambitions of inclusive economic growth, women’s economic empowerment, and to the health and well-being of women and their families. Unpaid housework and direct care remain significant contributors to countries’ economies and must be included in measuring economic growth, as well as in redistributing responsibilities for care and housework between individuals. Governments should support women’s access to decent work, ensure universal social protection, collect and utilize robust disaggregated data on national economic activity (including care work) and enact laws and policies that ensure the participation of women and girls in the formal economy. In addition, the pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women, girls, informal and unskilled workers, while exacerbating inequalities within and between countries.

There remains a need to ensure a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The right to health and intergenerational equity deserve emphasis when addressing climate change. Environmental sustainability should be the core of sustainable and inclusive growth. The gendered aspects of the climate crisis necessitate taking gender responsive action, especially for the most marginalized groups. In this regard, governments need to integrate SRHR in policies and programs that address climate adaptation and resilience, and in the construction of climate-resilient health systems. This includes allocating the necessary funding to implement holistic and integrated resilience efforts that span the climate, health, and gender equality sectors.

Furthermore, universal health coverage (UHC), including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), information and services for achieving healthy lives and well-being (SDG3) and all other goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is central to sustained inclusive economic growth. Countries should mobilize domestic resources to invest in inclusive social protection floors and universal health coverage including self-care. Thus, ensuring social protection floors is a crucial intervention for the whole agenda including recalling the global commitments of the Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage, with specific mention of “social protection mechanisms”.