

Statement on behalf of Rutgers for the general debate of the 55th session of the Commission on Population and Development

Honourable chair, esteemed delegates,

First of all, we would like to thank you Mr Chair for your conduct of this session. We would also like to thank the other Bureau members and the secretariat for their support and guidance. The earlier NGO consultations were highly welcomed, and we also appreciate the opportunity to speak during the general debate.

I'm delivering this statement on behalf of Rutgers. Rutgers is an international centre of expertise on SRHR founded and based in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has one of the lowest numbers of adolescent pregnancies in the world. This is because comprehensive sexuality education is given in most schools, parents speak openly about sexuality and family planning is widely available. This improves young people's health and well-being. However, young people in the Netherlands give a 5.8 out of 10 score when it comes to the sexuality education they received. Imagine how this would look like when young people are not educated on their sexual and reproductive health?

Comprehensive sexuality education is a proven intervention that benefits young people's health and well-being and by investing in it countries can contribute to their human capital. Women that have gone to school are more likely to marry later, use family planning and access healthcare. Each additional year of schooling for girls improves their employability. Whereas, child marriage and adolescent pregnancies interrupt school attendance and impairs young women's long-term social and economic mobility.

A way to prevent gender based violence, child marriage and adolescent pregnancies is CSE. Whereas, CSE educates young people on human rights and gender equality, nonviolence and non-discrimination as well as skills to build healthy relationships. CSE helps to prevent harmful gender stereotypes and empowers young people. We believe that CSE is a key intervention that should be part of policies when the goal is sustained and inclusive economic growth.

Rutgers believes in talking openly, positively and practically about sexuality. We hope young people in the Netherlands will soon give higher scores for the sexuality education that they receive. And hope their peers in other countries will do to, for them all to be empowered and be part of a sustainable future.

Thank you