

Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth

Statement by Swasti, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates and fellow advocates

I am honoured to make this statement on behalf of Swasti Health Catalyst, a member of the Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, a regional network that catalyses civil society advocacy towards the fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend the Member States in their commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental, and to addressing the structural and root causes of inequality.

The core of sustainable development is the fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. When women and other marginalized groups have bodily autonomy and can make decisions over their bodies freely, true economic empowerment be achieved.

Just and inclusive economic growth can only be attained through addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination which unfairly impact women and girls and other marginalized groups. This includes adolescents and young people, trans and gender diverse people, migrants and refugees, people living with HIV, and sex workers, amongst others. It is only through recognition of the multifaceted layers of discrimination that solutions can be found.

Therefore, we call on Member States to increase their commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including through support for the development of SRHR self-care initiatives that can empower communities to take their health into their own hands. We call for Member States to take action to eliminate the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence.

Finally, we urge Member States to intensify implementation of the Programme of Action in collaboration with civil society and community partners, in the run up to the 30 year celebration of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Thank you