

The Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights welcomes the focus of the 55th session of the Commission on Population and Development on **sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth**.

As an organization based in the Global South, we find this focus especially important coming from our experience of the COVID-19 pandemic which exposed and exacerbated long-standing gender and social inequalities and introduced significant rollbacks to human rights, particularly our sexual and reproductive rights. This is why we have called to end the inequality pandemic.

We saw how countries with low spending on public healthcare, inadequate social safety nets and weak labor rights were especially vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic. Regimes of healthcare privatization left health systems wholly unprepared for pandemic response. Meanwhile, sexual and reproductive facilities, including those providing abortion care, had been converted to COVID-19 response facilities or have had to suspend their services.

We cannot ignore the gendered impacts of the pandemic, from lack of access to SRHR, additional care burden of women and girls, increasing rates of child marriages, and rise in cases of gender-based violence.

In the light of these, we ask you, how can we achieve **sustainable development, sustained and inclusive economic growth when women and girls** are facing sexual and reproductive health challenges coupled with social and economic barriers on the daily basis?

Simplistic policies concentrated on women's access to education and work will not translate into fulfillment of any of our goals. Current evidence tells us SRHR is key to empowering women economically and enabling them to lead healthy and productive lives.

As such, we urge all member states to adopt the following measures in the 55th CPD outcomes document:

- Recognize sexual and reproductive health and rights as a critical element of sustainable development and inclusive growth;
- Ensure access to universal healthcare coverage, which includes and sexual and reproductive health services, by increasing public health expenditure, strengthening health systems, and eliminating stigma in healthcare;

- Ensure access to universal social protection systems through publicly-funded child and elderly care, parental leave, and basic income security for marginalized and vulnerable populations.
- Ensure equal pay for equal work or work of equal value and protection from gender-based violence in the workplace, and support the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work;
- Mainstream an intersectional, rights-based and gender-responsive approach into all development efforts and broaden the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls by addressing the multiple and intersection forms of discrimination they experience in all spheres of political, economic and social life;
- Emphasize the need to mitigate climate change impacts and maintain sustainable patterns of consumption and production, acknowledging the role of women and girls in safeguarding natural resources and ecosystems; and
- Ensure economic justice by ensuring states uphold obligations to meet social and economic rights through development-oriented trade, progressive tax regimes, sovereign debt workout mechanisms, and ending unjust trade and investment treaties and intellectual property rights agreements, especially on the issue of vaccines.

Thank you.