

56th
Session



COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Population, education and sustainable development

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Between Taboos and Freedom:

Religion, Rights and Reproductive Justice

UN Commission on Population and Development 56

Date	11 th April 2023, 13:15 – 14:30
Venue	Conference Room 5, UN HQ, Official Side Event, Capacity of 109
Co-Sponsors and Co-Organisers	Norway MFA, Argentina, UNFPA, ACT Alliance, NCA, World YWCA, Faith to Action Network, Føs Feminista, Act Church of Sweden
Contact Points	Dr. Rachel Tavernor, ACT Alliance, rachel.tavernor@actalliance.org Haldis Karstad, NCA, haldis.karstad@nca.no

Women and girls' rights in all their diversity are being threatened, deprioritised and structural inequalities further intensified. Girls are being robbed of their adolescence and freedoms and forced into child marriages and motherhood. Everyone should have the ability to decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion, and violence.

There have been increased gaps between sexual and reproductive health and rights policy frameworks and the constrained socio-economic contexts where these frameworks are implemented. While the right to information is embodied in several international treaties and conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, many are denied access to information, and education, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

Comprehensive Sexuality Education is a fundamental step towards achieving sexual and reproductive justice. Comprehensive Sexuality Education contributes to dismantling the stigma and addressing taboos that serves as a significant contributor to harmful practices, including all forms of violence and discrimination based on age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender identity.

To ensure access to CSE becomes a reality for all, innovative methodologies and collaborations are paramount. This requires an intersectional-paradigm shift, at community, country, regional and global levels. To secure human rights and reproductive justice, transformative and innovative collaborations is needed. The most marginalised must not be left behind.

Faith actors are critical stakeholders, who have a normative and real-life influence on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Faith actors can both positively and negatively influence the uptake, acceptability, and accessibility of preventive measures, education, and services. Education and health care systems around the world are sustained and delivered by faith communities in many parts of the world. In many communities, engaging faith actors is paramount for access and acceptability.

In this Side Event, gender and SRHR advocates from Africa, Asia, and Latin America will share their experiences and potential on how to engage faith actors in advocating for the SRHR and reproductive justice. The panel will provide recommendations to Member States on how to engage faith actors to contribute to the promotion of SRHR to enable transformative change.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Increased understanding of the obstacles and the possibilities to ensure CSE from the local to the global level;
2. Enhanced knowledge of the important role faith actors can have in promoting SRHR and CSE;
3. Highlighted good practices and possible entry points, methods, and approaches of engagement with faith actors and faith-based methods to strengthen young people's access to SRHR and CSE;
4. Increased understanding of how CSE influences the fulfilment of youth's rights including SRHR.

To register for the event and to see a list of our speakers, please visit our [Eventbrite page here](#).

Speakers:

- State Secretary Bjørg Sandkjær, Norway
- H.E. Ms. María del Carmen Squeff, Argentina
- Dr. Natalia Kanem, UNFPA
- Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, ACT Alliance
- Nirmala Gurung, World YWCA
- Yilikal Shiferaw, Ethiopian Orthodox Church
- Paula Sánchez-Mejorada Ibarra, CDD México

Moderator: Zanele Makombe, ACT Ubumbano