



Fifty-seventh Session of the Commission on Population and Development – National Statement

Statement by Dr Lucas de Toca, Australian Ambassador for Global Health

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Thank you Chair, your Excellencies.

It is an honour to represent Australia on the 30th anniversary of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

It is a Program of Action which holds us all accountable for taking action to improve people's health, wellbeing, safety, equality and respect for human rights and dignity.

This is a shared agenda which has lifted millions of people out of poverty, and contributed to improved safety, education and health.



On this important occasion, Australia reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of the Program of Action.

We are taking significant steps to advance universal sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

In March this year, the Australian Government released Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality - our first national strategy to achieve gender equality.

The Strategy includes a clear focus on advancing women's health.

It recognises that safe, affordable and universal access to sexual and reproductive health services is critical to women's health and economic outcomes.



Australia is supporting women to have more control over their health by improving access to contraceptives; eliminating barriers to safe and affordable abortion and taking steps to eliminate cervical cancer by 2035.

This includes partnerships with Australia's Indigenous Peoples to develop and implement initiatives to improve health and wellbeing, engaging through culturally safe approaches.

Early last year the Australian Government set up a National Women's Health Advisory Council to provide expert advice on tackling inequity.

The Council is examining gender bias across the health system and providing advice to government on what needs to change.

These efforts are accelerating progress towards better health equity for people across Australia, in all their diversity, regardless of gender, age, race, socioeconomic status, disability, sexuality or where they live.



The Australian Government is also committed to advancing gender equality and the human rights of women and girls in the Pacific and Southeast Asia regions of which we are a part.

And we have broadened our international engagement on this, which is a key priority of Australia's International Development Policy.

Australia's \$620 million dollar Partnerships for a Health Region includes a significant focus on advancing universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Building on our work in Australia, the Partnership includes a new program to eliminate cervical cancer in eight countries in the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

And we have strengthened collaboration with nine Pacific governments to realise their own national commitments to sexual and reproductive health services.



As Australia's Ambassador for Global Health, I attended the launch of the second phase of The Transformative Agenda for Women, Youth and Adolescents, hosted by the Fiji Government.

I was impressed with the strong commitment from government and civil society stakeholders, people with disabilities, and those representing LGBTIQ+ communities to support truly universal sexual and reproductive health services and advance human rights.

We also welcome and learn from the significant achievements in Southeast Asia, including in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

I have seen firsthand the breadth of support for the Program of Action, demonstrating the global consensus on the importance of human rights, health and equality.

Now more than ever, in the face of growing pushback, we must work together to protect and advance these important human rights and



international norms, which we know have helped save and strengthen countless lives over the last 30 years.

Australia strongly asserts that the Program of Action is as relevant today as it was in 1994.

We are pleased a CPD57 outcome document has been adopted. It underscores to the world that we remain determined in our shared commitment to fully implement the ICPD Program of Action and uphold human rights for all.

These rights remain vital to achieving a peaceful, stable, prosperous – and inclusive - world.

Thank you.

(630 words)