

Finland

National statement at the 57th session of the Commission on Population and Development

Madame Chair,

As we mark the 30th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the Programme of Action, let us reaffirm their centrality to sustainable development and the enjoyment of human rights for all.

Finland remains firmly committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. We see this occasion as a celebration of the ICPD agenda - the progress that has been made, and the lives of millions of women and girls that have been saved so far. Let us work together to ensure that we sustain and fulfill the commitments we made in Cairo 30 years ago.

Madame Chair,

We all want to build a better and more prosperous future for the world, for our countries and for future generations. Investing in people, in particular young people and adolescents, is key to achieving this and the Agenda 2030. As the Secretary General's report on the status of ICPD Programme of Action implementation notes, improving access to education, as well as sexual and reproductive health services, benefits economies and helps fight extreme poverty.

My country Finland has come a long way from a low-income, poverty-ridden country, to what it is today. This progress was made possible through significant investments in education, maternal and newborn health, and ensuring health and rights for all. To this day, we see that a life-course approach is key to progress – and economic growth. A life-course approach recognizes the needs and realizes the rights of everyone in society, and addresses intersecting forms of discrimination. Let us ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights are truly accessible to everyone, including marginalized communities and persons with disabilities.

Madame Chair,

The futures of young people are shaped by the decisions and actions we take today. Since 1994, we have seen a decline in child marriage and child pregnancies across the world. While this is a great achievement, we need to continue to advance the human rights of children, adolescents and young people. UNFPA and civil society have had, and continue to have, a central role in this. Thank you for your tireless work.

Child and adolescent pregnancies are a serious issue that has a negative impact on every child's right to education, health and protection. The negative consequences are not felt by girls alone, but also by their families and communities. Young people and adolescents need services that are tailor-made for them. They need access to correct information that enables them to decide on their own lives and helps them shape their futures. Comprehensive sexuality education is critical.

Realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights for everyone lays the foundation for achieving gender equality. Access to health and rights is

ultimately key to making sure that women can participate in economies and contribute to a sustainable future. Women have the right to bodily autonomy – the right to decide when and whether to have children.

To conclude, Madame Chair, I want to underline the following: realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights is about ensuring girls' opportunity to finish their education and contribute to their societies and economies as well educated adults. SRHR is about preventing child pregnancies and child marriages. It is about development and stronger economies. It is about a better society for all.

The standards that we set here at the CPD are essential for us as international community to fulfill the commitments we made in Cairo 30 years ago. The CPD needs to continue to be a platform for discussions on progress and on a better future. It is here, where we re-commit to the advancement of gender equality, human rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

Thank you.