

WHO CPD Statement, 4 minutes (431 words)

Dear Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is an honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the World Health Organization. WHO reaffirms our unwavering commitment to the highest attainable standard of health, well-being and human rights for all people.

This commitment includes sexual and reproductive health and rights, which are foundational to people's ability to make informed choices: whether, when and how to become parents, pursue education, and full participation in society.

WHO continues to advance the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) through normative guidance, technical support, evidence generation and global convening.

This past Monday, on World Health Day, WHO and partners launched updated global estimates of maternal mortality. Data reveal progress achieved through expanded access to essential care, but the persistent injustice of health systems that continue to devalue women's lives.

Maternal mortality remains a clear indicator of where we are failing. The missing piece is not only services, but agency—particularly for women and girls.

This year's CPD theme is both timely and urgent. Health is increasingly undermined by misinformation, political pushback, and unprecedented aid cuts. Yet let us be clear: investing in health is not a cost—it is a catalyst, generating economic returns, fosters equity, and anchors stability.

Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services are central to universal health coverage (UHC) and gender equality. These must include contraception, safe abortion, fertility and infertility care, maternal and perinatal health, STI prevention and treatment, services for menstrual disorders, sexual dysfunction and menopausal care, and protection from sexual and gender-based violence—grounded in education and delivered without discrimination.

Primary health care must be the backbone, capable of meeting 90% of health needs. And access to health products and technologies, safe, effective, affordable, is essential to making UHC a reality.

But coverage alone is not enough. Financial protection is critical. We must eliminate financial barriers that prevent people from seeking the care they need, and financial hardship caused by high out-of-pocket payments. Investment in reliable, flexible health financing is a prerequisite for resilience in the face of crises ahead.

As WHO marks its 77th anniversary, we celebrate Member State and civil society affirmations to the right to health, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, as a foundation for individual dignity and peaceful societies.

“Leaving no one behind” means confronting the hard truths: that by 2030, 60% of the world's poorest, and half of all maternal deaths, will be in fragile, conflict-affected, and vulnerable settings. Affirmations must translate into action: safeguarding health, mental well-being, autonomy and rights across the life course, without exception. Thank you.