

**Presented to the 47th Session of the Commission on Population and
Development by the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western
Hemisphere Region and the World Association for Sexual Health**

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

Many thanks for allowing us to speak in this crucial session of the United Nations Commission of Population and Development

The World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) is a multidisciplinary, world-wide federation of scientific societies, NGOs and professionals in the field of human sexuality which promotes sexual health throughout the lifespan and throughout the world by developing, advancing and supporting rights-based research, advocacy, education and services for all .

The International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994) was a milestone in shaping and developing the concept of reproductive health in a way which responded to the need to state human rights in relation to reproduction.

Great strides have been made since ICPD in the recognition that health in general and sexual and reproductive health in particular, are closely linked to a broad understanding of sexuality as a central aspect of being human that encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. There is no doubt that the way sexuality is lived and expressed is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual factors.

This concept of sexuality is at the heart of sexual health, a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being which is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

Sexual rights are not a new concept; they are rights grounded in universal human rights which are enshrined in international and regional human rights documents, in national constitutions and laws, and based on scientific knowledge related to human sexuality and sexual health.

The time has come to recognize that sexual rights are based on the inherent freedom, dignity, and equality of all human beings and include a commitment to protection from harm.

Therefore, the World Association for Sexual Health asserts that equality and non-discrimination are foundational to all human rights protection and promotion as they apply to sexuality and include the prohibition of any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, including disability, age, nationality, marital and family status, sexual orientation and gender identity, health status, place of residence, economic and social situation

WAS recognizes that persons' sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and bodily diversities require human rights protection and that all types of violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, and stigmatization are violations of human rights, and impact the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities .

The obligations to respect, protect and fulfill human rights apply to all sexual rights and freedoms and they protect all people's rights to fulfill and express their sexuality and enjoy sexual health, with due regard for the rights of others.

The following sexual rights are human rights pertaining to a person's sexuality.

1. The right to life, liberty, and security of the person.
2. The right to equality and non-discrimination.
3. The right to autonomy and bodily integrity.
4. The right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.
5. The right to be free from all forms of violence and coercion.
6. The right to the freedom of thought, opinion, and expression.
7. The right to privacy.
8. The right to the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual health; which implies the possibility of having pleasurable, satisfying, and safe sexual experiences.
9. The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application.
10. The right to information.
11. The right to education and the right to comprehensive sexuality education.
12. The right to enter, form, and dissolve marriage and other types of relationships based on equality and full and free consent.
13. The right to decide whether to have children, the number and spacing of children, and to have the information and the means to do so.
14. The right to access to justice, remedies, and redress.
15. The right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.
16. The right to participation in public and political life.

The World Association for Sexual Health calls upon all member states to recognize the value of sexual health and sexual rights and to acknowledge their links to personal and social development and the legitimate aspiration of all people through the promotion and protection of sexual rights, indivisible parts of basic human rights