



# **The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations**

**Statement by**

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**Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations**

**52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Committee on Population and Development**

3 April 2019

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**The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations**

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Mr. / Madame Chair,

Iceland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Netherlands on behalf of 49 countries. Let me start by congratulating the bureau members on the adoption of the political declaration and to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo was groundbreaking. Its outcome document enabled individuals – especially women – to exercise their reproductive rights. It established that those rights are human rights and already recognised in domestic and international law. Furthermore, it made access to sexual and reproductive health, education and services a cornerstone of sustainable development.

Mr. / Madame Chair,

Iceland continues to be a steadfast supporter of sexual and reproductive health and rights as we believe it contributed to our own social and economic development and promotes our success in achieving gender equality. Cross-regional and broad support for gender equality and respect for human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights is crucial to sustainable development and the achievement of Agenda 2030.

Today we face the largest generation of adolescents ever in history. National investments in adolescent's sexual and reproductive health and rights will generate great returns. Providing evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education to adolescent's is a fundamental way to foster gender equality, mutual respect, non-discrimination and non-violence. Importantly, it also prevents unwanted pregnancies, hinders sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and keeps girls and boys in school.

Mr. /Madame Chair,

In the spirit of the ICPD, Iceland is proud to support UNFPA's efforts, in particular the joint programme on the elimination of female genital mutilation which has contributed to a reduction in the global prevalence rate of FGM. It is however disconcerting to note, as we heard on Monday, that the projected absolute number of girls who will be undergo FGM this year will exceed the number of girls mutilated

in 1994, due to population growth in FGM-affected countries. This is simply unacceptable.

It is also unacceptable that during this same period there was an increase in the absolute number of women who still have an unmet need for family planning, again due to population growth in countries with high priority needs for family planning.

We would however like to highlight the impressive progress observed in Eastern Africa, which has seen a significant decline in unmet need for family planning, and applaud countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda who have prioritized family planning programmes.

Finally, allow me to highlight three critical issues that require greater commitment from all member states:

1. Increase focus on the SRHR of women and girls, without discrimination on any grounds and through the engagement of men and boys;
2. Eliminate all harmful practices and violence against women;
3. Accelerate progress to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, including comprehensive sexuality education and access to safe and legal abortion.

Mr. Chair, in closing, we look forward to the Nairobi Summit in November and you can count on Iceland's continuous steadfast support for the full realization of the ICPD promise and the outcome of its global and regional reviews and conferences.

I thank you.