



Ministry for Foreign Affairs

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

### CPD 52th session, item 3: Sweden's national statement

Mr Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Civil Society Representatives,

Broad, cross-regional support for gender equality, respect for human rights including **sexual and reproductive health and rights is fundamental to sustainable development. The Agenda 2030** can only be fulfilled with full enjoyment of SRHR for all. Women and girls must be an active part of development, having full autonomy of their own bodies. The participation of women and girls is necessary for the functioning of democracy. To achieve this **men and boys** must be engaged, too.

In Sweden's national experience, gender equality is a driver of development. Universal and affordable access to sexual and reproductive health and rights has contributed to both adequate fertility rates and high employment rates, and women's participation in the labour market has, in turn, contributed to Sweden's **economic growth**.

Sweden is a convinced advocate for **universal health coverage** in all countries. UHC should include an integrated package of SRHR interventions that safeguards women's and girls' rights to their own bodies and lives, which includes access to **safe and legal abortions**.

It is therefore deeply concerning when **denial of women's rights is used as a political weapon**, for example through anti-abortion policies leading to restrictions in development funding for NGOs working with SRHR. In practice restrictions lead to an increase in

unsafe abortions - because health clinics must close and the use of contraceptives drop as a consequence. We urge members of the international community and civil society to continue to join us in supporting SRHR, including safe abortion.

Today we have the largest generation of **adolescents** ever in history. A precondition to harness this **demographic dividend** is their full enjoyment of all human rights. **National investments in adolescent's sexual and reproductive health and rights** will yield high returns. Providing adolescents with evidence-based **comprehensive sexuality education** is a concrete way to prevent unwanted pregnancies, keep girls and boys at school, and prevent sexually transmitted infections such as HIV. But also, to foster mutual respect, safety, non-violence, non-discrimination and gender equality.

Mr Chair

Conflict remains the main driver of **humanitarian needs**. Droughts, floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters also contribute, and every day, women and girls die in emergency situations from complications due to pregnancy and childbirth. Moreover, the risk of sexual and **gender-based violence**, often increases during humanitarian crises. Providing SRHR to all, also in humanitarian settings, is of utmost importance.

Mr Chair

International cooperation, or multilateralism if you wish, is undergoing a stress test. Values and principles of legality, inclusion and participation are **challenged**. Basic notions of human rights, including SRHR or the right of everyone to decide freely over their body, sexuality and reproduction, are called into question.

Sweden is committed to make the case for these rights. We will continue making the call for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all, including **LGBTQI persons**, within the framework of our **feminist foreign policy**, applying a systematic gender equality perspective throughout the whole foreign policy agenda. We will remain highly engaged to strengthen and support the work for SRHR -

normatively, operationally and financially. We are hopeful that we jointly can foster a more constructive dialogue, for the benefit of all our communities and societies and the integrity of a UN system we all are part and proud of.

Mr Chair

Together we must continue to make progress. I can assure you of **Sweden's steadfast commitment** to the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to the ICPD Programme of Action and the outcome of its global and regional reviews and conferences.

Thank you.