

**Oral Statement of the International Planned Parenthood Federation  
at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development**

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Commission. We warmly congratulate all the Member States for the adoption of the Political Declaration on the historic, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ICPD. Together with the Agreed Conclusions at the Commission on the Status of Women, this demonstrates the essential role both the Beijing Platform for Action and the ICPD play in achieving sustainable development and human rights for all people and reaffirms that there can be no gender equality or sustainable development if women and girls are restricted from making their own decisions about their bodies and their lives.

There is much to celebrate on this anniversary. But if we are being honest, there are still major gaps in achieving what the ICPD set out to accomplish. This isn't because we don't know what needs to be done—we have the evidence and the data, we know what policies work. But the political will to make it happen, both through policy implementation and adequate resourcing, is falling short of the goals we set in 1994.

We are living in a world where your migration status, your nationality, your race, your ethnicity, your gender and sexuality, your income and geographic location define which human rights you can exercise. 214 million women still can't access the contraceptives they need. 800 women, girls and adolescents die every day giving birth, despite many of the causes being preventable. Girls as young as 9 are being forced to carry pregnancies that endanger their lives by governments who value ideology over their lives, human rights and dignity.

All people, regardless of any form of status, identity, or means, are entitled to have their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled. This includes the full exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights, including control over all matters relating to their sexuality. These have been agreed concepts for 25 years—I don't think anyone in this room believes a child should be forced into marriage, that anyone should be subjected to rape, or that the government should decide if or when you have a child. But until women and girls are recognized, respected and empowered as rights holders and as the architects of their own lives, and until all young people have access to the information and education they need to build healthy relationships, make informed choices, and protect themselves, we will still be falling short of our commitments another 25 years on.

Statistically, 1 in 3 women *in this room* have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence<sup>1</sup> 25 million women have to under unsafe abortions every year, even though abortion is one of the safest medical procedures when done in safe and legal conditions. The delegate who shared yesterday that an emergency c-section saved her life is not alone in that experience. Access to sexual and reproductive health, including access to safe abortion and the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights directly shapes all of our lives in a very real way.

So we call on you, as the international community upon which so many depend, to put posturing and politics aside and make this agenda a reality. Do not let those who seek to strip the rights that empower women, girls, adolescents, and young people, succeed at holding us back. It is our future, our lives, our bodies that pay the price of inaction, or not enough action, and we have paid it for long enough.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2013-34697-001>

The people in this room have enormous power, political capital and potential to achieve the vision set out in Cairo. We have seen you come together, despite all our differences, in your commitment to this vision by adopting the Political Declaration. In 25 years, when we come back to this room, let's do so to celebrate not just another milestone, but the fulfilment of an agenda that changed the world and improved the lives of all who live in it.