

Formal Statement
52nd Session of the Commission of Population and Development
Asociación Probienestar de la Familia Colombiana
Profamilia
April 3rd, 2019

Distinguished representatives, it is a pleasure for Profamilia to celebrate with you the 25th anniversary of the Commission for Population and Development. As Colombia's biggest sexual and reproductive health provider, Profamilia recognizes the unprecedented importance of Cairo as the milestone for reproductive rights.

In 1994, Colombia had just enacted a new Constitution that recognized that all citizens have the right to live without discrimination and that men and women have the same rights. Meanwhile, the United Nations coordinated the **International Conference on Population and Development** in Cairo that concluded in a visionary Program of Action and the Commission for Population and Development. For the first time, women's rights were recognized as human rights and reproductive decisions were understood not only as a relevant factor in terms of demographic reasons, but also because they relate with the right to dignity, freedom and autonomy of all women.

After Cairo, many countries, including Colombia, strengthened their legal frames and recognized sexual and reproductive rights. Many of the victories in this field have been possible thanks to many advocates and human rights defenders that have been working very hard to make the world a better place for young girls for decades. Now we know that reproductive rights are crucial for the accomplishment of sustainable development, social justice and the advance of human rights.

During the last 25 years, a lot has changed, and the lives of women and girls have significantly improved all over the world. In Colombia, the rate of births per families changed from 6 to 2; contraception is now part of the mandatory health plan; abortion is recognized as a fundamental reproductive right; survivors of gender-based violence can access protection measures, and teen pregnancy has significantly dropped over the last 10 years as the country has a youth-friendly services model.

However, this anniversary is an excellent occasion to recognize the challenges that countries still face for the real implementation of the CPD. Real social justice will only be accomplished when reproductive rights are a reality for everyone, leaving no one behind.

As we have been doing over the last 53 years, Profamilia will keep working in order to guarantee sexual and reproductive rights for every person, putting our efforts in those that have been historically segregated, such as indigenous women, afro-descendant, migrants, women with disabilities and girls and adolescents, among others. We can only hope this commission will keep working to remove the existing gaps and accomplish the agenda for Sustainable Development comprehensively, including regional commitments such as the Montevideo Consensus.

Thank you for your kind attention.