

## CSO Joint Statement at HRC42

*Co-sponsors: Danish Family Planning Association (Sex og Samfund), DSW (Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung), Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar, A.C. (Mexfam), ILGA World, International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Irish Family Planning Association, Le Planning Familiar, Mujer y Salud Uruguay (MYSU), Planned Parenthood Federation of American (PPFA), Plan International, Rutgers, Sex og Politikk, Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI), Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), and Women's Link Worldwide*

Thank you, Mr President. I make this statement on behalf of 17 organizations.

This year we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Conference on Population and Development and its Program of Action, a landmark moment for human rights, where 179 countries recognized that reproductive rights are part of existing human rights, and marked a shift to a human rights-based approach to population and development policies, with a focus on ensuring health, equality, empowerment and rights for all while upholding the principles of non-violence, and non-discrimination. Critically, it recognized the centrality of the indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated nature of human rights to issues of population and sustainable development, in line with the UDHR and the Vienna Declaration.

Since then, Member States have repeatedly reaffirmed their commitments to the ICPD PoA, including in the 2030 Agenda, and Treaty Monitoring Bodies (TMBs) have significantly built on the rights delineated in the PoA and furthered human rights standards pertaining to sexual and reproductive rights. However, while some progress in implementation has taken place, too much remains to be done. Therefore, we welcome the Nairobi Summit on ICPD+25 which will once again bring together Member States and different stakeholders to mobilize the political will and financial commitments urgently needed to implement the ICPD Agenda, putting the voices and rights of women and girls at the center of conversations, and meet the 3 zeros: zero gender-based violence, zero unmet need for family planning, and zero preventable maternal deaths.

As we approach September 28<sup>th</sup>, the International Safe Abortion Day, whose theme for 2019 is "abortion is healthcare," we cannot ignore that legal and policy barriers to safe abortion make unsafe abortion one of the global leading causes of maternal mortality,[\[1\]](#) which in most cases are preventable if all people, especially women and adolescents, have access to safe, legal abortion. Let's not deny the evidence: safe abortion saves lives. If Member States are serious about ending maternal mortality, the legal, policy, social, cultural and economic barriers to access safe abortion must be addressed.

We urge all Member States, to make meaningful, measurable national commitments in Nairobi to increase access to safe and legal abortion, in accordance with their legal obligations under

international human rights law, in an effort to reach zero preventable maternal deaths, and to commit to report on progress in its implementation.

Thank you.

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[1] Lisa B Haddad, MD, MA, and Nawal M Nour, MD, MPH, *Unsafe Abortion: Unnecessary Maternal Mortality*, Rev Obstet Gynecol. 2009 Spring; 2(2): 122–126, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2709326/>; Su Mon Latt, Allison Milner & Anne Kavanagh, *Abortion laws reform may reduce maternal mortality: an ecological study in 162 countries*, BMC Women's Health 2019 19(1) <https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-018-0705-y>. See also Medecins Sans Frontiers, 2019 *Unsafe abortion: a forgotten emergency*, <https://www.msf.org/unsafe-abortion-forgotten-emergency-womens-health>; Susheela Singh, Lisa Remez, Gilda Sedgh, Lorraine Kwok and Tsuyoshi Onda, Guttmacher Institute, *Abortion Worldwide 2017: Uneven Progress and Unequal Access* (2018) <https://www.guttmacher.org/report/abortion-worldwide-2017>