

Oslo Statement of Commitment “Life or Death is a Political Decision”

Preamble

We the members of Parliament from all regions of the world, met in Oslo, Norway, on 10-12 April 2024 to participate in the eighth International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation (IPCI) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), as the global community commemorates the 30th anniversary of the 1994 ICPD and its landmark Programme of Action (PoA).

Thirty years after the ICPD, we celebrate progress with the adoption of new laws, policies, programmes and renewed activism which have led to more women having access to contraception, less women dying while giving birth, more girls having access to education, a global reduction of child marriage and female genital mutilation. Our successes have placed individual dignity and human rights at the center of development.

These achievements make it imperative that as parliamentarians we push against the rising polarization, conflicts and increasingly fragile environments which threaten hard-won gains in the fulfillment of Cairo's vision. Progress on realizing the ICPD promise must never be reversed.

The ICPD PoA sets a vision for the present and the future where rights and choices for all are indispensable for sustainable development.

Crises, wars, natural disasters and other forms of conflict are creating a perfect storm, compounding the challenges and hardship faced by millions of people around the world. These crises disproportionately affect women, girls and adolescents in all their diversity, and other groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations. Record levels of displacement, rising inequalities and surging humanitarian needs break down essential services.

More than ever, the ICPD PoA remains a beacon of hope. Its full implementation demands a renewed commitment and increased political will to ensure that all who are in need, receive humanitarian assistance and protection.

Realizing the ICPD agenda goes beyond immediate relief and requires tackling the drivers of humanitarian crises, including entrenched injustice, persistent inequality, climate emergencies, and chronic instability.

We stand firm in our commitment to accelerate action for women, girls, adolescents in all their diversity, and other groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations, who suffer the

most during conflicts and crises. We call on all nations engaged in wars and other forms of conflict around the world to urgently seek peaceful, diplomatic resolutions.

As parliamentarians, we cannot afford business as usual. We must mobilize new stakeholders and expand alliances to deliver on the promise of Cairo. A world with more dignity for all is within reach. We must ensure that the rights and choices of people remain central to a sustainable future in a demographically diverse world.

Declaration

1. We recall and commend the pivotal contribution of parliamentarians towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the ICPD, including the work done by previous IPCI Conferences;
2. We advocate for the full implementation of the ICPD promise of placing people's dignity and human rights at the heart of sustainable development. This is critical to achieving the SDGs by promoting human rights, gender equality and equitable development for all;
3. We stress the need for realizing SRHR for all, including comprehensive sexuality education, and universal access to SRHR services across the life course. This is critical to ending the unmet need for family planning and preventable maternal deaths, including by providing safe abortion services, and to ending sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and harmful practices;
4. We recognize that women, girls and adolescents in all their diversity, particularly those affected by crises, wars, and other forms of conflicts, those with disabilities and other groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations, face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Discriminatory norms and laws, policies, and harmful practices disproportionately impact young women and girls' ability to realize their dreams and full potential;
5. We are deeply concerned by the global backlash against the SRHR agenda that has been observed in multiple countries, including the lack of women and girls' agency, which deepens social inequalities and undermines human rights, democracy, gender equality and the collective efforts to build more inclusive and resilient societies. Therefore, we call for the human rights, including SRHR, of all individuals to be respected, protected, and fulfilled;
6. We note with grave concern the existential threat posed by multiple, concurrent crises, including the climate crisis, which disproportionately affects women, girls and adolescents in all their diversity and other groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations.

We, Parliamentarians, consistent with human rights and the principles of the ICPD are determined to play our role as follows:

Human Rights for All - Respect, Protection, and Fulfillment

7. We commit to:

- a. Ensure that the rights of all individuals are respected, protected and fulfilled as set forth in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, and international human rights treaties, regional instruments and national laws, without distinction of any kind, in order to fully extend the principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, accountability, and universality, to all generations;
- b. Uphold international human rights law and international humanitarian law in all contexts and defend the human rights of all individuals through shared principles of justice, equality, and dignity. The ongoing conflicts inflict immense suffering, especially for women, children and vulnerable populations. Attacks on civilian populations, healthcare workers, the destruction of healthcare facilities and civilian infrastructure deepen this global crisis, and we must act with urgency;
- c. Work with and for women, girls and adolescents, in all their diversity, to safeguard their right to bodily and reproductive autonomy. In conflict and humanitarian contexts, provide universal access to quality SRHR education, information and services, and empower women and young people to play their role in the pursuit of peace and security, justice and accountability;
- d. Implement the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and formulate policies, including on free, prior and informed consent, necessary for their implementation, with the full participation of Indigenous Peoples.

Policy and Megatrends

8. We commit to:

- a. Take decisive action to combat the disparities and inequities that divide society. These disparities create and reinforce systemic and structural barriers, chronically marginalize women, girls, adolescents, and other groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations in nearly every aspect of life, from health and education to labor markets to political participation;
- b. Work with governments to design human rights based legislation, policies and programmes that promote and protect human rights. These initiatives

should serve as a catalyst for an equitable, sustainable development, and inclusive future for all;

- c. Advocate for governments to use population data and intelligence, including disaggregated data, to analyze, anticipate and adapt to demographic changes, to design evidence-based solutions tailored to country contexts in order to build demographic resilience. Support investment in institutional capacities to formulate and implement social and population policies informed by evidence, and evidence-based solutions;
- d. Invest in foresight analysis and inter-generational dialogues with young people to support public policies that meet the needs of present generations, without compromising the future of coming generations;
- e. Ensure that social protection systems provide services that empower all people, respect their diversity, uphold their dignity, and support them to realize their human rights and bodily and reproductive autonomy;
- f. Prioritize SRHR throughout the life course by integrating user-friendly services into Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This requires strengthening health systems, both formal and community-based, to end inequalities in healthcare access and prevent injustices faced by women, girls, young people in all their diversity, including period poverty. UHC benefit packages should ensure a comprehensive SRHR approach, integrated into primary healthcare. To accelerate SRHR for all, prioritize sustained investment in healthcare workforce, especially at primary health care facilities;
- g. Accelerate efforts to scale up scientifically accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, relevant to cultural contexts, that is key to ensuring that adolescents and youth are able to make informed decisions, and develop respectful relationships;
- h. To build resilient individuals, communities and societies, invest in emergency preparedness, anticipatory actions, and targeted disaster risk reduction plans. This includes prioritizing the protection of women, girls, and adolescents in all their diversity, and other groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations during emergencies, including those facing climate change impacts. Actively support youth leadership in promoting peace, conflict prevention and in humanitarian action.

Technology

9. We commit to:

- a. Recognize the rising importance of the digital environment on the lives of individuals, communities, and societies and the immense potential of technology for the full realization of the ICPD PoA;
- b. Harness digital technologies to strengthen health systems, expand access to essential services, and adopt robust digital health information systems;
- c. Invest in enhanced data collection, prioritizing areas where women and girls have been historically underrepresented. This will close crucial data gaps and drive evidence-based policies;
- d. Address the underrepresentation of young women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers, noting that too many are held back by harmful gender biases, social norms, and expectations that influence the quality of education they receive, the subjects they study, and limit their ability to take part in the jobs of the future that drive innovation and sustainable development;
- e. Invest in digital education and literacy programs for all. Partner with educational institutions, community initiatives, civil society, and the private sector to ensure accessible and relevant life-long learning opportunities in a rapidly evolving digital world. As the Fourth Industrial Revolution unfolds, we must recognize access to technology, data, and smart devices as a fundamental right of every person for full societal participation;
- f. Prioritize bridging the digital divide, especially the gender gap, noting that millions of people are largely offline and lack basic access to technology, and that most of them are women and girls, and groups in vulnerable situations;
- g. Partner with governments to promote women's safe and meaningful participation in the digital space, while strengthening legislation to prevent technology-facilitated SGBV and other cybercrimes, including cyberharassment, stalking, hate speech, doxxing, and the non-consensual use of images and videos, such as deepfakes;
- h. Include women and girls in the design, development, and deployment of digital technologies, to address gender inequalities and leverage technology to promote and safeguard health and human rights;
- i. Promote and advance human rights-based legal reforms to ensure accountability for digital technology systems. This includes protecting data ownership, cybersecurity, and user privacy. Ensure that current, new, and emerging technologies do not replicate existing biases;

- j. Ensure that AI development and deployment prioritize ethics, human rights, and address biases that exacerbate discrimination against women, girls, minorities, and marginalized populations. This includes protecting privacy in areas of SRHR, combating discriminatory laws, and ensuring transparent public policy decisions. Furthermore, it's imperative that countries avoid technological shortcuts, recognizing that true progress in SRHR requires political will and resource allocation to ensure equal rights and access;
- k. Pursue transborder cooperation to prevent and reduce risks, harness opportunities that technology presents for the benefit of all people and planet, and share best practices to ensure a world that is inclusive, equitable, and leaves no one behind.

Financing

10. We commit to:

- a. Advocate for allocating resources in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, which provides a comprehensive framework for ensuring that investments are long-term oriented so that growth is inclusive and sustainable and creates an enabling environment for implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. The United Nations estimates that investing in family planning and maternal health in developing countries yields a high return on investment of US\$8.40 for every dollar spent. An additional \$80 billion investment between 2022 and 2030 is projected to avert 400 million unintended pregnancies, save 1 million women's lives, and generate a significant economic benefit of \$660 billion;
- b. Advocate for at least 10% of national development budgets and development assistance budgets, to the implementation of the ICPD PoA, including the provision of SRHR programmes, access to family planning and reproductive health commodities;
- c. Advocate for increased development assistance budgets for population assistance, in particular for those in vulnerable countries, and ensure the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for official development assistance is met as agreed at the previous International Parliamentarians' Conferences on the Implementation of the PoA;
- d. Work with governments to strengthen the international cooperation mechanisms and recraft the financial architecture to support the

implementation of the ICPD PoA and the SDGs in a way that strengthens human rights, gender equality and promotes inclusive and resilient development;

- e. Accelerate funding and financing for SRHR, including funding for SRHR and SGBV services in emergencies. Support innovative financing and mobilization of domestic resources through the development of fair and effective tax systems, as well as greater engagement with the private sector and international financial institutions;
- f. Advocate for gender-responsive budgets to ensure equitable resource allocation for women, men, girls, and boys, fostering equal opportunities and achieving both gender and fiscal justice;
- g. Develop financing mechanisms that broaden access to new technologies, empowering communities to drive localized implementation of the ICPD PoA and ensure no one is left behind.

Parliamentary Action for accountability, political commitment and expanded partnerships for the full implementation of the ICPD PoA

11. We will continue to work with our parliaments to:

- a. Increase political commitment for the continued implementation of the ICPD PoA and to use our role as parliamentarians to keep Governments accountable to the commitments made in Cairo, the realization of SRHR for all, and for achieving the SDGs by 2030;
- b. Address harmful social and gender norms that limit the potential of women, girls, and adolescents in all their diversity, and other groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations, including through strengthened engagement of men and boys and the mobilization of community actors, faith-based organizations, and traditional and religious leaders;
- c. Strengthen national systems for disaggregated, timely data to facilitate effective implementation of policies and safeguard public accountability;
- d. Establish inclusive and transparent mechanisms for engagement of civil society, including youth-led and women-led organizations;
- e. Increase engagement of adolescents and youth in policy design and decision making for multi-sectoral investment, including formal and informal adolescent-led and youth-led organizations;

- f. Hold our respective governments accountable for the establishment of appropriate and transparent governance institutions for sustainable development, anchored in gender equality and human rights.
- g. Support multilateralism and the essential work of the United Nations worldwide to coordinate, scale-up and fully implement the ICPD PoA through international cooperation.

Our Pledge

We the parliamentarians from all regions gathered in Oslo pledge to:

Accelerate efforts to develop and promote laws and policies to respect, protect and fulfill international human rights obligations;

Recognize that life or death is a political decision, hence continue to implement previously adopted declarations of IPCI conferences and ensure that legislation, policies, and programmes are developed and strengthened to fully implement the ICPD PoA;

Accelerate joint action to secure adequate, predictable funding and financing for universal realization of SRHR for all. This is crucial as we reflect in the discussions ahead of the Summit of the Future, pursue the SDGs by 2030 and shape the post-2030 agenda for a resilient, equitable and sustainable future.