

Declaration on **Reproductive Health**

We are young people from diverse ethnic, cultural, economic, political and social backgrounds from all regions of the world. We are committed to fostering a society that protects everyone's right to a high standard of health, rooted in the inherent and inalienable dignity of the person.

We affirm the definition of reproductive health laid out in the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions and processes. Women and girls comprise approximately half the population of the world but remain more vulnerable when it comes to reproductive health.

A comprehensive view of reproductive health must include education on the role of hormones and their impact on the health of every system in the body. Hormonal activity in a woman's body is essential to overall physical and emotional health. A woman's biomarkers are vital signs; and ovulation, a proxy of multiple hormones functioning correctly, is a sign of health.

We affirm the international consensus on the right of women to be informed participants in their own healthcare. Women often accept as normal symptoms such as irregular bleeding, pain, depression, mood swings, and weight gain, not realizing that these are often signs of underlying hormonal imbalances and abnormalities. A woman who understands the science of her body is empowered to monitor her health, seek help when needed and make informed decisions about the care she receives. Programs that promote reproductive health literacy are a sustainable way of combating shame and stigma surrounding fertility and menstruation and improving women's health outcomes. Focusing merely on providing reproductive commodities often only manages symptoms but doesn't diagnose or treat underlying conditions.

We also recognize the importance of informed consent for women and couples in decisions involving family planning. Women have the right to know about all the options available and how they will affect their overall health. Still, fewer than 3% of women worldwide can identify their time of fertility and many lack basic knowledge about their body and health. The idea of a global unmet need for contraception ignores this fundamental problem and attempts to substitute the sustainable impact of increased knowledge with the short-term effect of distributing contraception. Many reproductive health care programs fail to ensure informed consent by not providing women with the education needed to understand their bodies, the mechanism of action and the side effects of what they are using. Furthermore, this approach ignores religious and ethical beliefs regarding the use of contraception. A focus on informed consent prioritizes the needs of individual persons, and provides them with the capacity to make informed decisions about the size and spacing of their family.

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We reaffirm the ICPD consensus that there is no international right to abortion, that abortion is not part of reproductive health, and that in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning. We condemn all coercion and abuses of human rights in regards to reproductive health, including: forced abortions and sterilizations; population control programs leading to femicide in sex-selective abortion; commodification of children and women's bodies through surrogacy; and imposing ideological programs on communities contrary to their religious and cultural values.

We urge the international community to develop and implement policies and programs that protect and promote the health of women and men with respect to their intrinsic dignity. We affirm medical approaches that diagnose and treat underlying conditions and restore health. Education programs for young people, as well as public health campaigns must equip individuals to be informed participants in their own healthcare. We call upon governments and civil society to support knowledge-based and person-centered medical care and education that recognizes the link between reproductive and overall health.