

HRC36: General Debate Item 8
25 September 2017

Joint statement on behalf of Action Canada for Population and Development; Federation for Women and Family Planning; Center for Reproductive Rights; Ipas; ActionAid; Advocates for Youth; ARC International (Allied Rainbow Communities International); Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW); Asociación Pro-Bienestar de la Familia Colombiana "Profamilia"; Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID); Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network; Catholics for Choice; Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL); Centre for Health and Social Justice; Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS); Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN); Ekta Resource Centre for Women; EngenderHealth; European Humanist Federation; European Women's Lobby; European Youth Forum; Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie van Homoseksualiteit – COC Nederland; FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development Norway; Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer (FEIM); Generation Initiative for Women and Youth Network (GIWYN); Girls To Mothers' Initiative; Global Fund for Women; Global Justice Center; International Commission of Jurists; International Federation for Human Right Leagues (FIDH); The International HIV/AIDS Alliance; International Humanist and Ethical Union; International Lesbian and Gay Association; International Planned Parenthood Federation; International Planned Parenthood Federation South Asia Region Office; International Service for Human Rights; International Women's Health Coalition; Italian Association for Women in Development (AIDOS); Manusher Jonno Foundation; Marie Stopes International; Médecins du Monde - France; MenEngage Alliance; Oxfam; Pathfinder International; The Population Council; PROMSEX, Centro de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos; Rutgers; Shalupe Foundation; Simavi; Social Charitable Center Women and Modern World; Sonke Gender Justice; Sukaar Welfare Organization Pakistan; Union Women Center; Womankind Worldwide; Women Enabled International; Women for Women's Human Rights - New Ways; Women International Democratic Federation; Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights; Women's Rights Center NGO Armenia; World YWCA; and Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights.¹

Mr. President,

It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of 285 organisations from around the world.

Through the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, States explicitly agreed to prioritize the human rights of women, including the eradication of gender-based discrimination and violence. However, many States have not yet made the important decision that women's human rights deserve to be upheld and their lives are worth saving. The continued criminalization of abortion and restrictions on access to and provision of abortion and post-abortion care in many jurisdictions is stark evidence of this.

Around 22 million unsafe abortions are estimated to take place around the world annuallyⁱⁱ, leading to 7 million health complicationsⁱⁱⁱ and 47,000 deaths^{iv}. In addition, there are major social and financial costs to women and girls, families, communities, health systems and economies. The criminalization of abortion and failure to ensure access to quality abortion services is a violation of the rights to non-discrimination, to privacy, and to make decisions about one's own body, and can constitute torture or ill-treatment, as repeatedly highlighted by UN bodies and experts.^v Prohibiting abortion pushes it

underground and gives rise to unsafe abortions, violating the rights to life, health and bodily autonomy. Moreover, the poor and those already facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are disproportionately affected, making the global community's pledge to "leave no one behind" ring hollow.

These human rights violations must stop now. On September 28, the Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion, we urge the Human Rights Council to address the human rights violations arising from criminalization of abortion and the denial of access to safe and legal abortion services through its resolutions, decisions, dialogues, debates, and the UPR. We demand in a collective voice that governments across the world respect, protect and fulfill the right to access safe and legal abortion services and post-abortion care.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ This statement is joined by the following organisations and groups not in consultative status with ECOSOC: Akahatá Equipo de Trabajo en Sexualidades y Generos, Coalition of African Lesbians, CREA, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights; A.L.E.G. _ Association for Liberty and Equality of Gender; Activista independiente; African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA); Agrupacion Ciudadana por la Despenalización del Aborto - El Salvador; Aidsfonds; AJWS; Alliance for Choice; Alianza por la Solidaridad; Alliance of solidarity for the family; Articulacion Feminista Marcosur; Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA); Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER; Asociación de Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida - LAS DIGNAS; Asociación Médica Privada Voluntaria Winay; Asociación Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres MSM; Association de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes; Association HERA-XXI Georgia; Associazione Luca Coscioni per la libertà di ricerca scientifica; ASTRA Network; ASTRA Youth; Atria - Institute for Gender Equality and Women's History; Balance- Mexico; Bangladesh Model Youth Parliament; Cairo Foundation for Development and law; Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir – Chile; Católicas Por el Derecho a Decidir Perú; Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir – Bolivia; CEDES (Center for the Study of State and Society); Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadoma; Center for the Study of Democracy; Centre d'Action Laïque; Centre de Communication et de Développement de l'Entreprise (CCDE) - Département de la promotion de l'autonomisation de la femme en Afrique; Centre for Gender, Feminisms and Sexualities, University College Dublin, Ireland; Centre for Secular Space; Centre Kurde des Droits de l'Homme; Centre Ombre des Femmes du Burundi; Centro de Apoyo y Protección de los Derechos Humanos SURKUNA; Centro de Atención Integral a la Pareja, A. C.; Centro de Derechos de Mujeres; CESI - Center for Education, Counselling and Research; CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality; CLACAI; Cladem; COADY International Institute, Canada; Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment; Colectivo Ovejas Negras; Community and Family Aid Foundation-Ghana; Community Safety and Mediation Center; Concern for Children and Environment - CONCERN Nepal; Consorcio Latinoamericano Contra el Aborto Inseguro; Contra Nocendi International; Corporacion Miles Chile; Costa Rica Afro; Creative and Innovation Business Incubation Center (Association CICIA); CSBR - Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies; Danish Family Planning Association; DareGender; Dartmouth College; DeGenerar; Discover Football; Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality, Fiji; ECIS - Educación, Clínica e Investigación en Sexualidad; El Colegio de México; Equal Ground, Sri Lanka; Essex Feminist Collective; Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS; Family Planning and Sexual Health Association; Family Planning NSW; Fédération nationale GAMS; Feminist Solutions towards Global Justice (FemJust); FILIA Centre; Forum de la Femme Menagere – FORFEM; FRONT Association; Fundación Arcoiris. Mexico; Fundación CulturaSalud/EME; Fundacion de la mano contigo; FUNDACION DE MUJERES LUNA CRECIENTE; Fundación ESAR; Fundación Oriéntame; Fundacion Sendas; Fundatia Corona; Gateway Health Institute; Gender Violence Institute; Global Doctors for Choice; Good and Useful Ltd; Great Lakes Initiative for Human Rights and Development (GLIHD); GreeneWorks; Grupo Curumim - Gestação e Parto; Gynuity Health Projects; Hábitat Mujer Salud; Haiyya Foundation; Health Development Initiative (HDI)-Rwanda; Hidden Pockets; Human rights and civic participation association PaRiter; Human Rights in Childbirth; ICRH-Mozambique; IGLYO - The international lgbtqi youth and student organization; Iniciativas Sanitarias Uruguay; Institute of Health Management, Pachod; Institute of Human Rights Communication Nepal (IHRICON); Inter Pares; International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion; International Gender Equality, SOCITSHOPO (Coordination Civil Society of the DRC Tshopo); International Youth Alliance for Family Planning; Irish Council for Civil Liberties; Irish Family Planning Association; Jamia Millia Islamia University; KOGS; La Mesa por la Vida y la Salud de las Mujeres; Legal hub consultants; London-Irish Abortion Rights Campaign; Love Matters India; MARIA Abortion Fund for Social Justice; Marie Stopes México; MDF Training & Consultancy; Men's Association for Gender Equality Sierra Leone (MAGE SL); Men's Story Project; MenEngage Africa; MenEngage Initiative Uganda; MenEngage Kenya Network (MenKen); Michaela Raab; Midwives for Choice; Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial (MFPF); Mujer Y Salud en Uruguay – MYSU; MuMaLa-Mujeres de la Matria Latinoamericana; Musas de Metal Grupo de Mujeres Gay A.C.; Nakoroiki Park Association; National Abortion Federation; National coalition for Education; National Women's Council of Ireland; Nossal Institute for Global Health; Nuhanovic Foundation; Observatorio de Equidad de Género en Salud; Oklahoma Coalition for Reproductive Justice; Options for Sexual Health; Organizando Trans Diversidades OTD Chile; PACE Society; Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition; Paper Crown Institute; PARI O DISPARE; Participatory Human Rights Advancement Society; Participatory Human Rights Advancement Society; PIECE (Prostitutes Involved, Empowered, Cogent Edmonton); Planned Parenthood Ottawa; Pro Salud Sexual y Reproductiva, A.C.; Pro-Choice Wexford; Programa Género, Cuerpo y Sexualidad (Universidad de la República); Programa Iguales ante la ley-CDC; Programa Interdisciplinario de Estudios de Género, Universidad de Guadalajara; Promundo-US; Radha Paudel Foundation; Reconstruction Women's Fund; Red Latinoamericana de Género y Salud Colectiva ALAMES; Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina; Red Tengo Derecho a mi Cuerpo Hauralde Fundazioa; Repeal The 8th Dublin Midwest; Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC); Reproductive Health Training Center from Moldova; Réseau Genre et Droits de la Femme – GEDROFE; Resource Center for Women and Girls; RESURJ - Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice Alliance; RHAC; Riskou Poulakou; Romanian Women's Lobby; Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; Sahil, Pakistan; SAHR; SAMYAK, Pune; Sarajevo Open Centre; Seres (con) viver com o VIH; Servicios Humanitarios en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva, A.C.; Sex og Politikk (IPPF Norway); Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition; Sexuality Policy Watch; She-Hive Association; Societatea de Planificare a Familiei din Moldova (SPFM)/Family Planning Association of Moldova ; Society for Education in Contraception and Sexuality (SECS) Romania; Society for

Feminist Analyses AnA Romania; Society for Women's Action and Training Initiative; Society Without Violence NGO; Solidarité des Femmes Burundaises pour la lutte contre le Sida et le Paludisme au Burundi; Solidarite des Femmes Burundaises pour le Bien Etre Social et le Progres au Burundi; SPECTRA: Young Feminists, Rwanda; Spectrum; SRHR platform Ghana; Srijanatmak Manushi Sanstha; Stella, l'amie de Maimie; Success Capital Organisation; Sukaar Welfare Organization Pakistan; Surkun; Sustainable Consulting; SWISSAID; Synergia - Initiatives for Human Rights; Taller Salud; Terre Des Jeunes Burundi; TFMR Ireland; The Bridges We Burn; The Legal Center for Women's Initiatives "Sana Sezim"; Tonga Leitis Association ; Uganda Network of young people living with HIV & AIDS; UNAM; Unidas por La Paz I A P; Unión Democrática de Mujeres –UDEMU; Uprising of Women in the Arab World; Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights; Vecinas Feministas por la Justicia Sexual y Reproductiva en América Latina y el Caribe; VOICE MALE Magazine; Voice Your Abortion; White Ribbon Canada; WISH Associates; WO=MEN; Women Interfaith Council/Network of Men Leaders on Violence Against Women; women on waves; women on web; Women's Link Worldwide; Women's Solidarity Namibia; YouAct, European Youth Network on Sexual Reproductive Rights; Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana; and Zeromacho.

ⁱⁱⁱ WHO: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs388/en/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} WHO: http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/unsafe_abortion/magnitude/en/

^v Center for Reproductive Rights, Breaking Ground, Treaty Monitoring Bodies on Reproductive Rights, 2016, available at <https://www.reproductiverights.org/document/breaking-ground-2016-treaty-monitoring-bodies-on-reproductive-rights>