

IPPF EN statement for the UNECE Regional Conference on ICPD+25 on thematic session: Inequalities, Social Inclusion and Rights

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, and partners,

The International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network believes that the ICPD+25 review process is a key moment to celebrate, reaffirm and build on the progress that we have made on the ICPD Agenda, and the ICPD beyond 2014 reviews, in particular for the UNECE region the 2013 Chair's Summary.

Madame Chair,

Social inequalities are on the rise in all parts of the UNECE region, which has serious implications for the fulfillment of women and girl rights, the most vulnerable and marginalized population and especially, their sexual and reproductive health and rights. There are also inequalities between states within the region; while some countries in the UNECE region have progressive policies on LGBTQI+ rights and abortion, in other countries, we witness the rise of conservative forces and the introduction of restrictive policies and challenging legal contexts which quite often jeopardize the gains achieved since 1994, and constitute serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Most worrying is that several UNECE countries are even regressing in terms of sexual and reproductive health and rights issues, often combined with a shrinking space for civil society.

Therefore, we call upon member states to:

- unite to counteract conservative stances by strengthening and amplifying progressive voices, particularly in an altered political environment;
- Ensure a LEGAL and SOCIAL sustainable environment free from violence, stigma and discrimination and pressure for CSO to contribute to society and policy making.
Ensure in particular the protection of human rights and women and young people human rights defenders to meaningful participate in the country's public and policy debates and guarantee that their views are taken on board.
- Increase political leadership and strategic investment, including increased budget and earmarked funding to advance SRHR, including supporting effective measures to fight sexual gender based violence, support for mandatory sexuality education, including for sexual gender based violence prevention, access to contraception and choice, safe motherhood and safe abortion care, HIV and STI prevention, treatment and care.
- Increase political leadership in implementing existing policies and legislation, including in eliminating all barriers that hamper women access to sexual and reproductive health services, including for legal abortion; as well as in supporting new more progressive policies and legislation.

Accordingly, if we are to implement the ICPD Agenda and realize the right to health, governments must pay particular attention to the specific and different needs of vulnerable individuals and communities; and guarantee that social protections schemes are extended to them, including marginalized groups such as rural populations, persons with disabilities, adolescent girls and young women, persons in informal settlements, young people out of school, sex workers, migrants, displaced populations, indigenous people, people living with HIV, older people and people of different sexual orientations and gender identities, free from stigma, coercion, discrimination and violence.

Finally, to ensure that everyone counts, governments must emphasise the vital role of gathering data and information, including for vulnerable groups, and support the call for the improvement of research, and the use of data and evidence for decision-making, through strengthening national statistical capacity. We welcome the UNECE monitoring framework as a good tool to track progress on implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014. And we stand ready to partner with Governments and the UN system in this regard.

Thank you