

## **STATEMENT**

**ICPD30 Regional Conference**

**High Level Plenary Session**

**Statement delivered by Ms. Bjørg SANDKJÆR**

**State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway**

19 October 2023

**Chair,**

**I am very pleased to be here at the European Regional Population Conference on the ICPD Programme of Action from Cairo, 1994.**

**I attended the ICPD in Cairo myself, as a youth delegate. As did our prime minister at the time, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norway's first female prime minister. In her speech she reminded us that sexual and reproductive rights are individual rights as well as building blocks for sustainable development. That is still true today.**

**She said, "Unless we empower our people, educate them, care for their health, allow them to enter economic life on an equal basis**

**and rich in opportunity, poverty will persist, ignorance will be pandemic and people's needs will suffocate under their numbers."**

**Her words ring as true today as they did back then. How we work to implement the ICPD Programme of Action in our region has repercussions for the rest of the world, and our global democracy.**

**Norway is a staunch supporter of the ICPD Programme of Action, and of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, showing that we must leave no one behind. I am pleased to announce that next year, the Norwegian Parliament will host the eighth International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD in Oslo. Parliamentarians working with SRHR-related legislation from around the world will be invited. We are looking forward to seeing many of you there. This will be one of Norway's contribution to making sure ICPD@30 will be a fruitful year where concrete progress is made.**

**Thank you.**