

**UNECE ICPD+30 Regional Conference**  
**30 years after Cairo: The International Conference on**  
**Population and Development agenda in a changing world**

Interventie namens Nederland in High-Level plenary session

Donderdag 19 oktober 2023

11:45 – 12:30

Palais des Nations

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Executive Secretary of UNECE, Executive-Director of UNFPA,  
Excellencies, Honorable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It was in Cairo in 1994, that we recognized that population is not about numbers, but about people. 30 years later, the Netherlands is still committed to this highly relevant agenda.

We support the Report, its Recommendations, and the Monitoring Framework. I hope this will be reflected in the Summary of this session.

Because we believe in engaging all stakeholders, our delegation today consists of Government officials as well as NGO partner Rutgers.

Regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, our level of ambition is high. Our approach is holistic and open, covering the entire life cycle, and including the meaningful participation of adolescents and young people.

The results are good. Science supports this, and the Conference report reflects this as well.

Let me share some examples.

1. With a national action program and a dedicated commissioner, we adopted a holistic strategy towards combatting sexual violence and transgressive behavior.
2. Abortion care in the Netherlands is accessible and of high quality, as concluded by a 2021 evaluation. And our parliament abolished the compulsory 5-day waiting period before an abortion. We have enabled access to abortion through general practitioners.
3. Schools are obliged to spend time on education about sexuality and relationships. And the government helps them with this.
4. People with greater risk of HIV can protect themselves by taking PrEP-medication. The government works on a pilot to expand this program.

However, there is always room for improvement. Comprehensive Sexuality Education is not always taught consistently and inclusively, yet. Waiting lists for free STD testing and counseling are still long. And increased circulation of disinformation distorts reliable information about contraception and sexuality education.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To address these challenges, the starting point must always be rights. Sexual and Reproductive Health is a human right.

We would like to congratulate UNECE and UNFPA for your vision to use this conference as an opportunity for a constructive exchange on policy experiences.

We are ready to share our best practices, as well as the lessons we have learned to bring real change for people. The Netherlands' international development policy is based on our successful national experiences.

We hope this week's discussions will lead to a renewed commitment to ICPD.

Thank you.

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