

A petition to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Fulfilling commitments to ICPD – a key to achieving SDGs in the Asia Pacific

We, the undersignedⁱ, strongly feel that the principles and objectives of the ICPD (Cairo International Conference on Population & Development, 1994) and outcomes of sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference (APPC)ⁱⁱ are critical to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Asia-Pacific region. The ICPD reaffirmed the importance of gender equality, equity and empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as cornerstones to a sustainable development.ⁱⁱⁱ

ICPD beyond 2014^{iv} and its assessment in 2017 reiterate the continued need to fulfil the agenda especially in the Asia-Pacific Region where over 132 million women aged 15-49 years in the region still do not have adequate access to modern contraceptive methods^v and 9.8 million young women have an unmet need for contraception^{vi}. Adolescent birth rates continue to be a challenge in Oceania (62%), South Asia Region (46%) and South-East Asia Region (44%). Unsafe abortion continues to be a major factor in maternal deaths in the region; mortality due to unsafe abortion for South East Asia is estimated as 14% of all maternal deaths, and 13% for South Asia. About 2.3 million women in the region are hospitalised annually for treatment of complications from unsafe abortion. Also, cancers of the sexual and reproductive system are a major threat for women^{vii} as prevention, screening, treatment and palliative care are not implemented adequately. The ICPD beyond 2014^{viii} report also highlighted that lack of information concerning sexual and reproductive health and limited access to related services are contributing to unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions in some parts of the region

The incidence of child marriage as well as early and forced marriage continues to persist in the region. South Asia has the highest number of child marriages because of countries such as Bangladesh (66%), India (47%) and Nepal (41%) having high numbers of women between the ages of 20-24 years, who were married before the age of 18 years.^{ix} There is a high out-of-pocket expenditure, unregulated privatisation of health, including unaffordable health insurance resulting in denial of health services specially to the most marginalised groups including women and young people. The region is also known for its inefficient and under-resourced (financial, human and infrastructure) health systems at national and subnational levels that do not prioritise acceptable, available, accessible and quality SRHR.

These grim realities are a result of the lack of political commitment for gender equality, especially when it comes to women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), largely owing to the existing structural barriers including the systemic nature of patriarchy. This has led to legal frameworks in many countries that are limiting and do not ensure SRHR. In many countries plural legal systems also discriminate the access to existing SRHR provisions and further marginalise women and girls. The lack of cohesive policies across national and sub-national levels creates barriers in implementing international and regional commitments.

Women's human rights in the region is further threatened by the rise of extremists and fundamentalists. This is in addition to already existing religious and cultural practices that are used to perpetuate harmful traditional practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Right to health and SRHR policies and interventions continue to have marginalised groups^x fall through the cracks. Their marginalisation manifests through the lack of participation,

decision-making, access to services including information and communication that lead to the denial of rights.

The Call

Recalling the unanimous commitments of the governments in the Asia- Pacific region to the full implementation, backed by adequate budget allocation and programme, of the ICPD PoA and the outcomes of Asian and Pacific Population conference (APPC), Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and Sustainable Development Goals,

Realising that the development agenda of SDGs and beyond, of *leaving no one behind*, remains unfulfilled until the fulfilment of SRHR for all the marginalised groups including women and girls,

Acknowledging the imperativeness of UN General Assembly resolution 65/243 on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014^{xi}, adopted in December 2010 in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the region in their entirety,

Recognising the crucial role of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as the regional development arm of United Nation for the Asia-Pacific Region, in reaffirming the commitments of the Asia- Pacific UN members states and decision makers towards the implementation of ICPD PoA,

We call on the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to

- Lead and facilitate a robust process to create and implement a regional monitoring framework to review progress towards and persisting gaps in the implementation of ICPD beyond 2015 in the Asia pacific region. The review should raise issues of human rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights through an in-depth technical analysis in the region and make concrete recommendations to the member states in order to fulfil their obligations to uphold human rights including SRHR of all citizens. UNESCAP Secretariat should facilitate the review process by proposing a timeline for the review process that is practical and enables adequate collection and reporting on data and other relevant information as well as for national consultative forums.
- Facilitate a process to ensure that the members states implement, monitor and report on SRHR holistically within the mechanisms of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which in this region are the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) and the Asia-Pacific Population Conferences (APPC)
- Work with champions, including those from rights-based civil society groups, including community and progressive media organisations that can ensure the advancement of the ICPD agenda in a holistic manner.
- Urge the member states to utilise constitutional and other legislative provisions to provide opportunities for women's participation on all decision-making structures at all levels to realise and fulfil women's human rights.
- Provide technical support to the members states in collaboration with other UN entities such as UNFPA to ensure adequate financial, human and infrastructural resources towards implementing

health policies, which ensures highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for all including their SRHR.

- In order to achieve the above, regulation of the private health sector to provide acceptable, affordable, accessible, quality health services and ensure dignity and respect, privacy and confidentiality.
- Ensure that marginalised groups and their access to health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights is at the centre of UNESCAP facilitated dialogues and processes so that ***No One is Left Behind***.

ⁱ Civil Society Organisations, thought leaders and human rights defenders and activists from the Asia and the Pacific and Globally

ⁱⁱ <http://www.unfpa.org/events/sixth-asian-and-pacific-population-conference>

ⁱⁱⁱ Principles 1, 4 and 8 within the Programme of Action of the ICPD

^{iv} Resolution 65/243 adopted by the General Assembly in December 2010

^v Facts and trends in sexual and reproductive health in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP, November 2013. <http://www.unescapsdd.org/files/documents/SPPS-Factsheet-SRH-v2.pdf>

^{vi} Darroch JE et al., *Adding it Up: Costs and Benefits of Meeting the Contraceptive Needs of Adolescents*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2016.

^{vii} http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ICPD-20-Asia-Pacific_Monitoring-Report_2013.pdf

^{viii} http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SDD_PUB_ICPD-report-e_0.pdf

^{ix} Laoiza, Edilberto, and Sylvia Wong. *Marrying too Young: End Child Marriage*. New York: United Nations Population Fund, 2012. Accessed September 13, 2016. <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MarryingTooYoung.pdf>.

^x Including young people, poor and rural women, female migrants, refugees and internally displaced, LGBTIQ, women with disabilities, indigenous women, religious and ethnic minorities and elderly women

^{xi} <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/international-conference-population-and-development-programme-action>

List of Endorsements (Individuals and Organizations)

1. “Princess” center for girls and young women’s right NGO, Mongolia
2. AAhung, Pakistan
3. Aashra Sansthan, Panchmahal, Gujarat
4. Adorsho Mohila Sangstha- Patuakhali District, Bangladesh
5. Akbayan, Philippines
6. Aliansi Remaja Independen (Independent Young People Alliance), Indonesia
7. Aliansi Satu Visi (ASV), Indonesia
8. Aman Foundation, Pakistan
9. ANANDI along with Devgadhi Mahila Sangathan, Gujarat, India
10. Annesha Samaj Sheba Shongho - Patuakhali District, Bangladesh
11. Ardhanary Institute, Indonesia
12. Artha-Shaajik Sanskriti Unnayan Sangstha - Barguna District, Bangladesh
13. ASEAN Youth Forum (AYF)
14. Asia Catalyst
15. Asia Pacific Alliance (APA)
16. Association for Dalit Women's Advancement of Nepal, Nepal
17. Association of War Affected Women, Sri Lanka
18. Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON)- national network of 92 youth organizations in Nepal.
19. AWARE Girls, Pakistan
20. Bandhu social welfare society, Bangladesh
21. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP), Bangladesh
22. Bargad, Pakistan
23. Barisal Mohila Kallayan Shongshta – Barisal, Bangladesh
24. Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC), Nepal
25. Blue Diamond Society (BDS), Nepal
26. Beautiful Hearts Campaign NGO against child sexual violence, Mongolia
27. Beit el Hanane organization, Beirut
28. Blue Veins/TransAction KPK, Pakistan
29. Boys of Bangladesh (BoB), Bangladesh
30. BRAC, Adolescent Development programme and gender, Bangladesh
31. BRAC, Education Programme, Bangladesh
32. Brokenshire Woman Centre, Philippines
33. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
34. Catholics for Reproductive Health (C4RH), Philippines
35. Centre for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP), Vietnam
36. Chanan Development Association (CDA), Pakistan
37. Centre for Karnali Rural Promote and Society Development (CDS) Park Mugu , Nepal
38. Center for Citizen’s Alliance NGO, Mongolia
39. Center for Rural Prosperity and Research, Tonk, Rajasthan
40. Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender, Family, Women and Adolescents (CSAGA), Vietnam
41. Centre for Human Rights and Development NGO, Mongolia

42. Centre for Reproductive Rights (CRR)
43. Chaitanya Charitable Trust, Jamnagar, Gujarat
44. Chetansheel mahilasamuha, Nepal
45. Centre for Health, Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness(CHETNA), India
46. Chhori, Nepal
47. Child Society Nepal, Nepal
48. Children and Youth Development Organisation (CYDO) - Jhalokathi District, Bangladesh
49. Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR)
50. Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines (DSWP)
51. Dharti Charitable Trust, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India
52. Dushtha Shasthya Kendra(DSK), Bangladesh
53. Federation of Reproductive Health Associations, Malaysia (FRHAM)
54. femLINKpacific, Fiji (Pacific)
55. FIAN international for the right to adequate food
56. Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)
57. Filipino Freethinkers (FF), Philippines
58. Forum for Dignity initiatives (FDI), Pakistan
59. Forum for Family Planning and Development (Forum for FP), Philippines
60. Family Planning Association Nepal (FPAN), Nepal
61. Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP), Philippines
62. Friendly Care Foundation, Philippines
63. GAYa NUSANTARA Foundation
64. Gender Development Association, Laos
65. Gram Vikas Navyuvak Mandal Laporiya, Jaipur, Rajasthan
66. Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti, Jodhpur, Rajasthan
67. Gramrajya Vikas Evam Prashikshan Sansthan, Karauli, Rajasthan
68. Haus of Khameleon (HK), Fiji
69. Human development, Reproductive Health and Right NGO's network, Mongolia
70. Human Rights Centre for Citizens NGO, Mongolia
71. Human Rights Development and Environment Protection Forum (HUDEP), Nepal
72. Huvadhoo Aid, Maldives
73. Idara -e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), Pakistan
74. Independent Youth Forum (IYF), Papua
75. Indigenous women's Legal Awareness Group, Nepal
76. Indus Resource Centre, Pakistan
77. INRECA Sansthan, Narmada, Gujarat, India
78. Institute for Community Health and Development – LIGHT, Vietnam
79. Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS), Vietnam
80. Interface Trust, Thiruporur, Tamil Nadu, India
81. Ipas, Nepal
82. Jago Nari, Bangladesh
83. Jatan Sansthan, Rajsammand, Rajasthan, India
84. Kaira Kaira Social Service Society, India
85. Karmashil Mahila, Nepal
86. KHANA, Cambodia
87. Lao Disable People's Association Champasak Province Branch (LDPA. cps), Laos

88. Lao-Aid Children with Disability Association [Lao-(ACDA)]
89. Likhaan (center for women's health inc.), Philippines
90. Loom, Nepal
91. Mahila ekata samaj, Nepal
92. Mahila Jagaran Samuha, Nepal
93. MAKALAYA, Philippines
94. MAP (Migrants Assistance Programme) Foundation, Thailand
95. Medical Women's International Association
96. Misa Pasa Falcha Pucha, Nepal
97. MONFEMNET National Network NGO, Mongolia
98. Mongolian Family Welfare Association, first Mongolian NGO granted with UN ECOSOC special consultative status
99. Muntada -The Arab Forum for Sexuality, Education and Health
100. Naisargik Trust, Patan, Gujarat India
101. National Alliance of Women Human right Defenders, Nepal
102. National Center Against Violence NGO, Mongolia
103. National Indigenous Women Forum, Nepal
104. Navachar Sansthan, Chittorgadh, Rajasthan, India
105. Navchetna Gram Vikas Seva Samiti, Junagadh, Gujarat, India
106. Navjeevan Education and Charitable Trust, Porbandar, Gujarat, India
107. Navjeevan Gram Vikas Kendra, Borsad, Anand, Gujarat, India
108. Navjjevan Mahila Utkarsh Society, Porbandar, Gujarat, India
109. Nazrul Smriti Sansad- Barguna District, Bangladesh
110. NISA UL HAQQ FI BANGSAMORO (Women for Justice in the Bangsamoro), Philippines
111. Organization Intersex International-Chinese (OII Chinese)
112. Our participation advocacy NGO, Mongolia
113. Oyu Tolgoi Watch NGO, Mongolia
114. Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK), Philippines
115. Participatory Research, Organization of Communities and Education towards Struggle for Self-Reliance, (PROCESS, Inc.), Philippines
116. Path Foundation
117. Patuakhali Development Organisation (PDO) - Patuakhali District, Bangladesh
118. People's Health Movement (PHM) Bangladesh Chapter, Bangladesh
119. Perkumpulan Pamflet Generasi, Indonesia
120. Perkumpulan Rutgers WPF Indonesia
121. Philippine Council for Population and Development (PCPD), Philippines
122. Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), Philippines
123. Philippine NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare, Inc.(PNGOC), Philippines
124. Philippine Society of SRH Nurses (PSORHN), Philippines
125. PILIPINA Legal Resources Center
126. PKBI (Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia)
127. Pravah, India
128. PROCESS (Participatory Research, Organization of Communities and Education towards Struggle for Self-Reliance, Inc), Philippines
129. Promotion of Family Health Association of Lao PDR (PFHA)

130. Psychological Responsiveness NGO, Mongolia
131. Puska Gender dan Seksualitas, Indonesia
132. RACHA (Reproductive and Child Health Alliance), Cambodia
133. Rahnuma (Family Planning Association), Pakistan
134. Rainbow Pride Foundation (RPF)
135. Rajasthan Samagra Kalyan Santhan, Ajmer, Rajasthan
136. Rauta samudayik bikash kendra, Nepal
137. Reach Center for family support and community development, Vietnam
138. Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC), Cambodia
139. Restless Development, Nepal
140. RH Agenda, Philippines
141. RH Step, Bangladesh
142. Rivers without Boundaries Coalition, Mongolia
143. Roots of Health (Ugat ng Kalusugan) Philippines
144. Rural Institution for Community Development, Nepal
145. Rutgers WFP, Pakistan
146. Rural Women's Social Education Centre(RUWSEC), India
147. SAHAJ, India
148. Sahayatri samaj, Nepal
149. SAHAYOG, India
150. Sanggar Swara, Indonesia
151. Sangkalpa Trust- Barguna District, Bangladesh
152. SERAC-Bangladesh
153. Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN)
154. Shri Saraswati Education Trust, Patan, Gujarat
155. Shri Shiddhi Mahila Sarvajanic Trust, Panchmahal, Gujarat
156. Shrushti Seva Samiti, Udaipur, Rajasthan
157. Sirjansheel mahila samuha, Nepal
158. Social Development Trust- SDT, Thiruporur, India
159. Social Education for Development (SED)- Trust Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu, India
160. Spectra Organisation, Alwar, Rajasthan
161. Steps without borders NGO, Mongolia
162. SuMa-Rajasthan White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood
163. SuMa-Rajasthan White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood, India.
164. Swera Sansthan, Ajmer, Rajasthan
165. Tarangini women Right and advocacy center, Nepal
166. The Forum for Family Planning and Development, Philippines
167. Unite for Body Rights (UBR), Bangladesh
168. University of Health Sciences, Laos
169. Vanita Shishu Vihar, Palanpur, Gujarat
170. Vedcchi Pradesh Seva Samiti, Surat, Gujarat
171. Visible Impact, Nepal
172. VISION
173. WOFOWON (women for women Forum), Nepal
174. Woman Health Philippines, Philippines
175. Women 21st century NGO, Mongolia

176. Women Against Violence
177. Women for Change NGO, Mongolia
178. Women In Need (WIN) Foundation, Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu, India
179. Women leadership foundation NGO, Mongolia
180. Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)
181. Women's UN Report Network
182. Women-Life center NGO, Mongolia
183. Women's Resource Center, Nepal
184. Women's Rehabilitation Centre(WOREC), Nepal
185. Yayasan Kesehatan Perempuan (YKP), Indonesia
186. YIFOS, Indonesia
187. Youth Action Nepal (YAN), Nepal
188. Youth Advocacy Network, Pakistan
189. Youth Advocacy Network, Sri Lanka
190. Youth Welfare Society, Nepal
191. YP Foundation, India
192. Yunnan Health and Development Research Association (YHDRA), China
193. YUWA, Nepal
194. Yuwalaya, Nepal

Individuals

195. Carolyn I. Sobritchea, PhD, Philippines
196. Le Thi Hong Giang, Vietnam. Email: legiangvn75@gmail.com
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198. Nguyen My Linh, Melbourne, Australia. Email: uq2001@gmail.com
199. Nguyen Thu Thuy, Hanoi, Vietnam. Email: thuynt@csaga.org.vn
200. Andi Suraidah, Legal Officer, Advocacy, Legal Services & Publication
201. Evelyne Accad, Professeur Emerita University of Illinois, Lebanese American University
202. Tarnistha - Public Health Personnel – India
203. Zainah Anwar - prominent Malaysian non-governmental organisation leader, activist and Muslim feminist.
204. Kosala Perera, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
205. Shashika Weerasinghe, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
206. Anuradha Jayasinghe, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
207. Pasan Bhagya Nanayakkara, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
208. Madhusa Pannigalagamage, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
209. Sarah Soysa, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
210. Dakshitha Wickremarathne, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
211. Dulitha Jayasekara, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
212. Lakmini Perera, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka
213. Priskila Arulpragasm, SRHR Advocate, Sri Lanka