



STATEMENT OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH COALITION FOR SRHR AND DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE ON THE RESULT OF THE 59TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The failure of the UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD) to reach a consensus outcome is not just disappointing; it is unacceptable.

This year's theme, 'Population, Technology and Research in the context of sustainable development,' should have created a space for convergence. Instead, it exposed deep and persistent fault lines. After three weeks of informal consultations followed by a week of intensive negotiations, Member States have once again failed to provide direction at a moment when the world urgently needs it.

We are off track on achieving the commitments in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights. Each year, an estimated 287,000 women die from preventable causes; more than 218 million women in low- and middle-income countries have an unmet need for modern contraception; and adolescent girls across the Global South continue to face early pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and restricted access to essential services. These are not marginal issues; they sit at the core of development.

During the session, a group of Member States sought to overturn long-established consensus language on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), aiming to undermine core elements of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. This included efforts to restrict women's and adolescents' rights and bodily autonomy, limit recognition of sexual and reproductive health services, and reassert narrow definitions of 'family.' These positions continue to be self-defeating. Countries that restrict SRHR, limit girls' education, and deny women and young people agency face higher fertility, poorer health outcomes, and slower economic growth.

Divergent views on development justice issues added to the challenges. Significant differences on elements of the right to development, such as technology transfer and intellectual property rights, surfaced; issues that reflect deeper structural inequalities between the Global North and South. Technology transfer is frequently discussed in other UN forums, including the General Assembly,



where consensus is often found.¹ The links between development justice and SRHR are structural. Without equitable access to technology, fair approaches to intellectual property, and genuine cooperation, progress on SRHR will stall. And without SRHR, sustainable development will remain out of reach. The rigidity shown by some Member States from the Global North at this session—including traditional supporters of SRHR—was deeply disappointing. These positions constrained the space for agreement and weakened prospects for solidarity.

At the same time, the actions of the United States, which repeatedly obstructed progress on gender equality and SRHR and broader development justice issues undermined multilateral cooperation.

Despite this, many Member States engaged constructively during the session, where efforts were made to identify overlap and build consensus. The second revised text demonstrated considerable skill in balancing competing priorities and offered a credible, if imperfect, pathway to consensus.

It is worth remembering that the Commission on Population and Development is the only forum that brings together issues of SRHR, gender equality and the right to development, all of which are core elements of the ICPD Programme of Action. The outcome underscores the importance of deepening understanding of the connections between development justice and SRHR—an approach advanced by Global South Coalition for SRHR and Development Justice since its founding.

The outcome also reinforces the need to protect, not dilute, core multilateral institutions that are advancing these agendas. Proposals to merge the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with UN Women risk weakening the technical leadership and programs required to deliver on the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs. UNFPA remains the primary global partner to Member States, particularly in the Global South, on SRHR and demographic change, and that role must be preserved.

As we look ahead to the 60th session, with the theme population, poverty eradication and sustainable development, Member States must act differently. The Global South cannot continue to absorb the costs of inaction. Finding solidarity on core development issues will be necessary to protect multilateralism, preserve the mandates of UNFPA and UN Women, and realize SRHR and development justice for all.

¹ For example, member states recently agreed to “technology transfer on mutually agreed terms” in the outcome document of the high level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit of the Information Society, as well as GA Resolution 79/194 on Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development, GA Resolution 80/133 on Agriculture Technology for Sustainable Development, and GA Resolution 80/147 on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development, amongst others.