

## **UK national statement on Inequalities, social inclusion and rights on the occasion of the UN International Commission on Population and Development (ICPD)**

Thank you Chair, Excellencies.

Thank you to all panellists for their remarks and highlighting this important topic of rights and choices for all including the most marginalised.

We believe that every person should have a fair opportunity in life no matter who or where they are. The UK's promise to Leave No-one Behind remains steadfast. We will stand up and speak out for women's and girls' rights and freedoms whether it is on global platforms such as these or through our bilateral relationships. With the efforts we are seeing globally to rollback on the hard-won rights of women, girls and marginalised people, this work has never been more important. This is why we are increasing our ambition to actively seek out marginalised and under-served people, hear their voices and respond to their needs and priorities.

The UK is proud to support Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR) for adolescents, girls and young people. We will use our political leadership to champion their needs, we will listen to the voices of young people and we will create space for their leadership. We will invest in adolescent-friendly SRHR – ensuring they can access the information, advice and care they need, including contraception, safe abortion, maternal health care, comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and HIV prevention and care.

The UK's Ending Preventable Deaths Approach paper highlights our continued prioritisation of the health and wellbeing of the most marginalised, including adolescent girls, sets out our commitment to championing their rights and increasing their visibility, voice and engagement at all levels of the health system, including at the community level.

We recognise that women, girls and marginalised populations, including people with disabilities and members of the LGBT+ community, can often be excluded from sexual and reproductive health services.

This exclusion can be deliberate – for instance, through laws, policies and social norms that assume girls, people with disabilities or LGBT+ people should not be sexually active; indirect – by forcing individuals to self-censor from services through fear of violence or discrimination; or through inaction by simply failing to consider their needs. We also know that we cannot achieve our global ambition on SRHR, including HIV, if we leave people behind.

This is why we are committed to removing barriers to equal, affordable, accessible and quality health services for all, including people with disabilities as set out in our disability inclusion and rights strategy, and championing a primary health care first approach as the means to reach the furthest behind.

I am proud of the UK's long history as a well-respected and influential global leader on universal, comprehensive SRHR and its leadership in defending and championing these fundamental rights in international fora, particularly for people who face stigma and discrimination. We will continue to demonstrate this same leadership today and, in the years, ahead.

Thank you Chair, Excellencies for your time.