

Statement - Second Thematic Session: Families, sexual and reproductive health over the life course

20 October 2023 - 09:30 - 10:50

Excellencies, My name is Aslan Temirkhan, I am from Kazakhstan and I am 25 years old. I am a young person. I am a doctor. And I am a peer-to-peer SRHR trainer. I would like to share the voices of young people of the ECE region.

We, as young people, have a few asks to governments.

When we enter the hospitals. we want to make sure that we can access them and receive quality health services.

When we're in school. we need education that equips us to make well-informed decisions about our lives, especially our sexual and reproductive health and rights.

When we are about to have sex for the first time, we wanna know how to **have. safe sex**

And when we're ready to start a family or **decide not to**, we want to have the knowledge and access to contraceptive commodities even without being married or needing parental consent to make that choice.

But because contraceptives not accessible to all of us across the region in the 2023, some are using the following items for contraception:

a plastic bag, (show to audience)

A lemon, (show to audience)

An onion juice, (show to audience)

an empty chip bag, (show to audience)

a tape, (show to audience)

And when young people becomes pregnant unwanted, and because safe abortion is not accessible, some even use:

a hanger (show to audience)

Sexual and reproductive rights are HUMAN RIGHTS, but when young people use unsafe methods, Governments are not fulfilling their role as duty bearers.

All states **must** fulfill their duty. We as young people call upon member states to create conditions for us **as** affordable, accessible, inclusive youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services, commodities, and information (including comprehensive sexuality education), **emergency contraception** and **safe abortion care, PrEP, hormonal therapy, irrespective of disability, sexual orientation, marital status or gender identity**, free of stigma and discrimination, without the need for parental consent, especially in remote areas and those experiencing humanitarian crises.

We understand that creating these conditions entails financial resources. So we want more investments in youth-friendly services that are of high quality, (stress) evidence-based (stress) and uphold our rights to information and care.

We promise the investment will return plentiful, in better health and well-being, better jobs and education prospects, more equality and more harmonious families and relations.

We also **demand** an end to harmful policies and practices affecting young people living with HIV, Roma, refugees, LGBTQ+, and people with disabilities as well as the commitment to recognise the inequalities and stigma not only in official documents and statements, but **in practice and the lived experiences of all young people**. We are deeply concerned about hate speech and harmful practice, often reinforced by policies demonstrating lack of respect towards diverse youth communities. We believe it is critical to eradicate discrimination and stigmatization.

Last but not least, the world is ever-evolving, with a multitude of events unfolding at every moment. Yet, one thing remains unchangeable **is the significance of the health**, especially the reproductive health, of young people across the region. We yearn for change, demand commitment, and seek full engagement. We need platforms and opportunities to express our views. Thank you!