

**YOUTH DECLARATION AT THE 5<sup>TH</sup> APCRSR**  
**BEIJING, CHINA**  
*17 OCTOBER, 2009*

We, the youth<sup>1</sup> participants of the 5th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights, held in Beijing, China on 17-20 October 2009, call upon policy makers and decision makers from government, donors, private sectors, as well as civil society to actively address SRHR of young people as a global goal with specific time bound indicators.<sup>2</sup>

We believe that the meaningful participation of young people plays a vital role in improving their reproductive and sexual health and rights. Embracing the fact that our communities are a reflection of the contributions made by each of its members, including young people, we are committed to finding innovative and effective strategies to meet the challenges that all young people are facing in fulfilling our sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We call upon policy-makers, decision makers, governments, donors, private sector, civil society and all young people to make every effort to work hand-in-hand in realizing achieving the goals of ICPD and MDGs' towards creating an enabling environment, so that all young people are empowered to enjoy their sexuality and protect themselves from harm.

**ALL PARTICIPANTS OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> APCRSR YOUTH FORUM ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:**

ICPD PoA and MDGs continue to play a key role in Asia and the Pacific regional sexual and reproductive health and rights movements. Under the above mentioned frameworks, consistent actions of national governments, courageous political commitments, and positive policy changes for population, health, and the environment have contributed significantly to the comprehensive development of young people and adolescents in Asia and the Pacific region. However, we believe that it is necessary to think beyond Cairo and acknowledge the limitations of the ICPD Plan of Action, by pushing for a more inclusive and progressive agenda.

The efforts made to provide integrated reproductive health services and education that are comprehensive, sex-positive, gender-sensitive, youth-friendly, youth-driven, which recognize the evolving capacities of young people are an invaluable investment in the present and future of the region.

**DESPITE THE PROGRESS, HOWEVER, ALL PARTICIPANTS OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> APCRSR YOUTH FORUM REALIZE THAT:**

Denying young people accessible sexual and reproductive health services and education is a violation of young people's human rights and their right to development, as affirmed by the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action.

A significant number of young people in Asia and the Pacific do not have enough knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights. This leaves them potentially vulnerable to coercion, stigma and discrimination; abuse, violence and exploitation; unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortion and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

Significantly, poverty and regional disparity in social and economic development is the largest barrier in realizing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people.

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<sup>1</sup>Paragraph 2, Global Partners in Action: NGO forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development

<sup>2</sup> Such as the Millennium Development Goals

## **TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES, WE URGE NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES:**

**To fulfill** sexual and reproductive health and rights, as they are an inalienable aspect of young people's right to health.

**To recognize** that gender affects young people's lives and experiences. Young people, especially young girls are deeply affected by harmful gender stereotypes and gender inequality. Therefore, actions should be taken towards addressing issues due to gender disparities such as child marriage, forced marriage, early and forced pregnancy.

**To provide** mechanism for easier access to funding and support for youth-led and youth focused initiatives and establish strong and sustainable partnerships between States, decisions makers, international agencies, donors, and NGO's, government, civil societies, and young people.

**To ensure** the involvement of young people at all programmatic, policy and decision-making and budget planning and distribution at the national, regional and international level.

**To invest** in young people as a priority in population and development strategies with programming specifically directed at increasing access to information, education, counseling and skills that enable young people to make decisions about their own wellbeing. Consequently, States should ensure that the different sectors of society are fully informed, sensitized on youth issues and empowered to act in the best interests of young people.

**To develop and enforce** non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health related laws and policies at local, national, regional and international levels particularly those concerning young people. This includes eliminating legal and policy barriers, which restrict young people's access to essential services, such as parental and spousal consent, age of consent and issues of confidentiality. Furthermore, to assess the credibility of programmes, ensure transparency, and close monitoring that is driven towards positive progressive results.

**To guarantee** universal access to comprehensive sexuality education for all young people, and ensure that all existing SRH services are youth-friendly, non-judgmental, recognize and respect diversity and are accessible to all young people, including underserved groups.

## **WE, THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 5<sup>th</sup> APCRSR YOUTH FORUM:**

Commit **our individual capacities** towards improving the health and well-being of our societies.

Commit to **sharing accountability** towards protecting the health and rights of all individuals.

Commit to **enhance understanding** across geographical regions, cultural and religious diversities with a vision to achieve inclusive social development with sustainability.

Commit to **continue promoting** sexual and reproductive health and rights as a primary component of equal opportunity and human development.

We would like to emphasize that many of the mentioned demands have been made at various instances in the last 15 years. This document has to be seen in continuity with those that have come before.

**We Commit. We Recommend. We Deserve.**