



## ***Kigali Call to Action: United for Women and Girls' Bodily Autonomy***

***July, 2023, Kigali, Rwanda***

The world is not on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) by 2023. Instead we are witnessing a global pushback on women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender equality. The global pushback, driven by a well-coordinated transnational anti-gender movement is placing the hard-fought gains on gender equality and women's rights, including reproductive rights, under threat. This global pushback is hampering negotiations in intergovernmental spaces. Additionally, declining investments, regressive laws, rising conservatism, harmful technology, and climate change, are factors further compounding the gender equality and reproductive health and rights crisis.

According to recent data from 68 countries reporting on SDG indicator 5.6.1, 44 per cent of partnered women worldwide still cannot make their own choices about their reproductive health, use of contraception, and ability to say no to sex. Violations and limitations of women and girls' bodily autonomy ranges from a lack of choice which can lead to unintended pregnancies, to laws that restrict women and girls' ability to exercise their reproductive rights, and abortion being criminalized or not accessible despite being legal. These constraints also threaten access to comprehensive sexuality education, and hamper efforts to end gender-based violence including increasing forms like technology-facilitated gender based violence, and harmful practices.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the rights to be free from violence and harmful practices are human rights and they are not negotiable. They ought to be upheld for women and girls in all their diversity everywhere - and should never be rolled back anywhere. Bodily autonomy, "the right to govern over one's own body" is the foundation of gender equality and societies flourish when women and girls can exercise their bodily autonomy.

Therefore, We, the signatories of this Call to Action are:

*Reaffirming* the ICPD Programme of Action, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international agreements that give credence to the right to bodily autonomy,

*Reiterating* the [Beijing Declaration](#), which recognized that "the right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility, is basic to their empowerment",

*Recalling* the [Nairobi Statement on ICPD25](#), which called for the protection of the right to bodily integrity and autonomy,

*Championing* the momentum of the Generation Equality Forum, building on the achievements of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, through global multi-stakeholder partnerships to reach gender equality by 2030, and *reiterating* our commitments to the blueprints of the Action Coalition on Bodily Autonomy and SRHR, reflected in the [Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality](#) as well as the [Young Feminist Manifesto](#),

*Recognizing* the complexity of the challenges before us with gender inequality being perpetuated by multiple intersecting forms of discrimination, deeply rooted social and gender norms, gender unequal structures as well as misconceptions about the rights of women and girls,

*Acknowledging* that gender inequality, perpetuated by gender unequal structures, norms and attitudes, remains one of the most pervasive impediments to bodily autonomy,

*Expressing* deep concern about the global pushback and backtracking of the hard fought gains and the shrinking civic space for the women's movements to operate, especially since the presence of an autonomous feminist movement is a critical factor to drive policy change,

*Reminding* that exercising bodily autonomy means access to free and informed choice, unhindered by demographic, economic, social, political, environmental or security barriers, as articulated in the [State of the World Population Report 2023 "8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities: The Case for Rights and Choices"](#),

*Celebrating* the examples of progress witnessed globally, offering a glimpse of hope, in terms of progressive legislation on reproductive rights, and the significant contributions made by civil society, including women-led organizations, the girls and women's feminist movement, and networks fighting for bodily autonomy from local to global levels.

We call on all stakeholders to:

- Leverage the momentum of the ICPD30 Review to reaffirm, recommit and expand the range of stakeholders globally in support of all women and girls' bodily autonomy,
- Harness and accelerate collective actions and partnerships towards the implementation of the blueprint of the Action Coalition on Bodily Autonomy and SRHR, as well as synergies across all Action Coalitions,
- Expand efforts to ensure all women and girls have the power of choice and decision-making to realize bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and live free of gender-based violence and harmful practices — as essentials for achieving the SDGs and a sustainable future,
- Innovate and identify approaches, particularly to support, finance and engage women-led organizations, the feminist movement, including young feminists, to engage in collective action towards a stronger movement for bodily autonomy, leveraging the potential of the ICPD mandate,

- Increase international financing for the accelerated implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, to complement and catalyze domestic financing, in particular of sexual and reproductive health programmes, and other supportive measures and interventions that promote gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment,
- Invest in and strengthen evidence informed and rights based policies and programmes in support of all women and girls' bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights.