



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.: General

July 2021

Original: English and French

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**2021 session**

13 July 2021 – 16 July 2021

Agenda item 5

**ECOSOC High-level Segment**

**Statement submitted by Family Planning NSW... in  
consultative status with the Economic and Social Council \***

The Secretary-General has received the following statements, which are being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statements are issued without formal editing.

## Statement

Family Planning NSW is one of Australia's leading providers of sexual and reproductive health services. We work domestically and internationally, supporting our partners in the Pacific to deliver sexual and reproductive health education, information and clinical services. Family Planning NSW is committed to annually reporting on progress of the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia and the Pacific.

### **Sexual and reproductive health and rights and the 2030 Agenda**

Global work towards the realisation and achievement of sexual and reproductive health and rights is more important now than ever, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries must ensure progression towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals remains a priority. Without accelerated progression, there are serious and real risks to the health and wellbeing of the global community, especially those who are vulnerable and marginalised.

Given the interconnectedness of sexual and reproductive health and rights on poverty, health, wellbeing, and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, implementation of global priorities to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights is needed. Family Planning NSW recommends five strategies to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights and promote inclusive and effective sustainable development.

#### **1. Increase access to long-acting reversible contraception**

Despite evidence of effectiveness, use of long-acting reversible contraception in Australia and the Pacific remains low. Increasing long-acting reversible contraception uptake supports women and girls to decide whether or when to have children, and enables them to engage in sustainable work and education by reducing the number of unintended pregnancies.

#### **2. Eliminate cervical cancer**

While Australia is on track to eradicating cervical cancer, compliance with screening varies within vulnerable and marginalised populations. Further, cervical cancer remains a leading cause of death for women in many countries in the Pacific and across the globe. Focus needs to remain on improving screening rates in under-screened populations and ensuring sustainable access to essential preventive services.

#### **3. Invest in comprehensive sexuality education**

There remains no consistent approach to comprehensive sexuality education in Australia, and an alarming lack in the Pacific. Implementation of age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education promotes respectful relationships, gender equality and better health outcomes, including lower rates of unintended pregnancy, sexually transmissible infections, stigma and gender-based violence.

#### **4. Promote gender equality and end sexual and gender-based violence**

Discrimination and violence against women and girls are common in Australia and the Pacific. Sexual and reproductive health and rights and achieving bodily autonomy supports gender equality by addressing harmful gender norms, promoting respectful relationships, empowering women to make decisions about work, education, relationships, and whether or when to have children.

#### **5. Improve sexual and reproductive health data collection**



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There are significant gaps in reliable data on key indicators that would improve governments and civil society's ability to identify and address areas of sexual and reproductive health need, supporting the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

## **Conclusion**

By investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights programs, policies and services for all people, we contribute to creating a world where everyone reaches their full potential.

**Word count: 500**