



## **Key messages for General Assembly Special Session on ICPD+20**

In marking the General Assembly Special Session on the 20th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development on 22 September 2014, Heads of States and Government and other high-level dignitaries have a unique opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to making sure the world's population – in particular women and youth - can live a life with dignity and human rights. Amnesty International encourages States to draw on and reflect the following points in making their statements at the Special session:

### **1. Commit to ensuring the protection of sexual and reproductive rights as human rights, and recognise that these rights are key to advancing gender equality and development**

1.1 We reaffirm our commitment to sexual and reproductive rights for all, including by reaffirming the ICPD Program of Action and subsequent progressive legal and political developments in this field. We pledge to turn these commitments into reality, including by implementing recommendations by international human rights monitoring bodies.

1.2 We commit to reforming laws, policies and guidelines that impose criminal or punitive sanctions for the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights. These include, among others, laws that criminalize abortion, conduct during pregnancy, same-sex relations, and consensual sex between adults, as well as laws that punish consensual sex between adolescents without taking into consideration their evolving capacities and meaningful consent.

1.3 We will empower individuals, in particular those most marginalised, to know and claim their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

1.4 We will protect individuals' sexual and reproductive rights from violations, including those committed by State or non-state actors. References to culture, tradition and religion can never be used to justify discrimination and other human rights violations, including violations of sexual and reproductive rights.

1.5 We pledge to ensure that all government agencies are aware of, are committed and have the capacity to comply with all international human rights standards on sexual and reproductive rights.

### **2. Commit to ensuring universal access to quality, comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive health information, education, and services for all.**

2.1. We commit to ensuring that all individuals can exercise their right to access quality, comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive health information, education, and services throughout their life cycle, without discrimination, coercion or violence. We pledge to realizing this right by ensuring access to the full range of modern contraceptive methods, prevention and treatment of STIs/HIV, maternal health care, safe and legal abortion services and post-abortion care, and prevention and treatment of reproductive cancers.

2.2 We will remove all barriers (geographic, financial, language and otherwise) that impede access to sexual and reproductive health services, information and education, in particular for individuals from marginalised groups.

2.3 We commit to ensure that all young people can access youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, with the full respect of their rights to privacy and confidentiality.

2.4 We will ensure universal access to age-appropriate, evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education.

### **3. Commit to taking effective measures to address the impact of discrimination and marginalization on individuals' abilities to enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights**

3.1 We commit to ensuring that our efforts to implement the ICPD Programme of Action and sexual and reproductive rights will always be aimed at ending discrimination and guaranteeing gender equality, and that we will prioritize the most disadvantaged groups in this process.

3.2 We will adopt effective measures to end all forms of discrimination, taking into account the impact of intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination. To this end, we will proactively promote the empowerment of individuals through implementation of programmes and policies aimed at addressing gender equality and removing discriminatory stereotypes.

3.3 We will abolish all discriminatory laws and policies that impair or nullify individuals' equality before the law on the grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, age, language, ethnicity, Indigenous identity, culture, religion, or disability. In particular, we will abolish all laws and policies that illegitimately criminalize the exercise of individuals' sexual and reproductive rights, and that impairs or nullify women's equality within the family or undermine the rights of women who experience gender-based violence.

3.4 We pledge to take measures to prevent and prosecute all forms of gender-based violence whether perpetrated by state officials or non-state actors, including through taking effective measures to eradicate gender-based discrimination and stereotypes, which perpetuate or justify violence or result in stigmatization of survivors of violence. We will ensure that survivors of gender-based violence have access to justice, effective remedies, and adequate support services.

3.5 We will take concrete measures to support and protect human rights defenders, including those working on sexual and reproductive rights, so that they can carry out their work without fear, intimidation, threats or violence.

### **4. Commit to guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, including through allocation of sufficient resources, and ensuring accountability, including through participation, monitoring, evaluation and access to justice mechanisms and remedies**

4.1 We commit to collecting data on the realization of sexual and reproductive rights that is disaggregated on the basis of gender and for other groups identified as facing discrimination. This data will inform the design and evaluation of all policies and programmes related to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

4.2 We will review the allocation of resources for sexual and reproductive health, including those available through international assistance, in order to ensure that they are consistent with prioritizing disadvantaged groups and sufficient to realize sexual and reproductive rights.

4.3 We commit to ensuring that all individuals are enabled to use the law to enforce their sexual and reproductive rights and access remedies for any violations of these rights. We will remove all barriers in law, policy and practice preventing access to justice and effective remedies for people from marginalised groups.

4.4 We will mandate national human rights monitoring bodies, as well as quasi-judicial regulatory bodies, to monitor violations of sexual and reproductive rights and take action to investigate complaints and provide remedies for violations, and ensure these bodies have the capacity to do so effectively.

4.5 We commit to permitting increased scrutiny of the government's implementation of human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, by ratifying optional protocols of human rights treaties that provide access to complaint mechanisms, in particular those relating to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

4.6 We will ensure that individuals, in particular those from marginalised groups, are enabled to participate in priority setting, planning, implementation and monitoring in relation to programmes and policies connected to sexual and reproductive rights.

**5. Commit to integrating sexual and reproductive rights in the post ---2015 development agenda**

We pledge to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights are integrated in the post--2015 development agenda through adequate targets and indicators both within the goals on gender equality and on health.

August 2014

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