CONCEPT NOTE

20th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development
Virtual conference, October 27-28, 2022

Looking back, looking ahead: Building Resilience to Crises for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Background:

After two years of living with the COVID 19 pandemic, we have seen rapid changes in the way we adapt, innovate, and develop measures to ensure access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) despite the many obstacles and challenges that we have faced. We have had to sharpen our efforts to ensure that SRHR stays a relevant policy and funding priority, and increasingly so given emerging security crises that may lead to fundamentally changed aid priorities, resulting in further funding cuts or even program discontinuations.

Two years ago, the 18th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development, in November 2020 focussed on the implications of COVID-19 for SRHR as we saw how the COVID-19 pandemic was having a profound impact on access to services and enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights – especially in the Global South. While families, couples and individuals faced intense pressure and hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, life-saving SRH services and supplies, including sexual and gender-based violence services, became scarce and/or inaccessible. Existing socioeconomic inequalities were exacerbated, especially as they pertain to girls, women and under-served groups. Disrupted health systems, deprioritising of SRHR, stock outs of supplies of medicines and Family Planning commodities, opportunistic attacks on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, as well as the consequences of physical distancing, travel restrictions and economic slowdowns offered up new and unexpected challenges. This has fundamentally changed the SRHR landscape.

We have, however, gained much in practical experience on how to ensure SRHR in the face of immediate constraints and on how to increase the resilience of SRHR services to be better prepared for future crises. The 20th International Dialogue provides an opportunity and a space to share our experiences, explore best practices and creative solutions, and discuss issues like these together.

Objective:

The 20th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development will **identify what builds resilience for addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights in times of crises**, by learning from the past and strategizing for the future.

The 20th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development will:

- Bring together key stakeholders for SRHR from different regions, and from a range of sectors: government, international organisations, civil society, SRHR networks and movements, academia and the private sector. It will provide a '**safe space' to explore ideas, share experiences, build alliances, strategize, and find new ways forward**.
- Take stock of the last two years to understand **what builds resilience when it comes to SRHR.** We will investigate what factors have enhanced continuity of SRHR services, what new ways of working and innovations have emerged, and how these have been sustained, especially in the Global South. We will also explore the lasting damage where SRHR has been deprioritised, under attack, or ignored.
- Look forward, to see where we can make **smart investments to prepare for future crises**: we will identify the tools to use, the approaches to take; and the different stakeholders that will play a key role and the expectations we can have of them.

Format:

The 20th International Dialogue will offer a format that prioritises interactive discussion and meaningful encounters between participants.

Day 1 will focus on taking stock of the last two years: drawing on inputs from participants we will look back to identify what interventions were critical in ensuring continuity of SRHR services and maintaining an enabling environment for SRHR.

Day 2 will look ahead to the future: by pulling together the learnings of day 1, we will identify 'what' and 'who' makes for **resilience in realising SRHR in situations of crises**.