

Her Excellency Dr. Angela Merkel
Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany
Bundeskanzleramt
Willy-Brandt-Straße 1
DE-10557 Berlin, Germany

cc: Honorable Hermann Gröhe, Federal Minister of Health
Honorable Prof. Dr. Lars-Hendrik Röller, Federal Chancellery

1 May 2017

Re: 2017 G20 Summit should ensure political and financial commitments to sexual and reproductive health as part of achieving Universal Health Coverage

Dear Chancellor Merkel,

We as civil society organizations urge you to prioritize the lives and rights of women and girls as your 2017 G20 legacy by ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health, including access to modern methods of contraception. We call on you to make important steps towards investments in these areas as a key contribution to sustainable development, the realization of human rights and economic growth.

We welcome the G20 health experts' recognition that the world needs strong, resilient and gender-sensitive health systems which respond to the health-needs of local communities.¹ Strong national health systems are the building blocks required to deliver comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, information and education to those that need it most. It enables individuals to decide freely on the timing, number and spacing of their children and promotes social and economic wellbeing, which has been proven to yield economic gains.

Health systems strengthening is critical for achieving Universal Health Coverage, and sexual and reproductive health is an essential component of this agenda; it is a strategic choice for the 2017 G20 Summit. We applaud Germany's leadership on ensuring that sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning is high on the global agenda, as prioritized in the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, and the G7 Ise-Shima Vision for Global Health.² We call upon you, in your presidency, to further these commitments and champion strong endorsement for sexual and reproductive health and rights from G20 countries.

We call on the G20 to commit to the following:

1. **Further Political Commitment in Continuum of Comprehensive Care in Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health.** Promote investment in capacity development of health workers, enhance health literacy of women and girls, improve access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and comprehensive sexuality education in collaboration with partner countries and civil society.
2. **Explicit Financial Commitments on sexual and reproductive health, information and education.** Make an explicit financial commitment to women, children and adolescents' health with a focus on sexual and reproductive health.

¹ http://health.bmz.de/what_we_do/hss/Dates_and_events/strengthen_health_systems/index.html

² <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000160273.pdf>

- 3. Health System Strengthening/ Universal Health Coverage must leave no one behind.**
Ensure Health System Strengthening/ Universal Health Coverage puts people first, with a human-rights based, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive approach so that primary health care and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, education and information, reach the most marginalized and vulnerable populations.

At this moment, we cannot compromise on affordable, accessible and high quality health services for women and girls. Now more than ever we need strong support and commitment from world leaders to promote essential, life-saving services and give women, men and young people the opportunity to exercise their human rights.

Chancellor Merkel, we again thank you for your prioritizing health as a key agenda of this year's G20. As the host of the 2017 G20 Summit, we would ask you as the leader of the G20 to use this opportunity to inspire and galvanize other G20 countries to make firm political and financial commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Yours sincerely,