

Joint Statement on Women's, Adolescent, and Children's Health, World Health Assembly, May 2019

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World Health Organization, 72nd Session of the World Health Assembly



May 2019

On May 2019, the Joint Statement on Women's, Adolescent, and Children's Health was delivered at the World Health Organization (WHO) during its 72nd Session of the World Health Assembly. The statement underscores the importance of the family in expanding health opportunities for women, children,

and adolescents, as well as refraining from using ambiguous and controversial expressions – such as sexual and reproductive health - in WHO documents.

"We are pleased to speak on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, United States, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Haiti, Ghana, Nigeria, and Iraq, that believe the health of women, children and adolescents support and improve the overall health of our families and communities, and that the family is the foundational institution of society and thus should be supported and strengthened.

We commend the World Health Organization on the occasion of the release of the report on the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health for placing a high priority on giving them equal access to the many tools that are predictive of health and thriving throughout their lives.

We applaud progress made to expand access to health care. We also recognize more work remains to improve their wellbeing and future prospects, so we commit to expanding these opportunities.

We therefore, urge Member States to join us in focusing on the important work of expanding health and opportunities for women, children and adolescents, especially those in situations of risk and/or vulnerability.

To make the most meaningful progress without delay or dissension, we respectfully call upon Member States to join us in concentrating on topics that unite rather than divide on the critical issues surrounding women's, children's and adolescents' health. We choose to pursue areas where

unity is possible because every nation, regardless of circumstance, has much to do to improve the health of women, children and adolescents.

We do not support references to ambiguous terms and expressions, such as the right to *sexual and reproductive health* (and its derivatives) in the context of the WHO, since they cause confusion and misunderstanding. Such terms do not adequately take into account the key role of the family in health and education. Furthermore, they have become associated with pro-abortion policies and measures. We therefore request that the WHO focus on terms that enjoy broad consensus among member states.

We strongly support the highest attainable health outcomes for women, children, and adolescents throughout their lives, including, but not exclusively related to reproductive concerns. The health of women and girls will benefit from a more holistic approach.

Let us focus on concrete issues and challenges to accelerate access to health by women, children and adolescents, in particular those in situations of vulnerability. To this end, international solidarity has a key role to play, in order to the build broad consensus by member states."

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