

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE  
HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN THE  
GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM'  
ACTION COALITION ON



## FEMINIST MOVEMENTS & LEADERSHIP



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Countdown 2030 Europe (C2030E) is a consortium of European NGOs advocating to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and family planning (FP) in developing countries through holding European governments to account on their international policy and financial commitments on SRHR. To achieve this mission, amongst other activities, the consortium provides inputs to intergovernmental negotiations and policy processes. **This factsheet aims to inform the Action Coalitions on the interlinkages between SRHR and various elements of gender equality and feminists movements.**

The objective of the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) is to build a new momentum to advance gender equality worldwide. To do so, Action Coalitions must avoid silos and must instead explore synergies between them, complement one another and focus on gender-transformative interventions. This series of factsheets done by Countdown 2030 Europe and IPPF EN aims at building bridges between Action Coalitions to bring about an actual change in the lives of women and girls worldwide and to show how access to SRHR is gender-transformative and is essential to achieve gender equality.



# WHY

## SHOULD SRHR BE INCLUDED ACTION COALITION ON FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP?

### FROM CAIRO TO BEIJING

Following the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) was a major step in advancing the recognition of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) at the international level and asserting women's control over their sexuality. Both conferences in Cairo and Beijing saw a massive amount of feminist and women's health activists participating. These organizations stood up for SRHR and gender equality and were defining for the success of the conference's outcomes. These movements remain vigilant and advocate to ensure existing agreements and human rights are not reversed and progress made are not undone.

### LATEST TRENDS RELATING TO SRHR, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND FEMINIST MOVEMENTS



- At a global level, **funding for international development and cooperation policy around SRHR has suffered significant budgetary cuts**, especially as a result of the reintroduction of the USA' Global Gag Rule in 2017. But we are also seeing and can further expect cuts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which mainly affects small grassroots organizations, and will in the future have further impact on development cooperation funds amidst economic recession.
- Where feminist organizations already had to fight for access to decision-making spaces, **civic space further shrank in the context of COVID-19** - due to lockdowns, the disruption of international air travel and inaccessible discussions and negotiations about policies that affect women and girls.
- In the past ten years, **certain groups have been strategizing with the aim of reversing human rights in the area of gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights**. These coercive, anti-SRHR, anti-gender and anti-LGBTI groups find more ground with conservative governments and pose a threat to gender equality and the health and well-being of women and girls.
- In the meantime, **objectives related to achieving access to SRHR for all women and girls have not been achieved**. Still 830 women die every day due to complications of pregnancy or childbirth which should be avoidable.<sup>1</sup> 214 million women who would prefer to delay or avoid pregnancy still don't have access to safe and effective contraception<sup>2</sup> and an estimated 68 million girls are at risk of FGM by 2030. These figures are worsening with the COVID-19 pandemic, with an expected additional 49 million women with an unmet need for modern contraceptives and an additional 15 million unintended pregnancies over the course of a year.<sup>3</sup>
- **The COVID-19 crisis and Black Lives Matter protests have brought into sharp focus how people's gender, class and ethnic identities – and systemic racism in healthcare – can severely affect healthcare access, including SRHR services, and mortality rates**. In the UK, for example, black women are five times more likely than white women to die as a result of complications in pregnancy, according to a 2019 study by the University of Oxford.<sup>4</sup>

### SRHR AND FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP

- **Feminist movements have been mobilising all over the world for sexual and reproductive rights**. From the global #MeToo movement addressing sexual violence, the Green Wave throughout Latin America and the Caribbean for legal abortion to the Tunisian campaigns for equal inheritance rights, feminist movements are profoundly transforming power relations.
- Many governments have shown leadership in becoming **champions for SRHR through the SheDecides movement**.
- There is an emergence of a **'feminist foreign policy' agenda**, also by European governments, often including SRHR as a central pillar.

# HOW

## SHOULD SRHR BE INCLUDED IN THE ACTION COALITION ON FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP?



The Action Coalition blueprint should be developed **in partnership with civil society and especially feminist, women's rights and grassroots organisations**. The Action Coalition leaders and members should ensure in particular the **meaningful and inclusive participation of young people**, especially adolescent girls, as young feminist activists are essential to developing and implementing successful programmes, laws and policies that affect new generations of women and girls.

The Action Coalition should take an **intersectional approach** to solving the systemic barriers civil society and feminist movements face.

The blueprint should include a **priority action on closing the gap in gender data**. Persistent gaps in gender data are preventing progress to achieve SRHR and gender equality as captured in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The urgent need to close these data gaps was highlighted by the UN Secretary General's Beijing+25 Review Report.<sup>5</sup>

The blueprint should also include a mechanism to **monitor the implementation and impacts of policies** from a multidimensional and intersectional approach that serves the interactions between gender and economic, social, political and environmental aspects.

In terms of funding commitments, the blueprint should call for commitments from States to increase the **funding allocated to feminist movements**, which are playing a leading role in the promotion of SRHR at both national and international level, through national budgets and international cooperation and development policies.

The Action Coalition leaders and members should work with feminist organisations to ensure that the blueprint includes the implementation of **flexible funding mechanisms** which are adapted to their needs, modes of operation and daily reality.

And finally, governments and civil society should join forces to **counter the anti-gender and anti-rights movement and seek broad cross-regional support** for the human rights framework and multilateralism.

This factsheet is part of a series of factsheets by Countdown 2030 Europe on the inclusion of SRHR in the various Action Coalition (AC) of the Generation Equality Forum - to ensure an integrated and inclusive approach across the ACs with particular attention to SRHR throughout.

1. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)00838-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)00838-7/fulltext)

2. WHO, 2018

3. Guttmacher Institute, 2020. Estimates of the Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Sexual and Reproductive Health In Low- and Middle-Income Countries. [https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article\\_files/4607320.pdf](https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article_files/4607320.pdf)

4. Knight M, Bunch K, Tuffnell D, Shakespeare J, Kotnis R, Kenyon S, Kurinczuk JJ (Eds.) on behalf of MBRRACE-UK. Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care - Lessons learned to inform maternity care from the UK and Ireland Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths and Morbidity 2016-18. Oxford: National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford 2020.

5. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3850087?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>



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