

Statement delivered by Sachini Perera on behalf of the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) and 118 civil society organizations from 33 countries and 7 regions - Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, Europe, North America and Africa.

Thank you, Your Excellencies. I welcome the opportunity to be able to comment on the **Political Declaration of the zero draft** in relation to Population Dynamics and Sustainable Development.

We live in a world of 7 billion people, a significant 1.8 billion of them young people and another significant portion the elderly. Our changing demographic structures are affected and challenged by factors such as poverty, urbanization, internal and international migration, as well as unmet need for access to healthcare for all, especially in the regions of the Global South. Population dynamics are a clear indication of the persistent inequalities in our world and will significantly influence the outcome and achievement of the SDGs. Therefore, we hope that you take into cognizance the following.

The **Introduction** should, in **paragraph 3**, include ending of discrimination of any kind and the achievement of human rights, including women's human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, right to food and nutrition, and right to development. The latter is a reminder that development and human rights go hand in hand and are in no way mutually exclusive.

In **paragraph 18**, sexual and reproductive health and rights and comprehensive sexuality education must be added as critical parts of right to and access to health and to education.

Under **Implementation** in **paragraph 30**, we are concerned that although the role of business and the private sector in implementing the SDGs has been prominently highlighted, this is not matched with appropriate accountability measures to ensure that any such actions should adhere to human rights, environmental and labor standards, and be **age, disability, migrant,** and **gender-responsive**.

The framework should reduce not only income inequalities, but also inequalities in economic, social and political opportunities. To this end, listings for disaggregated data, across the outcome document and in **paragraphs 17 and 39** in particular, need to be non-exhaustive in order to incorporate characteristics relevant in national contexts.

We are committed to work with governments and UN institutions in order to ensure that catchphrases like “freeing the human race from the tyranny of poverty” and “no one will be left behind” don’t end up as empty words. Thank you.