

**Human Rights Council Fourth Intersessional Meeting on Human Rights and the Agenda 2030**

**18January 2022**

Thank you Chair,

Human rights are at the heart of UNFPA’s work. Protecting the human rights of all people is a precondition for individual well-being and sustainable development. UNFPA works to empower individuals and communities to claim their sexual and reproductive health and rights and advance gender equality to achieve the vision of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Under our new Strategic Plan 2022-2025, a human rights-based approach serves as an accelerator to achieve by 2030 three transformative results which are: (1) ending the unmet need for family planning; (2) ending preventable maternal deaths; and (3) ending gender-based violence and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

To effectively embed human rights standards and principles in all our programmes and activities UNFPA’s Guidance Note on “Elevating Rights and Choices provides a road map for strengthening the normative and operational connection from our policies and principles down to our programmes and interventions in the field by:

1. Addressing inequality and discrimination
2. providing quality services aligned with human rights norms and standards, and
3. strengthening national accountability systems to address systemic and structural shortcomings in protecting human rights.

In order to achieve sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality, UNFPA supplies governments with population data and programming evidence to help inform human rights policy and standard setting processes. Our strategic plan also stresses the importance of a continued engagement with international human rights mechanisms, such as the Universal Period Review to promote dialogue and accountability and help direct development cooperation efforts on SRHR. UNFPA also works with regional and national human rights protection systems, including national human rights institutions, to help monitor access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, information and education.

Mindful that only what is measured counts, indicator 3.6 of the Strategic Plan will assess the follow-up and implementation of accepted recommendations of international and regional human rights mechanisms related to discriminatory social/gender norms, stereotypes, and practices on sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and harmful practices.

In closing, it must be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to undo years of work on women’s health and rights as access to sexual and reproductive health services are disrupted, and human rights are increasingly contested. Therefore, this intersessional meeting and the High-Level Political Forums will be important milestones in renewing the commitments to keep the achievement of our three transformative results on track by 2030.

I Thank you.