**Introduction: international data on HIV & Youth**

Distinguished panel, delegates and representatives of civil society. My name is Linda Barry and I am a youth activist with the youth-led organisation CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality.

It is my privilege to make this statement on behalf of 12 partnered youth organisations. Collectively we call your attention to the importance of integrated SRHR services in the context of HIV prevention among youth.

Despite significant efforts by the international community, young people continue to be disproportionally affected by the HIV epidemic. About one fourth of all new HIV infections globally occur among young people between the ages 15 and 24. Additionally, AIDS related deaths among young people continue to grow, while decreasing in all other age groups.

**Our Research**

* + - In preparation of this discussion, we consulted with 450 young people between the ages of 15 to 29 in more than 20 countries,
    - 52 percent of whom had never had a HIV or STI test.
    - Equally Concerning, among those who tested, 58% of youth reported significant barriers to their testing experiences
    - Including age-based stigma from health workers, high costs of services and lack of adequate information.

To increase the access & uptake of HIV services among young people we recommend states to:

* + - **Strengthen the youth-friendly capacity of health workers**
    - **Increase access to information on SRH and HIV services**
    - **Eliminate harmful laws and policies**
    - **Decriminalise the sexual behaviour of young key populations**

HIV prevention policies have to be better, however without the meaningful participation of young people in their design, implementation and evaluation it is impossible to know how.

What we ask for is not new, and has been confirmed and reaffirmed throughout numerous HRC resolutions and UN policy documents.

In order to end the HIV epidemic, young people need to, and deserve to be at the forefront of the HIV response.

This statement has been endorsed by the following youth-led organisations:

1. CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality
2. Network for Adolescent and Youth of Africa
3. Equality Triangle Initiative
4. Reach a Hand Uganda
5. Coalizão
6. Youth Empire and Civic Education
7. Generation Alive
8. YouAct
9. Zimbabwe Young Positives
10. International Youth Alliance for Family Planning
11. YUWA
12. Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV