

Thank you Mr President.

This statement is delivered on behalf of the Center for Reproductive Rights, the Sexual Rights Initiative, and the International Initiative on Maternal Mortality and Human Rights.

We welcome the follow up report by the OHCHR on the technical guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementations of policies and programmes to reduce preventable maternal mortality and morbidity.

Despite massive reductions in maternal mortality rates over the last two decades and increased implementation of the technical guidance, the full realisation and enjoyment of women and girls' sexual and reproductive health rights remains a distant goal for millions. In 2015 alone, there have been **303,000**<sup>1</sup> pregnancy related deaths of women and girls, which were largely preventable, with millions more women and girls suffering serious and sometimes lifelong injuries. Particularly affected by these higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity are adolescents, women and girls in conflict and humanitarian situations, women and girls with disabilities and other marginalized women and girls.

While the international community is gearing up for the implementation of the 2030 agenda, for the roll-out of the Secretary General's Global Strategy for women's, children's and adolescents' health and for the first report of the independent accountability panel at the UNGA that will provide an assessment of progress and challenges to help strengthen the maternal mortality and morbidity response from the international health community and countries, we echo the report's call to states to use the technical guidance as a tool for assuring compliance with their human rights obligations. Indeed, the implementation of the technical guidance, together with the use as a reference point of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' General comment No.22, will help ensure a comprehensive, holistic, human rights-based approach is applied to the realisation of the multiple targets linked to the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity within the 2030 Agenda and make sure that no group is excluded or marginalized. It will also help ensure that accountability remains at the center of interventions and strategies and that appropriate and sustainable accountability mechanisms are put in place and regularly reviewed within the implementation of the SDGs. States will need to continuously allocate and utilize maximum available resources to realising the maternal mortality and morbidity target under the SDGs as this target will require reducing global MMR by an average of 7.5% each year between 2016 and 2030. This will require more than three times the 2.3% annual rate of reduction observed globally between 1990 and 2015.

We therefore call on this Council to reaffirm the centrality of human rights to preventing maternal mortality and morbidity and reinforce linkages between international and regional processes, including the 2030 Agenda and the Global Strategy for women's, children's and adolescents' health.

Thank you Mr President

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.who.int/gho/maternal\\_health/mortality/maternal\\_mortality\\_text/en/](http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/mortality/maternal_mortality_text/en/)