



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

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We would like to thank you for your letter concerning 'A Nordic development agenda for gender equality and SRHR post Covid-19'. The ongoing crisis requires a response of unprecedented scale. The civil society plays a crucial role in this regard. IPPF and its Nordic member organisations are doing valuable and groundbreaking work to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).



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Finland is strongly and long-standingly committed to the realization and promotion of rights of all women and girls, including women and girls living with disabilities. SRHR is a particular focus of Finland's foreign policy. Supporting the organisations that are working in country-level and local level is important to us. This year, we have significantly increased our financial support to UNFPA – Finland's core funding to UNFPA is 33 million euros in 2020. We also fund various NGO's and INGO's working for SRHR, through advocacy work, service delivery and awareness raising, most often in fragile contexts. Finland continues to promote enabling space for civil society and to further enhance the meaningful participation, especially of those in the most vulnerable situations.

We see that in the current political climate it is crucial to recognise that SRHR information and services are part of essential health service. SRHR must be guaranteed also in conflict and crisis situation, including in pandemic context. Finland is actively pushing back against the global pushback on women's and girls' rights and gender equality – we work actively on this in the UN and EU fora. Finland wants to ensure that SRHR remains embedded in the universal health coverage (UHC) and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Nordic countries have a long and strong tradition of applying a human rights based approach to development. Finland pursues a human rights based foreign policy. The central aim of this policy is to systematically promote gender equality and the full materialisation of women's and girls' rights. Advancing SRHR is an integral part of this work. During the pandemic, we have increased our Nordic cooperation on having a shared analysis of the global trends regarding Covid-19 and development. We must use this opportunity to ensure that people do not only survive but can live long and healthy lives.



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Beyond the Nordic cooperation, the programming of EU's new multiannual financing framework 2021-2027 is an opportunity to advance SRHR globally. Multilateral cooperation is urgently needed in order to guarantee that rights of all women and girls are respected, protected and promoted all over the world. Multilateralism is extremely important in order to build back better and recover from Covid-19. Root causes of gender inequality need to be addressed in this process to ensure that no one is left behind. Like said, Finland will participate actively in international forums to ensure this.

Finland is engaging in 5-year Generation Equality process launched by UN Women, France and Mexico. The Generation Equality aims at systemic change in order to achieve gender equality. Finland is co-leading action coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality. Civil society will actively participate in the process. During the pandemic, technology and innovation have become even more crucial for women and girls to be able to enjoy their rights and participate fully in the society.

We very much appreciate and look forward to our continued, excellent cooperation with IPPF and its member organisations in making the world a better place for women and girls everywhere.

Sincerely yours,

Pekka Haavisto
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ville Skinnari
Minister for Development
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