

The Netherlands Statement on thematic session: Families, sexual and reproductive health over the life course

Sr. Chair,

As said yesterday, The Netherlands believes in engaging all stakeholders. I am glad to be part of the Dutch delegation as CSO and to be able to speak, as my organization implements the Cairo Agenda on a day to day basis. The Netherlands actively advocates for the right to bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive rights.

We are glad to see that The Netherlands is serious about its approach towards comprehensive sexuality education. Research shows that comprehensive, inclusive and evidence-based sexuality education eliminates harmful gender norms that are at the root of Sexual and Gender Based Violence. It also prevents unintended pregnancies, discrimination towards LGBTQI+ people, and STI's.

In the Netherlands we see the importance of comprehensive, safe, legal and affordable abortion services for all, as early as possible, with choice of method. Recently, the Netherlands has removed the compulsory five-day reflection period for accessing abortion services. And access to the abortion pill via general practitioners will be established in 2024 and thereby adheres to the WHO guidelines.

In addition to a multisectoral strategy to prevent, combat, and respond to sexual violence, The Netherlands is also in the process of adopting a consent-based definition of rape and sexual assault in our national law.

Yet challenges remain: we are concerned about the spread of mis- and disinformation on contraceptives, abortion, lgbtqi+ people and sexuality education. We must take action and work together to provide evidence based information to all.

And while education on sexuality and relationships is mandatory in all primary and secondary schools, not all schools implement it equally and comprehensively.

To conclude, it is essential to include and actively involve disadvantaged groups and reach furthest behind first, such as women, girls, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities, people with HIV, the LGBTQI+ community and of course, adolescents and young people.

Thank you