

JOINT SUBMISSION OF  
THE YOUNG PEOPLE  
OF NEPAL



## Call to Action to reaffirm to the Program of Action of International Conference on Population and Development, for the 25<sup>th</sup> year review and appraisal of CPD, 2019



This call to action has been developed by Right Here Right Now (RHRN) Nepal platform for the consideration of Review and Appraisal of Commission on Population and Development (CPD) during its 52nd session, to be held in United National Headquarters in New York in April 2019. Right Here Right Now Nepal is a strategic partnership of fifteen youth-led and youth-serving civil society organizations, advocating on three thematic issues: comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), marriage equality and safe abortion. Visible Impact is one of the member of the Right Here Right Now Platform.

This paper been prepared in consultation with around fifty young people, who came together to review and appraise the Program of Action of International Conference on Population and Development in March 2019 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The consultation consisted of young people, who have been working in various youth-led and youth-serving organizations, or attending academic institutions in social sciences and are aware about the work of CPD, and represented diversity of gender, geography, academic background, ethnicity, class etc.

This paper aims to highlight some of the pressing issues faced by young people in Nepal with respect to violations of their rights to participation, bodily rights and autonomy, and reflect on the key issues identified by the Program of Action (PoA) of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). This call to action also aims to provide key recommendations to mitigate these key issues and concerns, so that every young people can realize and exercise their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

# Why is ICPD Program of Action more relevant than ever?



The International Conference on Population and Development took place in Cairo, Egypt in 1994. It was adopted by 179 countries, including Nepal and is considered an important turning point in international development because several key agendas relating to population and development were addressed for the very first time. It recognized that key population issues like immigration, rapid urbanization, and family planning, were intimately interlinked with sustainable and inclusive development, and that none of these topics could be addressed in isolation from the others. It put the rights and needs of human beings at the heart of development, and also recognized the importance of sexual and reproductive health, and stressed that SRHR are fundamental human rights.

ICPD PoA is a strong advocacy document that contain intergovernmental negotiated commitments that United Nations (UN) member states have publicly agreed to. The CPD session held every year allows for an annual opportunity to review national, regional, and global progress and gives member states a space come together to re-confirm their commitment. The CPD outcome documents guide the priorities of the international community on issues related to development, population and human rights.

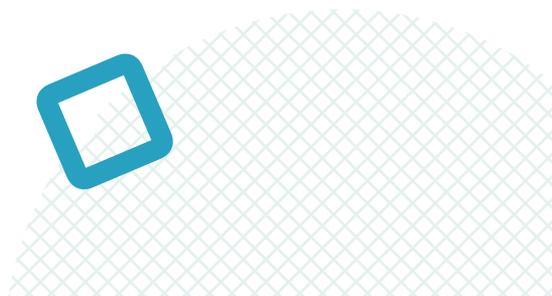
With the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 as Agenda 2030, CPD becomes even more relevant because both can

complement each other to complete each other's agenda. With both the mechanisms stressing on keeping people at the heart of development, and that sustainable development cannot exist in isolation from the population, they are relevant to the development world today more than ever.



“ICPD is more relevant than ever” -  
Björn Andersson, Regional Director of  
the United Nations Population Fund for  
Asia and the Pacific.

Nepal was one of the signatory of ICPD PoA in 1994 and it has been able to make progress in several aspects after that - the maternal mortality has reduced, the contraceptive prevalence rate has increased, adolescent birth rate has declined, to name a few. Nepal is known as one of the most progressive countries in the Asia Pacific region in terms of formulation laws and policies. However, implementing the laws and policies strictly remains a challenge. Recovering a decade long armed conflict and mega earthquake, Nepal has recently moved to a federal structure that supports decentralization. Hence, the concerns raised by ICPD 25 years ago are still relevant today.



# Issues of ICPD PoA identified by the young people themselves

Upon reviewing the ICPD PoA, the young people have identified the following key concerns that still need attention to ensure that young people are able to enjoy their bodily rights and autonomy:

- 1. Need to recognize young people as change agent:** Young people make 44.2% of the total population<sup>ii</sup>, who will mature alongside SDGs. Despite the important role that young people serve as change agent for political, economic and cultural transformation and the energy they contain, their role as change agent is often limitedly recognized as beneficiaries only.
- 2. Inadequate access to SRHR information and services:** The current curriculum is not comprehensive enough to meet the international guidelines<sup>iii</sup>. A formal Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) monitoring mechanism or a formal CSE curriculum for out of school children does not exist.<sup>iv</sup>

37% girls are married before turning 18, and Adolescent Birth Rate (ABR) is 62.<sup>vi</sup> The contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) has remained stagnant in the last five years; in 2011 (50%) and in 2016 (53.0%)<sup>vii</sup>. Unmet need for spacing is highest (32%) among married women aged 15-19 years.<sup>viii</sup>

Only 48% of women aged 15-49 are aware about the service center where they can access safe abortion services and only 42% of the abortions were conducted legally in government approved facilities<sup>ix</sup>. Stigma on abortion still persists among community people, service providers, managers, and policy makers<sup>x</sup>.

The Government of Nepal aims to make all service sites adolescent friendly and has been working towards it, but the perception of service



“Nothing for us, without us. If the Government expects us to act for population and development, we should also be invited to policy tables”  
(Female, 21 years)

- providers remains a challenge. The tailored need for access to services by third gender, rural women and girls, people with disability (PWD), indigenous people and ethnic groups are often overlooked. The sexual needs of elderly women and PWD is usually not recognized.
- 3. Unsafe public and private spaces for young women:** Twenty-two percent of women in Nepal age 15-49 have experienced physical violence since age 15, and 7% have ever experienced sexual violence.<sup>xi</sup> The experience of violence in public spaces like bus and movie theaters are largely under reported. Reported cases do not see sufficient actions from the state. In the year 2018/2019, 1018 cases of cybercrime were reported, out of which more than half of the cases were filed by women<sup>xii</sup>.
  - 4. Discrimination during menstruation:** 89% girls have experienced some form of menstrual restrictions<sup>xiii</sup> including 19.4% experiencing Chhaupadi, the tradition of banishing menstruation girls and women to cowshed. 53% of the girls are absent due to inadequate infrastructures to manage periods in school.<sup>xv</sup>
  - 5. Need to enhance the role of local government:** Local governments require to allocate at least 10% of their budgets for programs that directly benefit women and children<sup>xvi</sup>. With country's restructuring, and the local governance more powerful than ever, building the capacity of the local governance is important.

## Call to Action

This paper calls on all the relevant stakeholders, that includes relevant Government bodies such as Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen, National Planning Commission, National Youth Council to put young people at the heart of sustainable development, and all young people, youth activists and advocates, youth-led and serving international and national Non-Governmental Organizations (I/NGOs) to urge and support the decision makers in doing so.

- Reaffirm the Program of Action of International Conference on Population and Development, emphasize on the impertinent role it plays for achievement of Agenda 2030 at 52nd session of CPD and other platforms.
  - Include young people meaningfully in the national delegation during review of international commitments such as CPD, and in national policy making and policy review processes, so as to ensure that youth voices are included.
  - Ensure that the commitments made by Government in CPD PoA is implemented adequately, and these commitments reach beyond being a paper.
  - Ensure Comprehensive Sexuality Education for both in-school and out of school children, including its monitoring mechanism so that young people have access to correct and complete information related to their bodily rights and autonomy.
  - Provide stigma free and youth friendly services that is inclusive of the diverse need of age, gender, geography, ethnicity and physical ability. The specific need of third gender and PWD is recognized in policies and in practice.
  - Eliminate all forms of systemic discrimination against women such as patriarchy, menstrual isolation, child marriage etc. by strictly implementing the laws
  - Ensure protection of women in public and privates spaces, and enhance the system to ensure that cases are reported and actions are taken.
  - Enhance the capacity of the local government in effectively mobilizing the resources to design programs that empower women, girls and young people.
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  - xi. Nepal Demographic Health Survey. 2016.
  - xii. My Republica. 2019. More women falling prey to cybercrimes. Available at [myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/more-women-falling-prey-to-cyber-crimes/](http://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/more-women-falling-prey-to-cyber-crimes/)
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  - xiv. Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010. Central Bureau of Statistics. (2010). Downloaded from <http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Surveys/NMICS%202010%20Final%20Report/NMICS-2010-Preliminary-Report.pdf>
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  - xvi. Ministry of Local Development's guidelines on granting support to local governments.