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PRESS RELEASE

Fifteen years since the Cairo commitments, the Mexican Government will testify before the UN Commission on Population and Development

The Mexican government will have to explain serious setbacks in reproductive and sexual health and rights

Within a framework of clear public policy setbacks related to reproductive and sexual rights that violate women's basic rights, the Mexican government will present its report before the Expert Group in the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development that will evaluate the commitments acquired in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo. Fifteen years have passed since these commitments were signed and ratified.

Although Mexico had been previously commended for its advances in reproductive health, the last few years have witnessed a series of setbacks that contradict the spirit and objectives encompassed by the ICPD. A group of more than 50 civil society organizations from throughout Mexico highlighted this fact in a shadow report that was presented to the UN Commission on Population and Development to contrast the official government report.

This shadow report was developed because, for the first time, civil society organizations were not included in the development of the official Mexican report. This speaks to the deterioration of the relationship between organizations that work on issues related to population and development, human rights, women's rights and in particular reproductive and sexual health and rights and the Mexican government.

The position of Secretary General within the National Population Council (CONAPO, for its initials in Spanish), the public agency responsible for coordinating State policy related to population issues and offer follow-up to the Cairo agreements, remained vacant since the end of the last administration and during nine months of the current one, a reflection of the little importance placed by this government on population policies and CONAPO's role.

Reference to ICPD has been left out of important governmental documents, such as Official Mexican Norms, under the argument that the Convention is non-binding.

The principal setbacks include:

- Mexican policies related to families do not recognize diversity. They are limited to the nuclear family and do not consider demographic trends nor the new composition of the family structure, and consequential burdens placed on women.
- Attending the increase in family and sexual violence is not a policy priority.
- Human trafficking, particularly that of minors, child pornography and pedophilia have increased.
- Access to birth control methods within public health services has decreased.
- Access to legal abortion is not guaranteed, except in Mexico City. Many states have approved reforms to state-level constitutions that protect life from the moment of conception which puts access to legal abortion, under the indications where it is currently allowed, and even certain birth control methods at risk.
- Programs related to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections are limited to certain populations. Women are not among these priority groups.
- Clear resistance exists for reviewing and updating population and reproductive and sexual health policy instruments, as demonstrated by the delay in the publication of the Official Mexican Norm 046 Family and Sexual Violence: Criteria for Prevention and Care.
- Dialogue and collaboration with civil society organizations has diminished.

As such, civil society demands that, 15 years after committing to the Cairo Program of Action, the Mexico government:

1. Respect and comply with the ICPD agenda.
2. Recognize new population dynamics and design and implement public policies to attend these new realities and their social consequences for families.
3. Adopt effective measures to eliminate all forms of exploitation and abuse of children, adolescents and young people.
4. Design policies that respect adolescents' reproductive and sexual rights.
5. Implement reproductive health and particularly family planning and safe abortion (as allowed by law) policies, including quality and humane services.
6. Foment comprehensive sexuality education at all educational levels.

7. Formulate national policies that recognize diverse identities and sexualities, that decrease unwanted pregnancies, as well as the rapid spread of sexually transmitted infections, and that prevent and attend to sexual abuse.
8. Eliminate discrimination against women given the State's lack of recognition of and respect for their reproductive autonomy.
9. Reinstate discussion between civil society and government and the former's collaboration and participation in government policy, as a necessary condition for meeting the ICPD agreements and the Millennium Development Goals for 2015.
10. Allocate necessary resources to fully implement the Cairo Agenda.

Afluentes; Alternativas Pacíficas; Asociación Internacional de Familias por la Diversidad Sexual; Asociación Queretana de Educación para las Sexualidades Humanas; Asociación Sinaloense de Universitarias; Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir; Centro Cultural Esperanza Rodríguez; Centro de Capacitación para el Desarrollo Comunitario; Centro Integral de Atención a las Mujeres, CIAM Cancún; Centro Mujeres (La Paz, BCS); Centro Mujeres Graciela Hierro (La Paz, BCS); CIDHAL, Comunicación, Intercambio y Desarrollo Humano en América Latina; CIMAC, Comunicación e Información de la Mujer; Iniciativa Ciudadana y Desarrollo Social, INCIDE Social; Coalición por la Salud de las Mujeres; Colectivo de Mujeres por la Equidad, la Salud y la Educación; Colectivo HUAXYACAC; Comité de América Latina y El Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer, CLADEM México; Comunicación, Educación y Desarrollo para la Igualdad; ddeser, Red por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos en México; Democracia Familiar y Social; DEMYSEX, Red Democracia y Sexualidad; El Armario Abierto; Elige: Red de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos; Enclave, Equidad Social y Transparencia; Equidad de Género, Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia; Espacio Espiral, Promoción Cultural, Desarrollo Sustentable y Equidad; Estas Mujeres; FEMESS: Federación Mexicana de Educación Sexual y Sexología; FUNDAR Centro de Análisis e Investigación; GAEM, Grupo de Apoyo a la Educación de las Mujeres; GIRE, Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida; Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal de las Casas; Grupo Interdisciplinario Sobre Mujer, Trabajo y Pobreza, GIMTRAP; Instituto Superior de Educación Sexual; Ipas México; K'inál Antzetik Distrito Federal; Lesbianas en Patlatonalli; Marie Stopes México; MEXFAM, Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar; Mujeres por México en Chihuahua; Observatorio de Familias y Políticas Públicas; Observatorio de Violencia Social y de Género de la Sierra Norte de Puebla; Observatorio Ciudadano Nacional de Femicidios; Population Council; Programa Jóvenes en Acción (La Paz, BCS); RADAR 4° Red Nacional de Abogadas y Abogados por la Defensa de la Reproducción Elegida; RECIFEM, Red Ciudadana Feminista de México (40 organizaciones en 11 estados); Red de Apoyo a Grupos Vulnerables; Red Nacional Católica de Jóvenes por el Derecho a Decidir; Red Feminista Sonorense; RedPar, Red Nacional de Asesoras y Promotoras Rurales; RIRIKI Intervención Social; Servicio Educación, Sexualidad y Salud, SEEDSSA; SHSSR, Servicios Humanitarios en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva; Servicios Integrales a Mujeres Emprendedoras; SIPAM, Salud Integral para la Mujer; UNASSE, Unidad de Atención Sicológica, Sexológica y Educativa para el Crecimiento Personal; Vida Plena.