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ICPD+20 Latin American
and Caribbean Regional Alliance
of Civil Society Organizations

ICPD + 20. Latin America and Caribbean Regional Alliance of Civil Society Organizations.

GOOD MORNING (GOOD EVENING) LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

20 years ago in Cairo, the participation of women's organizations from all over around the world at the International Conference on Population and Development was essential to advance the agenda and make a set of commitments from more than 179 Governments there present. Two decades later, strengthened by the presence of a more diverse movement and new actors, we were summoned by the purpose of the United Nations to review the level of progress of this program of action and by the interest in a process that could be used to renew the political commitment to this agenda and an opportunity to make gaps, inequalities, and new challenges visible.

THERE WE WERE, HERE WE ARE

As Latin American and Caribbean women we have been present in every stage of the process: in the assessments, in expert or thematic meetings, in the main tables as well as in halls and cafeterias where so often issues are discussed and agreements made. We have been present at the global, regional and day to day meetings, at the national and local level, because we are convinced that the agenda of sexual and reproductive rights, dignity, equality and non-discrimination for women in all their diversity is an urgent agenda for any society willing to live in peace and build a sustainable development.

THERE WE WERE, HERE WE ARE

We hope that this review process has been useful for you, leaders of the world to, once more, commit to what should be the most important point in any discussion about development: people; the millions of women and men of different ages, white, indigenous or Afro-descendants, with different sexual orientations and identities, with different trades; to recognize that without dignity, without rights, without education and without territory for all women, there is no possible development; to refresh your memory and see that despite the advances in our region, profound lags and enormous

inequalities still remain, to remind you all that as a movement we will be vigilant. **THERE WE WERE AND HERE WE ARE, AGAIN.**

Today, at the United Nations and before the General Assembly that convenes the top leaders of the world, we want to recall that:

- Despite advances in policies related to sexual and reproductive rights, millions of women are forced to live under laws criminalizing their sexual or reproductive decisions, undergoing unsafe abortions, lack of contraceptive methods, gender-based violence.
- There are still thousands of women who die from avoidable causes related to maternity. Thousands of them are still living in conflict areas where their bodies are spoils of war, and every time more and more women human rights activists are persecuted and killed for fighting for equality and non-discrimination. **WE WERE THERE AND HERE WE ARE AGAIN TO DENOUNCE IT.**
- There are still millions of women and young people living without comprehensive sexuality education, without access to sexual and reproductive health services. Millions of adolescent girls get pregnant without any other possible life project. Millions of people face discrimination of different kinds.
- There are many policies without budgets, policies without mechanisms for implementation and gaps, inequalities and violations of human rights without punishment.

And what is preventing that we move **FURTHER AND FASTER**? What do the kidnapping of 200 girls in Nigeria, the femicides in Mexico or Jamaica, the total criminalization of abortion in Nicaragua, the marriages of girls in South Asia, the millions of women who have been infibulated or the incredible rates of women murdered by their partners in Spain, the United States or Colombia have in common?

IT'S CALLED PATRIARCHY, ladies and gentlemen and it supports this system that reinforces exclusion, racism, sexism, homophobia and fundamentalisms of all kinds, holding the fragile political will of some and the low memory of others with this agenda. The development that we must promote should not be limited to the reduction of poverty, but it should cover the productive and reproductive areas. We need development in balance with nature and people-centered.

As Latin American and Caribbean women, as feminists from all movements, we will continue fighting so as momentous as the Montevideo consensus become a reality for all women; for secular societies in which public policies and more intimate decisions relating to sexuality and reproduction are not determined by predominant or absolute moralities; to see in the post-2015 agenda and the objectives of sustainable

development goals sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality; for national policies coherent with the various international agendas and agreements.

As it was said in this same House just a few months ago: "*...We women are the owners of rights, women of different colors of skin and hair, young and old women, of all sexualities and identities, different ethnic groups and cultures... and we are many, we are all these women who everyday battle so that the Governments do their job well and guarantee the exercise of those rights.*"

We will continue fighting for the agenda of Cairo to be fulfilled and to permeate all the development agenda. **THERE WE WERE, AND HERE WE ARE. AND WE WILL NOT LET YOU FORGET.**