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STATEMENT BY FINLAND
THE ICPD BEYOND 2014 UNGA SPECIAL SESSION, NEW YORK 22.9.2014

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Executive Director of UNFPA, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we mark the 20th anniversary of the tireless efforts to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as gender equality, to empower women and girls – in other words to put individuals and human rights at the center of sustainable development.

The work done in Cairo 20 years ago deserves our respect even today. Progress as documented by the ICPD Review process has been important. However, it has been uneven. Inequality and multiple forms of discrimination remain crucial barriers for the well-being and health of individuals.

Violence against women and girls, discrimination of sexual minorities, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and cutting, as well as unsafe abortions are still far too common. Women, the young, the poor and minority groups are particularly affected.

Differences in gender identity and sexual orientation or any other status cannot be a basis for differences in enjoyment of human rights. If people cannot decide for themselves on their most private matters – sexuality, marriage, children – how could we expect them to be able to take broader responsibility for their communities and the environment.

Finland greatly values the work of UNFPA. Besides our unwavering political support, this is reflected in our core contribution to UNFPA; 58 million dollars in 2014 – more than we give to any other UN organization.

We congratulate UNFPA for its increased focus on adolescents, young people, and especially young girls. They need life skills, youth friendly services, including comprehensive sexuality education and information.

We need to keep up the momentum created in Cairo that has led to remarkable improvements in the lives of millions of people. We welcome the findings and recommendations of the Secretary-General's forward-looking *'index report'* and the *Framework of Actions*, and the agreements of the regional conferences.

We must now move boldly forward with the recommendations of the ICPD review, and build effective partnerships to achieve even stronger support for sexual and reproductive health and rights in the post-2015 agenda.

My country, Finland, remains strongly committed to this work.

Mr. President,

In my capacity as the co-chair of the High Level Task Force for the ICPD, it has been a privilege to be part of a global movement dedicated to advancing human rights, equality and social justice for all.

I commend all the Member States and women's, youth and other civil society organizations for their dedication to uphold human rights and freedoms throughout this process.

Our common work is not finished until every individual can fully enjoy their human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Thank you.