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Medicus Mundi International

Meeting:
Seventieth World Health Assembly (A70/1)
Agenda Item:
16.3 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030): adolescents' health
Statement:

MMI would like to address agenda item 16.3. Our statement is supported by PHM.

We welcome the report's emphasis on adolescent health. We appreciate that the Global Strategy is strongly positioned within the framework of human rights and SDGs.
We are extremely distressed at the assault on reproductive and sexual rights of women and adolescent girls, with the United States of America re-introducing the Global Gag Rule that prevents organisations receiving funds from US government sources to work on, promote, provide services or advocate for abortion, even with their own funds. We urge the US to reconsider its move.
Sexual and reproductive health rights are core to the discourse on the human rights of women and adolescents. There is compelling evidence that restrictions lead to more unsafe abortions and contribute to mortality and health complications of women and adolescents.

It is of concern that civil society and other organisations receiving US government funds either have to adhere to the gag or lose funding. This will have negative implications on women and adolescents, especially in LMICs. We strongly believe that the Global Gag rule will stall progress towards the goals of the Global Strategy.

We urge MS to request the DG to prepare estimates of the anticipated morbidity and mortality burden subsequent to the reintroduction of the Global Gag Rule, to report to WHA 71 regarding the observed impact of this policy, and discuss it in the Secretariat's next report on implementation of the Global Strategy.
The UN Secretary General, the UNFPA and the Executive Director of UN Women have already expressed their concern at this development.

We believe that a comment by WHO on this issue is urgently needed in order to reiterate its accountability to women, children and adolescents of this world.