

STAND UP AND SPEAK OUT

TO MAKE BODILY AUTONOMY A PRIORITY



Today, 28 May, is **International Day of Action for Women's Health**.

It's a day to take action, stand up and show support for sexual and reproductive health and rights as inalienable human rights.

This year has shown us how important it is to stand up and speak out for bodily autonomy. We're seeing a rollback on these rights on every continent. Conservative forces are organizing to restrict her right to decide. Major donors, including the UK, are cutting funds for vital sexual health and reproductive rights programmes. This, at a time when they're gathering at the G7 and Generation Equality Forum to show commitment to advancing gender equality.

Raise your voice now to tell national and global leaders that we won't stand by when sexual and reproductive health and rights are deprioritised. It's time to step up, not scale back.

Join the call led by the UK Network on SRHR to say **#SRHRisEssential** today and every day!

How to take action

Write to the UK Ambassador in your country to call attention to the catastrophic cuts and show them that we will hold them to account. You can use the below template – and adapt it as you need – and **look up your country's UK Ambassador or representative here**. It is important to emphasise the impact cuts will have on national health systems, and the impact on women and girls.

Send a hard copy of the letter via the post, as well as emailing a copy.

And you can tweet at UK missions – look up your country's UK mission handles **here**.



[UK Embassy, Address]

[Date]

Your Excellency,

I am contacting you to emphasise the catastrophic impact the UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) cuts to global health that were announced by the UK Government in April 2021. The budget reductions will have devastating consequences on our national health system, and the health of women and girls in [insert country name] and globally.

The UK government has long been a global champion of family planning, bringing reproductive choice to millions of women and girls in the world's poorest and most marginalised communities. As the main architect of Family Planning 2020, we applaud UKAid's contribution to ensuring 25 million women have access to life-saving contraception.

Covid-19 has laid bare the fragility of health services globally, seeing many contraceptive services closed and classified as non-essential. Two million women have lost access to contraception as a result of the pandemic, 1.4 million unintended pregnancies and thousands of avoidable deaths from unsafe abortions and birth complications. Now is not the time for reductions to investments in global health.

Expanding access to contraception is one of the smartest investments countries can make, and it is essential in keeping girls in school and advancing gender equality. We ask that you reconsider your level of investment in global health, and the impact on the world's most marginalised women and girls. Particularly, your reductions to UNFPA and the UNFPA Supplies Partnership will devastate women and girls' access to lifesaving commodities and compromise our national health system.

In 2020, support from UNFPA and commodity support and technical assistance through the UNFPA Supplies programme, to the Government of [insert country name] programme helped avert:

[insert number from Annex1] Unintended pregnancies

[insert number from Annex1] Abortions

[insert number from Annex1] Maternal deaths

[insert number from Annex1] Child deaths

[insert number from Annex1] Unsafe abortions

And save [insert number from Annex1] in direct healthcare costs resulting from the lack of access to family planning.

Without this level of support in 2021 and 2022, UNFPA's support to [insert country name] could be reduced by an estimated 70%. Your reduction in support will lead to catastrophic shortages to life-saving contraceptive supplies. A generation of women and girls will not be able to realise their bodily autonomy to prevent, plan and space their pregnancies. The impact will lead to a surge in preventable maternal deaths, increased unsafe abortions, and millions of girls will cut their education short and be forced to drop out of school.

[Please add any organisational details and any impact details on how cuts will impact your organisation or country.]

I kindly ask you to pass on our message to your counterparts in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and support our efforts to reverse the devastating cuts to sexual and reproductive health.

Sincerely,

[Name]