

IAAH YOUTH DECLARATION

Preamble

We, the youths participating in the 9th World Congress of the International Association for Adolescent Health, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 28 to 30 October 2009, have gathered to listen, voice out and discuss issues related to young people's health and we would like to affirm our collective rights and responsibilities in mobilizing resources and advocating for awareness on the importance of young people's health.

We value this opportunity to ensure that the voices of young people are heard at the Congress.

Our health cannot be negotiated. It is a precondition to our personal, physical, mental and social well-being, development and happiness. We need and deserve the fundamental human right to gain access to information, education and appropriate services to be able to most effectively make informed decisions to take care of our health.

This Congress by the choice of the theme has focused on the sexual and reproductive health of young people. Unfortunately, most of the time our rights in this area had been misconstrued to mean permission to sexual freedom. We want to reassure adult that with each right comes with a responsibility that we will fulfill and that we are not irresponsible people. With the proper information we can and will make responsible and informed decisions that will protect us now and in the future so that we can become healthy leaders of tomorrow. We urge the government, non-government organizations, policy makers, donors and service providers that from now on to give due emphasis to and involve young people in the designing, implementation and monitoring of programmes related to our health.

YOUTH DECLARATION

WE THE ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE 9TH CONGRESS OF THE IAAH URGE POLICY AND DECISION MAKERS FROM GOVERNMENT, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, DONORS, PRIVATE SECTORS, AS WELL AS CIVIL SOCIETY TO ENDORSE AND ACT UPON FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) **To accept** young people as solution rather than problem.
- 2) **To recognize** that young people have sexual and reproductive health needs, rights and responsibilities that must be given due consideration to preserve and sustain our over well-being.
- 3) **To recognize** that experiences in gender inequality, inequity and stereotypes can affect and harm young people's lives as well as health, and to pledge for the implementation of comprehensive adolescents health related policies and programmes by mainstreaming gender equality and equity tailored for young people.

- 4) **To provide** comprehensive and adequate information related to sexual and reproductive health and healthcare services that are easily accessible and youth-friendly.
- 5) **To guarantee** universal access to comprehensive sexuality education for all young people. Affirms the rights of young people to be properly equipped with knowledge on reproductive organs and related health conditions, risk to symptoms and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS as well as the skills to practice these rights and responsibilities.
- 6) **To involve** young people in all programmatic policy and decision-making, budget planning, distribution of resources, monitoring and evaluation of programmes at the national, regional and international level on youth related programmes.
- 7) **To invest** in young people's education and health as a priority in population and development strategies. Funding to be made available to support youth-led programmes on the environment and health, as well as related research and follow-up activities.
- 8) **To develop and enforce** non-stigmatizing and non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health related legislations and policies at local, national, regional and international levels particularly those concerning young people. This includes the sensitization of health care service providers who may act as gate keepers to morality and the elimination of legal and policy barriers, which restrict young people's access to essential services such as contraception, safe abortion, voluntary and counseling for HIV testing, PAP smear and other sexual and reproductive healthcare services .

We the young people at this Congress want to convey our appreciation to the organizers who have made great effort to allow us the opportunity and space to overcome ignorance and to express our opinions and needs on our health. We will take advantage of this opportunity to build and strengthen a sustainable network among ourselves, as well as to hold ourselves accountable to monitor the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of adolescents health related programmes within our own countries with guidance, expertise and cooperation via youth-adult partnerships in the formation of a healthier and more sustainable future for everyone.

“PRIVATE LIVES, PUBLIC ISSUES OF ADOLESCENTS”

BEGINS with

LOVE, RESPECT, ACCEPTANCE, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY ACTION