



**UNFPA Side Event  
High Level Political Forum**

*Intergenerational Action for Bodily Autonomy - Accelerating SDG3*

**Convened by UNFPA and the Government of Argentina**

**07:30-09:00 Eastern Standard Time, 8 July 2021**

**Closing Remarks**

Your Excellency Ms. Carla Vizzotti, Minister of Health, Argentina,

Your Excellency Ms. Emma Inamutila Theofelus, Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in the Republic of Namibia,

Ms. Alexandra Chichikova,

Dr. Joia Crear Perry,

Dr. Peter Waiswa,

Ms Mavis Naa Korley Aryee,

Ms Maria Teresa Rivera,

Thank you for your interest, advocacy and meaningful reflections on and contributions to today's theme. A special thank you to the Minister of Health of Argentina for co-convening this side event today, and to Eunice Leyva Garcia for moderating this conversation.

I am Ib Petersen, Deputy Executive Director - Management, of UNFPA and I have the honor to close this side event.

Today we have had the privilege of hearing from a diverse and inspirational group of inter-generational experts. In sharing their experiences, thoughts and ideas, they have in different ways driven home the critical importance of bodily autonomy to health and wellbeing, women's agency and empowerment, and more broadly, inclusive and peaceful societies as means to in fact accelerate the achievement of SDG 3.

Women's bodies and choices continue to be controlled by others, and we know that those most hurt by this are women and girls. This must end. UNFPA is committed to this mission and it is central to all that we do.

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown our world into upheaval. The rights we hold so dear and are at risk of negation, violation and dismantling. The SRH services that countries have put in place have been dismantled, its workforce transitioned to immediate pandemic related services and care. With increases in gender based violence and harmful practices, alongside the worrying reductions in access to healthcare, employment and education, we cannot wait, the time to act is now.

As we begin to build back more resilient health systems and structures, sexual and reproductive health and rights for all must be considered essential elements of those systems. Barriers to accessing quality care must be removed and the right to make choices about one's body promoted, protected and ensured. This is important to us all.

We have heard excellent suggestions and ideas to take forward the fight of bodily autonomy for all towards a more sustainable world. We have heard some inspiring examples of ongoing efforts, to advance the agenda, which will certainly contribute to advancing the commitments some of you made at the landmark Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 and at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris just last week. Let us harness the power of our collective commitments and amplify the voices of women and girls into actions.

We cannot stop until every woman and girl, in all their diversities, can exercise their rights and reap the full benefits of health, wellbeing, equality and prosperity, free of discrimination, violence and coercion. The health and well-being of over half of the world's population - our women and girls - underpins our global development. Their empowerment, agency, voice and protection must be a priority.

As we march forward, let us build on the momentum and honor the commitments made at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the Beijing Women's Conference, the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 and the Generation Equality Forum..

In the words of our UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem at the Generation Equality Forum, "We must deliver on our shared vision of a gender-equal world...where every woman and girl can confidently proclaim, 'My body is my own.'

My body is my own is also the title of the 2021 State of the World Population Report which can be accessed on the UNFPA website.

I would like to thank you all for your engagement and commitment to this critical dialogue. Thank you to all of those who joined this conversation on YouTube. We look forward to advancing the health and well-being, and rights of women and girls globally, together. We have less than a decade to materialise our SDG commitments, SDG 3 is central to all other SDGs. To make it happen we will depend on strong and inclusive multi stakeholder partnerships where every voice and every action counts. No one is to be left behind!