

public policy. Sexuality and gender-based power inequities have been largely ignored, and sometimes even strengthened, by population and family planning programs.

As women involved directly in the organization of services, research and advocacy, we focus this declaration on women's reproductive health and rights. We call for a fundamental revision in the design, structure and implementation of population policies, to foster the empowerment and well-being of all women. Women's empowerment is legitimate and critically important in its own right, not merely as a means to address population issues. Population policies that are responsive to women's needs and rights must be grounded in the following internationally accepted, but too often ignored, ethical principles.

## FUNDAMENTAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Women can and do make responsible decisions for themselves, their families, their communities, and, increasingly, for the state of the world. Women must be subjects, not objects, of any development policy, and especially of population policies.
2. Women have the right to determine when, whether, why, with whom, and how to express their sexuality. Population policies must be based on the principle of respect for the sexual and bodily integrity of girls and women.
3. Women have the individual right and the social responsibility to decide whether, how, and when to have children and how many to have; no woman can be compelled to bear a child or be prevented from doing so against her will. All women, regardless of age, marital status, or other social conditions have a right to information and services necessary to exercise their reproductive rights and responsibilities.
4. Men also have a personal and social responsibility for their own sexual behaviour and fertility and for the effects of that behaviour on their partners' and their children's health and well-being.
5. Sexual and social relationships between women and men must be governed by principles of equity, non-coercion, and mutual respect and responsibility. Violence against girls and women, their subjugation or exploitation, and other harmful practices such as genital mutilation or unnecessary medical procedures, violate basic human rights. Such practices also impede effective, health - and rights-oriented population programs.
6. The fundamental sexual and reproductive rights of women cannot be subordinated, against a woman's will, to the interests of partners, family members, ethnic groups, religious institutions, health providers, researchers, policy makers, the state or any other actors.