

# Dublin Declaration

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY  
8 MARCH 2017

**We, the organisations and individuals participating in the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Women's Mental Health, gathered here in Dublin on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2017, are determined to advance women's mental health and well-being across the globe by:**

**Affirming** the importance of full access to reproductive health rights for women in guaranteeing mental health and well-being.

**Recognising** the United Nations resolutions and concluding observations that state that the right of women to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health encompasses the right to control and make decisions about one's sexual and reproductive health, free from violence, coercion and discrimination.

**Noting** that the United Nations has further stated that where a barrier to health is created by criminal law or other legal restrictions, it is the obligation of the State to remove it.

**Reinforcing** the World Health Organisation's Safe Abortion Guidelines, which establish that abortion laws and policies should aim to promote and protect the health of women, as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

**Noting** that States' failure to provide abortion services creates intense psychological and emotional distress for women who are forced to carry an unwanted pregnancy or are compelled to seek clandestine and often unsafe abortion services or to travel outside their country of origin to obtain a safe procedure.

**Noting** in particular how the current restriction on availability of abortion in several countries is discriminatory because it impacts disproportionately on the physical and mental health and well-being of teenagers and women living in poverty or with restricted access to financial resources, as well as highly vulnerable groups of women including minors in state care,

women with disabilities, women with a pre-existing mental and medical illness, women experiencing domestic or sexual violence, asylum seekers, indigenous women and women who are undocumented.

**Recognising** in particular the detrimental impact that restrictive abortion laws (including criminalisation of abortion) have on women's autonomy, and therefore on their mental health and well-being, that the laws put women's lives and health in hazard and perpetuate shame, stigma and trauma while restricting women's ability to attain sexual and reproductive health.

**Expressing** deep concern about ongoing failures to respect and protect women's reproductive rights across the world and attempts to undermine these rights and the long-standing resistance in various countries to bring its reproductive health services in line with International norms, that guarantee women's right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

**Emphasising** the important and leading role that each country can play in reaffirming the importance of guaranteeing such rights as part of realizing one's right to health.

**The Congress hereby calls on all governments to: Guarantee that abortion services are available and accessible in a manner that ensures women's autonomy and decision-making is respected, in line with the best international health practice and in fulfillment of women's human rights.**