

Thank you Mr. President,

It is my pleasure to deliver this statement that has been drafted together with organizations based in Ecuador.

In spite of being prominent in civil society reports, women's reproductive rights were not adequately highlighted during the UPR. In the first place, we would like to encourage Ecuador to affirm the Constitutional principles of non-discrimination and right to exercise informed choice in matters of sexual and reproductive health above the interests of particular groups, including religious groups, in the implementation of national policies in the area.

Research done by civil society shows that women do not use contraception due to ignorance, pressure from their husbands/partners and "religious beliefs". We encourage the Ecuadorean government to strengthen the awareness-raising component of their current plans on Reproductive Health to better educate the population on the uses of contraception and to eradicate gender stereotypes and harmful beliefs, including those of a religious nature, that hamper the full exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights by women and men.

Including a specific reference to the secular character of the Ecuadorean state in the new Constitution with full respect for the right to religious freedom will further contribute to this end.

