Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates, and fellow Advocates,

My name is Gyanu Gurung, and I am making this intervention on behalf of the Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights network.

The Asia-Pacific indicator framework is being reviewed and endorsed by Member States at an unparalleled time. We are now well versed that COVID-19 is exacerbating structural inequalities and laying bare the gender, racial and economic inequities in our health systems. The need for more and better data to drive policy is on-going, and implementation of the indicator framework by Member States will contribute to this.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is essential healthcare, but current evidence clearly shows reduced access to SRHR information, education and services across the region as a result of the pandemic. Lockdowns have led to reductions in access to contraception, increases in the number of unplanned pregnancies, and a rising need for safe abortion. Young key populations affected by HIV are experiencing disruptions in accessing HIV prevention services. Sexual and gender-based violence against marginalized /vulnerable groups has been reported across the globe, especially against women and girls, sex workers, and LGBTIQ. And a significant increase in early child and forced marriage is projected.

Honourable Chair, a resilient society in one that not just tries to respond to crisis by bringing the system back into balance, but takes the opportunity to develop solutions that bring a system capable of dealing with future challenges. Civil Society generated evidence will uncover inequalities faced by

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marginalized communities, and expose the intersections of different forms of discrimination that compound violations of sexual and reproductive rights.

Yet, we are strongly concerned that space for civil society is shrinking through the COVID crisis\(^2\). Now, more than ever, an enabling environment for Civil Society is essential for fulfillment of the ICPD Agenda, the Asia Pacific Ministerial Declaration, and the sustainable development of the region.

We congratulate the Member States on endorsing the indicator framework, and offer our partnership in its implementation as one step down the path towards building a resilient Asia Pacific community.

Thank you.

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