

In the past four years a number of member states have taken important steps to enact domestic laws and policies that advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights of diverse populations.

However, despite this progress, the Center for Reproductive Rights is deeply concerned about the emergence of resurgent regressive trends in some member states and the adoption of harmful, discriminatory and retrogressive laws and policies which threaten gender equality, undermine sexual and reproductive health and rights and contravene international human rights standards.

Effective implementation of the ICPD program of action requires sustained progress towards gender equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on prohibited grounds. Yet in some member states we have witnessed concerning trajectories of backlash and the adoption of retrogressive laws and policies which seek to impede or prevent access to legal sexual and reproductive health care services. Of significant concern are retrogressive policies that impose new barriers on access to contraception and family planning services and information as well as on access to safe and legal abortion care. The introduction of such retrogressive laws contradicts international public health guidelines and contravenes international human rights law and the international legal principle of non-retrogression.

In some member states concerns regarding population growth, declining birth rates and demographic concerns have been invoked as the rationale for these retrogressive laws. No such justification can ever be used to legitimize discriminatory policies that foster gender inequality and violate human rights. We call on member states to reject and repeal measures and initiatives that seek to roll back established entitlements in the sphere of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Instead we call on member states to take action to ensure the adoption of laws and policies that promote gender equality and respect human rights.