

11 September 2017

Dear Mr Commissioner,

Investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights is critical to sustainable development. It enhances the chances of women, especially adolescent girls, to fulfil their potential and make a productive contribution to their society. Evidence shows that ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health and rights unleashes numerous benefits from saving lives to improving gender equality to stimulating economic growth.

The European Union urgently needs to step up its efforts in the face of dramatic cuts to all global health funds provided by the US Government. It has been estimated that the total cuts of US funding could be around 600 million USD. The US has already announced that it will no longer fund UNFPA.

In March 2017, more than 50 governments attended the "She Decides" conference and were able to mobilise over 200 million euro to fill the financing gap. However, a gap remains and the EU must fulfil its responsibility as the world's largest aid donor.

At the "She Decides" conference in Brussels in March 2017, You stated that the EU will not divert from its development cooperation in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights. You also emphasised the need to mobilize additional funding to address the gaps to support sexual and reproductive health and rights, comprehensive family planning, education, information and preventive health programmes. The EU and its Member States have confirmed their commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights and the ICPD Programme of Action in the May 2015 Council conclusions on Gender in Development. This commitment remains and should be acted upon.

Therefore we encourage the European Commission to allocate additional funding to address the gaps to support sexual and reproductive health and rights, comprehensive family planning, education, information and preventive health programmes. The Commission should announce its additional contribution by the high-level segment of the UN General Assembly. We also look forward to the new EU-UN Gender Initiative and expect it to be one step towards filling in the financial gap in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights as well.

Finally, youth is the overarching theme of the 5th AU-EU Summit to be held in Ivory Coast on 29-30 November. The Summit will constitute an excellent opportunity to discuss the importance of access to family planning for young people in order to gain access to the socio-economic opportunities they deserve and realise their full potential. The EU and African States should seize this opportunity.

Mr. Neven MIMICA Commissioner International Cooperation and Development

Cc. Ms. Federica MOGHERINI High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice-President of the European Commission

Yours sincerely,



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