UNFPA Statement at the 74th World Health Assembly, May 2021

Item no. 22: Social Determinants of Health

- Thank you, Moderator
- In the course of our work, the linkages between Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and climate change have become evident.
- Research findings from WHO and Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women show that global heating impacts the patterns of vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, with negative outcomes on maternal health such as: maternal illness; low-weight birth; and increase risk of miscarriages, premature delivery, stillbirth and many other health challenges. Moreover, a 2021 study on the Lancet revealed that increased poverty and food insecurity are driven by climate-related loss of livelihoods and affect maternal health.
- Several studies have shown that climate-related emergencies cause major disruptions in access to health services and life-saving commodities, including contraception. Indeed, existing health systems are not ready for the array of new and more severe challenges posed by climate change. It is important that countries and health partners commit to building resilient health systems and strengthen their capacity to adequately meet the right to health in an unstable and ever-changing climate. This includes ensuring access to services, information, and education on SRHR, including comprehensive sexuality education for a better protected and more resilient adolescence and youth.
- Currently, SRHR is poorly reflected in climate change policy and action. More substantial and meaningful inclusion and recognition of the intersections between climate and SRHR in climate, health, and gender policy will positively impact livelihoods and protect

the wellbeing of all.

- And ongoing study by UNFPA and Queen Mary University London which is due to be released soon, finds that only six of the 50 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) have direct references to SRHR, and only few countries address maternal health in their health sector adaptation plans. The study also reveals the need to ensure that adaptation responses address the needs of the most vulnerable groups and fulfill the rights of all as agreed in the ICPD Programme of Action.
- The realization of SRHR helps build resilience and adaptive capacity for climate change while reducing inequality and enabling justice**.**
- It will be important to ensure integration, by governments, of sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Gender Action Plans (GAPs) in their post-2020 climate adaptation actions, in line with an integrated and comprehensive approach towards climate action.
- I thank you