Statement
by members of the Alliance

to the Seventy-third World Health Assembly resumed session

on Agenda Item 23 J Female Genital Mutilation

Millions of young girls and women throughout the world suffer, FGM - a harmful physical practice causing mental and sexual health complications regardless of who performs it. It is a violation of rights with no medical justification leading to immediate health risks and long-term complications. It is practised on young girls without their consent, It violates a person’s rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life which often results in death.

The global community set a target in the SDGs to abandon the practice of FGM by the year 2030, a major issue for Health Promotion. Countries investing in ending FGM have stronger and healthier communities.

Countries with higher rates of FGM have higher rates of maternal and infant mortality, poor life expectancy, lower rates of literacy and rankings for human capital and development. It increases the likelihood of maternal ill health/morbidity and death.  “Medicalization” of FGM by clinicians does not make it safe.

Countries with high rates of FGM cannot afford the extra disadvantages as they face enormous challenges in regard to health, education, social policies and other economic factors. Treating health complications caused by FGM costs 1.4 billion dollars a year. Socio economic disadvantages are increasing as disparities in the prevalence of COVID become more marked.

FGM is harmful to the health and well-being of mothers and children often stopping girls and young women from pursuing their education, employment or professional ambitions. It causes political problems among migrant families.

UFER – an INGO representing the International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples is involved in promoting assistance in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Drafted by Board Member Berhane Raswork

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