

Media Statement

London, 10th March 2022: If you are covering the U.S Congress spending bill containing final government funding for fiscal year (FY22), you may find the below statement from the International Planned Parenthood helpful.

U.S congressional leaders have announced they have reached a final spending deal for the fiscal year 2022. This bill results from months of negotiations over funding and policy decisions, including those that impact sexual and reproductive healthcare globally.

Despite the inclusion of language to permanently repeal the global gag rule passed in the House and introduced in the Senate, the final legislation fails to permanently end the harmful policy that has destroyed the lives of women and girls around the world for so many years. It also does not remove discriminatory abortion bans like the Hyde, Helms, and Weldon amendments or include much-needed new investments in sexual and reproductive healthcare and international family planning programs.

Dr Alvaro Bermejo, Director-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, said:

“We are outraged to learn that the long-awaited U.S spending bill failed to permanently repeal the global gag rule, nor did it include other areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights progress on which advocates had built strong momentum. The bill fell foul to anti-choice Congress members whose primary goal is to control the bodies and reproductive rights of women and girls they will never know, whose lives they could never imagine.”

“Failure to utilize this golden opportunity risks the continuation of the flip-flopping of American policy that has played with the lives of millions across the globe for nearly 40 years. Ultimately the global gag rule destroys long-term access to lifesaving contraception, maternal health and HIV/STI services and forces vulnerable women and girls to carry pregnancies to term or make the agonizing decision to get a potentially deadly unsafe abortion. It also manipulates the ability of international organizations, like IPPF, to use their own funding to provide legal, safe abortion, which unethically denies women care and imposes neo-colonial policies around the world.”

“While the global gag rule poses serious challenges to sustained engagement with USAID, especially at a time when anti-choice movements continue to attack the rights of people worldwide, IPPF is grateful to the Biden-Harris administration for the current rescission of the policy. We will continue to engage with U.S Government global health assistance programs when possible.”

We are also thankful to our relentless Member Association, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Despite the challenges, they have worked tirelessly alongside thousands of women’s rights campaigners across the United States and worldwide to advocate for vulnerable women and girls everywhere. The fight for reproductive rights and justice will not end until every person can access high-quality sexual and reproductive healthcare when and where they need it.”

Santos Siminone, Executive Director at Associação Moçambicana para Desenvolvimento da Família (AMODEFA), a member association significantly affected by the last imposition of the Global Gag Rule, said:

“We are deeply saddened by the failure to permanently repeal the Global Gag Rule. For AMODEFA, IPPF’s Member Association in Mozambique, a national provider of sexual and reproductive healthcare in the country since 1989, the impact of the global gag rule meant a \$2 million gap in funding - about 60% of our total budget.”

“The impact was almost instantaneous, forcing the closure of six programs across 12 districts in Mozambique. This denied nearly 390,000 clients access to contraception, STIs, HIV, malaria, and

tuberculosis services. Almost every local population was affected, with closures impacting adolescents, youths, women, and marginalized people.

“For the people we serve, the permanent repeal of the policy would have meant an end to the violation of human rights. It would have meant dignity and that women’s lives would no longer be at risk. It would have meant an end to fear, pain, tears, and chaos, especially for black and brown women from low-income countries who bear the brunt of restrictive abortion policies.”

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