



## **BERLIN DECLARATION ON ABORTION 2008**

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**Made by the Board of Directors of the International Federation of Abortion and Contraception Professionals (FIAPAC) on the occasion of their Eighth Congress in Berlin on 24/25 October 2008**

We make this Declaration as representatives of a wide range of professional members and on behalf of 500 Congress delegates from 44 countries. The theme of our Congress is the responsibility of society to provide a legal setting for abortion and to provide safe abortion care.

We believe:

- that it is the right of every woman to decide whether or not to continue a pregnancy
- that women should be offered pregnancy options counselling
- that women should have ready access to the best abortion techniques
- that women should be entitled to an abortion with adequate pain control
- that women should be able to approach abortion according to their personal ethical judgement, supported by their healthcare provider and not in the context of a potential crime
- that every country should allow women access to an abortion with social security cover like any other health procedure

We recognise:

- that legal access to effective contraception and safe abortion is a major determinant of the high health status of women in developed countries; this has also been the basis for the development of these societies
- that liberalising abortion laws reduces the number of clandestine and unsafe procedures
- whatever the law one is working to, there is room for innovation and improvement in delivery of humane abortion services

We note with concern:

- that more than 200 million women in the world have an unmet need for contraception
- the repressive abortion laws in the majority of African and South American, some Asian and a few European countries
- that every day there are 54,000 unsafe abortions in the world, leading to the death of 180 women daily
- the negligible progress so far in reducing maternal mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa
- that women in 153 out of 193 countries still do not have access to the abortion pill, mifepristone, available for the last 20 years

We welcome:

- the increasing recognition that a woman, having chosen abortion, should expect to have a safe abortion
- the production of quality of care guidelines for safe abortion services by many national and international organisations and their dissemination in different languages
- the Council of Europe's resolution 1607, passed on 16 April 2008, that member states should guarantee women's effective exercise of their right of access to a safe and legal abortion; a FIAPAC delegate was present at the debate in Strasbourg

We encourage:

- more countries to follow the example of the 55 so far whose laws allow abortion without restriction as to reason
- the establishment of links between activists, lawyers, clinicians and others in order to work on contesting human rights violations of women who seek abortion and on breaking down bureaucratic barriers to abortion