

Joint Statement:

28 September, International Safe Abortion Day

MenEngage Global Alliance and North American MenEngage Network

We, **MenEngage Global Alliance and North American MenEngage Network (NAMEN)**, on the occasion of this **28 September 2021, [International Safe Abortion Day](#)**, come together in support of all women, girls, and people who can become pregnant in their right to access safe and legal abortions and to uphold their right to bodily autonomy, sovereignty, and choice over their own bodies and lives.

On this day, we express our solidarity with all involved in the call for universal access to affordable, safe, and legal abortion. **We call all men and boys, especially men in positions of power and influence across institutions, to be responsible and join women, girls, and people of diverse gender identities in actions to protect and expand access to safe and legal abortions and post-abortion care everywhere.**

The ability of each and every one of us to make **autonomous decisions about our own bodies and lives** includes decisions about pregnancy and abortion. We must challenge the norms, systems, and policies that create barriers to safe abortion and post-abortion care, and restrict women and girls, in all their diversities, to their fundamental autonomy over themselves. **We believe that no impediment should come between a pregnant person and their choice of whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term.** Yet, many women and girls are currently not able to access the safe and legal abortion and care they need globally. **We recognize the disproportionate impact on women of color, black, indigenous, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and nonbinary individuals, and youth communities** living at these intersections and who are on the margins of the margins.

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** reports that 3 out of 10 (29%) of all pregnancies, and 6 out of 10 (61%) of all unintended pregnancies, ended in an induced abortion¹. While abortion is a simple procedure, and safe forms of abortion are available throughout the world, of all abortions performed each year worldwide approximately 45% continue to be unsafe,

¹ Bearak J, Popinchalk A, Ganatra B, Moller A-B, Tunçalp Ö, Beavin C, Kwok L, Alkema L. Unintended pregnancy and abortion by income, region, and the legal status of abortion: estimates from a comprehensive model for 1990–2019. *Lancet Glob Health*. 2020 Sep; 8(9):e1152-e1161. doi: 10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30315-6.

posing unnecessary risks to the health and life of the pregnant person.

We believe that sexual and reproductive health and rights are not only women's issues. They are issues for everyone and **impact all of us**. We call on men and boys to add their voices and take actions to **protect access to safe and legal abortion, to protect universal access to health, and to speak up** when they see violations of the human rights of women and girls taking place, including their right to reproductive healthcare.

We are outraged that around the world women and girls continue to lack access to safe sexual and reproductive health services and abortion, particularly in countries where abortion is criminalized. We are also outraged by the **systematic attempts by policymakers to revoke women's rights in countries where abortion is legal, including most recently in the United States with Texas Law SB8, laying the foundation for dozens of states across the US to take the same action**.

This is a clear attack on women's human and SRHR rights in the US, while they have been recognized as individual rights for a very long time. We are aware that the ability to travel to other States for these services bears a disproportionate socio-economic burden on Black, Latin and Indigenous women, women of lower-income and in informal labor, who are unable to take time off or to afford the expenses incurred, further marginalizing and directly targeting them. We collectively condemn this regressive move by the State and **raise our collective voices to protect the right of pregnant people to end a pregnancy, if they so wish, in privacy and with dignity**.

The North American MenEngage Network (NAMEN) and MenEngage Alliance, therefore stand in solidarity with the women and abortion services and care providers in the **United States and globally who have been under attack**. Recent measures strive to sow fear and doubt in their rights, and intentionally creates mistrust among and within the population, communities and families. Such measures are attacks on the fundamental rights and health of women and girls, and the wellbeing of communities all of which are appalling and unacceptable to us as men, boys, and supporters of women's rights.

Supporting women's right to safe and legal abortion is crucial in MenEngage Alliance's activism globally. Together we take this opportunity to commit to supporting women's fundamental rights to bodily autonomy and reproductive rights and work to challenge laws and policies restricting the right and access to safe abortion and post-abortion care for everyone who needs them. We call upon all men and boys, in all diversities, to work as meaningful allies in ending this long-overdue existing control of women's sexuality and reproduction.

On this day, we call for the following:

Call to Action

- *We call on the US Congress to protect federal law for the right to abortion, for all women, girls, and people who can become pregnant. We call on lawmakers in the State of Texas to immediately repeal Texas law SB8*
- *We call on other states to open access for women, girls, and people who can become pregnant as individuals from Texas seeking critical abortion services*
- *We call on men and boys, in all their diversities and at all levels of society, especially men in positions of power and policymaking, to stand up and speak out alongside and in favor of the rights of all women, girls, and people with diverse identities to make the choices that are best for their bodies, their lives.*

On this **28 September 2021**, [International Safe Abortion Day](#), as MenEngage Alliance and NAMEN, we commit to continue to stand up and against any policy that limits anyone, anywhere, to make **autonomous decisions about our own bodies and lives** including decisions about pregnancy and abortion. We commit to the critical task of centering and elevating the agency, voices, analysis, and demands of girls and women of color, black, indigenous, lesbian, gay, transgender, youth, and non-binary individuals who are at the margins of the margin to access to safe and legal abortion, and care. We together commit to stand in solidarity and follow the leadership of feminist and SRHR leaders in this joint global struggle.