



Wilton Park

**Working together to promote comprehensive, universal  
sexual and reproductive health and rights (WP3163)**

24 - 26 April 2023

Wilton Park, Wiston House, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3DZ



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

Mon  
24  
Apr

00:00

In the context of concerted efforts to roll back on women's and girls' rights and the disproportionate impact of COVID, conflict and the climate crisis, there is a need for a concerted, collective effort on, for and with women and girls. The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) will use the full range of levers at its disposal to unite partners in standing up to those who want to hold back women and girls, and champion women and girls as agents for change through local leadership, including grassroots women's rights organisations. The new FCDO 'International Women and Girls Strategy 2023–2030' was launched in March 2023, setting out campaign principles and goals. The Strategy is framed around the 3 Es of Educating girls, Empowering women and girls, and championing their health and rights, and Ending violence against women and girls.

The Wilton Park series forms an important part of this commitment to partnership-building, to pushing back on the rollback, and to supporting women's rights organisations while delivering progress on the empowerment and rights of women and girls around the world in the context of growing global threats and shocks.

This conference, the second in the series, will address **sexual and reproductive health and rights**:

[New UN analysis](#) has revealed a staggering backsliding amongst women's, children's and adolescents' health, as a result of Covid-19 and conflicts around the world. Today, a woman in sub-Saharan Africa has around a 130 times higher risk of dying from causes relating to pregnancy or childbirth than a woman in Europe or North America. Each year there are 35 million unsafe abortions, resulting in life-changing injuries for millions and the death of at least 23,000 women each year.

At the multilateral level, SRHR has become a political lightning rod. Opposition to SRHR is well organised and well-funded, and the polarisation of debate around SRHR risks undermining and weakening multilateralism, which could have damaging effects on international human rights more generally.

Despite the tensions, it's notable that at the local and national level, communities, medical providers, legislators and national governments are working to increase access to SRHR in many places across the globe. There have been huge strides in access to family planning and reproductive health services. Since 1994, only 4 countries have taken steps to reduce the legal grounds for safe abortion. In contrast over 60 countries have taken some steps to expand the grounds for legal abortion over the same period. At country level, the general direction of travel, is still one of strengthening women's rights and increasing access to SRHR.

In October 2022, the UK, US, Mexico, Liberia, Albania and Nepal co-led a landmark statement on SRHR at UN Third Committee on Human Rights which was signed by 71 countries. It re-stated our intention to join together and to reaffirm that all women and girls have the right to bodily autonomy, including the right to make their own informed decisions about sex and childbearing: to avoid unwanted sexual contact; decide if, and when, to have children; and to face fewer risks during pregnancy and childbirth.

### **Aims of the conference**

The conference aims to broaden and deepen alliances with key actors, exploring the challenges to - and opportunities for - championing SRHR at the UN during negotiations. The meeting will aim to agree how to work together to widen the number and geographical spread of countries that speak out in favour of SRHR, in multilateral fora.

The conference will also provide an open space in which to discuss and demystify certain contested issues and terms. Participants will also engage in a deep dive on comprehensive sexuality education (“CSE”) and how pushback on pre-agreed language on CSE played out in multilateral fora this year. Building on commonalities to unite partners, the conference will explore innovative strategies to overcome challenges and risks, predominantly at the multilateral levels.

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**13:00** Participants arrive and buffet lunch available

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**15:00 - 15:15** **Welcome and introduction**

**Julia Purcell**

Programme Director, Wilton Park

**Alicia Herbert**

Director of Education, Gender & Equality and Special Envoy for Gender, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

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**15:15 - 16:45** **1. The ‘rollback’ on SRHR: what is the scale, how is it manifested and what’s at stake?**

The first session will provide an overview and context for discussion, highlighting the scale and scope of the issues and considering key concerns.

What and where is the pushback on the international stage and what does this mean for multilateral inter-action? How has the over-turn of *Roe v Wade* impacted on the gender movement and in what ways has this affected the operationally and advocacy capacity of civil society organisations? What are the domestic implications for States including legislative changes? What is the impact of rollback on the lives of women and girls?

**Beth Schlacter**

Interim Director of Global Advocacy and US Representative, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

**Neil Datta**

Executive Director, European Parliamentary Forum for Reproductive Rights

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**16:45 - 17:30**      Photograph followed by tea/coffee

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**17:30 - 18:45**      **2. Responding to the rollback: challenges and opportunities**

This session will take place in smaller break out groups. Building on the previous session, group discussion will develop an understanding of the anti-rights movement, and consider priority areas for influence and positive change. Guiding questions to include:

- What tactics and arguments are we most concerned about that are used by opponents of global SRHR, how are they evolving and are we keeping up?
- What are the examples of successful practice in counteracting this pushback on a state, regional or multi-lateral level?
- What are the examples where we have been unsuccessful in counteracting the pushback, or at least faced set backs - and what can we learn from those?
- What needs to be done, how can we work together more effectively? Who can do what? What is most urgent and what are we going to do now/this year? What do we hope to get from this conference?

**Facilitators:**

**Katie Chapman** Senior Social Development Adviser, Gender Equality Hub, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Morgan McArdle** Senior Policy Adviser, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Helen Bryer** SRHR Team Leader, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
**Vikki Spencer** Co-Head SRHR, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

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**19:00** Reception followed by dinner

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**Tue**

**08:00 - 09:00** Breakfast

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**25**

**09:00 - 09:30** **3. Priorities for focus in challenging rollback: brief points from groups**

**Apr**

Feedback from discussion groups

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**09:30 - 10:45** **4. SRHR rollback at multilateral level**

Multilateral scene setting: what are we observing, what's the big picture. What else is at risk- where and what are the particular challenges? And what measures and strategies are in place to counter-act? How to ensure a joined up approach across capital and missions to counter backlash? Where to prioritise efforts? What other tools or mechanisms can be drawn on, including learning from other recent UN processes?

**Sivananthi Thanenthiran**  
Executive Director, Arrow

**Susan Papp**  
Director, Nexus Initiative

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**10:45 - 11:15** Tea/coffee

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**11:15 - 12:45** **5. SRHR Rollback at multilateral level. Part 2**

What is the wider threat to multilateralism and it's impacts. How does the rollback manifest beyond New York? What are the implications for negotiations elsewhere and at regional level? How best to support and strengthen networks at a regional level?

**Ian McFarlane**  
Director, Communication and Strategic Partnerships, UNFPA

**Katherine Olivera**

Associate Director, US Global Policy, Fos Feminista

**Randa Hamadeh**

Director of Primary Health Care and Social Health Department,  
Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon

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**13:00 - 14:00** Lunch

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**14:00 - 15:00** Free time  
Optional garden tour

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**14:00 - 14:15** Session 7 facilitator briefing

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**15:00 - 16:30** **6. Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE): Look back at the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission on the Status of Women and pathways forward**

What can we learn from the discussion on CPD regarding CSE this year? Why is CSE important and why is it contested? Where is there common ground around CSE and how to capitalise on that? What are the prospects to progress this going forward?

**Morgan McArdle**

Senior Policy Adviser, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Jannemiek Evelo**

Executive Director, CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality

**Eunice Garcia**

Executive Director, Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights

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**16:30 - 17:00** Tea/coffee

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**17:00 - 18:30** **7. Building alliances and resources: priorities for future work**

This session will take place in smaller break out groups.

Proposed topics could include:

- What is our common ground, do we have language that resonates?
- Ways in which to support broader civic space and identify further alliances
- Consensus building and tackling polarising debate: what are the short, medium and long term priorities?
- What resources are needed?
- What further research is required to evidence the need for action?

**Facilitators :**

**Group 1**

**Catalina Devandas** Aguilar Executive Director, Disability Rights Fund

**Matt Gould** Director, SRHR, Policy and Narratives, Children's Investment Fund Foundation

**Group 2**

**Claire Hubert** Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

**Maliha Khan** President/CEO, Women Deliver

**Group 3**

**Bethan Cobley** Director, Advocacy and Partnerships, MSI Reproductive Choices

**Randa Hamadeh** Director, Primary Health Care and Social Health Department, Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon

**Group 4**

**Tanya Trevors** Director of Women, Children and Adolescent Health and Rights, Health and Nutrition Bureau, Global Affairs Canada

**Marijke Wijnroks** Head of Strategic Investment and Impact Division, The Global Fund

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**18:30**      [Session 7 facilitator debriefing](#)

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**19:00**      Reception followed by dinner

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**Wed**

**08:00 - 09:00**      Breakfast and checkout

**26**

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**09:15 - 10:00**      **8. Priorities for future action**

Apr

Report back from break outs

Followed by roundtable discussion to include:

How to develop a wider support base for SRHR? Identifying upcoming opportunities for action- eg High Level Meeting on Universal Health Care, International Conference on Population and Development +30, Agenda 2023. Ways in which to build on Member State Commitments to the global goals to broaden support for SRHR, towards Agenda 2030.

Strengthening alliances with wider civil society and donors. Who needs to do what?

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**10:45 - 11:15**      Tea/coffee

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**11:15 - 11:25**      **9. Evaluation survey**

Completion of online survey

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**11:25 - 12:45**      **10. Closing remarks**

**Alicia Herbert**

Director of Education, Gender & Equality and Special Envoy for Gender, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

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**13:00**                  Lunch

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**14:00**                  Participants depart