

## **LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR**

MsC. Mariela Castro Espín

### **2014. NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANKIND'S FUTURE**

The year 2014 could be crucial for the future of Mankind if we succeed in including the issues related to health and sexual and reproductive rights in the new Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Important regional and global meetings were held in 2014 among representatives of all UN member states to negotiate the basis for a new development framework, the main objective of which would be the eradication of poverty and fostering social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The fifteen-year timeframe of the millennium development goals that ends in 2015 became an incentive to mobilize the international community in their attainment. However, worsening of the structural conditions generating the different inequality and disparity gaps, reluctance to change traditions based on prejudices or attachment to the historical power of certain groups over others, continue to hinder the path towards dialogue and collective development of policies aimed at fostering or enforcing by law equal rights and opportunities for women, the youth and persons belonging to the poorest and excluded sectors of society. The discussion on these troublesome and controversial issues is often ignored, trivialized or postponed in political and legal debates, without considering the high cost for development. Even in some countries with an advanced legal system in terms of recognizing sexual and reproductive rights, whenever a general or specific legal analysis is made about persons who are discriminated against, one can understand that being equal under the law is no guarantee that there will be equality in the praxis. Strategies to transform the structural and cultural elements of these systems are required and, above all, political will. Not addressing these issues in all their complexity and magnitude is also a political stance.

The year 2014 provides us with new opportunities to focus our efforts on development agendas placing human beings at the core through processes of social and economic transformation addressing all their rights.

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