
DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Virtual Event

11th June 2021, 3pm-4:30pm EAT (GMT +3)/ 8am-9:30am New York time

High-Level Continental Dialogue on The State of World Population (SWOP) Report 2021 My Body is My Own: Claiming the right to autonomy and self-determination.

1. Background:

In October 2018, the first continental launch of UNFPA's flagship report, the State of World Population (SWOP) was held in Addis Ababa led by the UNFPA's Deputy Executive Director (Programme) and the African Union Commission's Deputy Chairperson in the presence of the diplomatic community in Addis Ababa, international development partners, civil society representatives, and other key stakeholders. Subsequent continental launches of the UNFPA flagship report took place in 2019 and 2020. These continental events have provided an important platform to disseminate the report and show at a very high level, the results of cutting-edge research on issues of population and development in Africa by UNFPA.

In view of the prevailing circumstances occasioned by the COVID19 pandemic, and following the global launch of the 2021 State of World Population (SWOP) in April, a high-level continental dialogue on the report theme, "**My Body is My Own: Claiming the right to autonomy and self-determination**", will be held virtually, via UNFPA's Zoom channel on **June 11, 3pm-4:30pm EAT (GMT+3) / 8am-9:30am New York time**

2. Objective of the high-level continental dialogue on the theme of the 2021 SWOP Report

UNFPA's flagship report finds that when women and girls can make the most fundamental choices about their bodies, they not only gain in terms of autonomy, but also through advances in health and education, income and safety. These add up to a world of greater justice and human well-being, which benefits us all.

The high-level continental dialogue on the theme of the 2021 SWOP Report will shine a spotlight on the global consensus that bodily autonomy is a right for everyone, and that communities and countries flourish when all people have the power to make their own informed decisions about their bodies and their futures. The dialogue will also discuss the solutions, highlighting *the power to say yes, the right to say no*.

More specifically the high-level continental dialogue on the theme of the 2021 SWOP Report will help to:

- Convene thought leaders on the right to bodily autonomy, including the power to make informed decisions on harmful practices against girls and women, supported by cutting-edge research.

- Demonstrate impactful partnerships in promoting the right to bodily autonomy and combating harmful practices against girls and women.
- Sound the alarm on the devastating impact of the COVID19 pandemic on progress in achieving bodily autonomy and how the pandemic continues to amplify existing barriers that hinder the ability of women to exercise bodily autonomy such as lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, increased incidences of gender-based violence and harmful practices.
- Demonstrate, through concrete results, how UNFPA and partners have transformed individual's lives by preventing and responding to harmful practices that hinder exercise of bodily autonomy.
- Provide a space for dialogue that promotes bodily autonomy and places harmful practices against girls and women at the centre of development discourse, while making the case that the success of Agenda 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063 will depend in part on fully realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights.

3. Date of the high-level continental dialogue on the theme of the 2021 SWOP Report

The high-level continental dialogue on the theme of the 2021 SWOP Report will be held on **11th June 2021 at 3pm-4:30pm Addis Ababa time (GMT +3) / 8am-9:30am New York time**. This will be a virtual dialogue using the Zoom platform.

4. Theme and key topics:

Speakers will be invited to share their insights and perspectives on bodily autonomy including harmful practices against girls and women; emerging best practices and lessons learnt from implementing legal and programmatic interventions; successful grassroots and community-based approaches; as well as changing social norms and cultural attitudes. First-hand accounts of survivors of these harmful practices will also be sought.

There will be an elaborate communication component that includes media coverage, livestreaming/tweeting of the event.

5. Format:

The opening session of the virtual dialogue will have remarks by: Dr. Diene Keita, Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA; and a Head of State championing bodily autonomy. The remarks will highlight the state of bodily autonomy, including harmful practices against women and girls on the continent and urgent steps needed to stem the tide.

This session will be followed by a special address by continental leadership, the Head of the EU Delegation to the African Union, a ministerial panel and thereafter a high-level interactive discussion by diverse panellists with in-depth knowledge on bodily autonomy and lived experiences of harmful practices against girls and women.

6. Participants to the Event:

It is anticipated that the following groups of people will participate in the event:

- Government Ministers and senior representatives of African Member States
- Senior officials from UN agencies based in Addis Ababa and across the continent
- Diplomatic community
- International and Regional Organizations

- Women and youth networks from across the continent
- Non-Governmental Partners
- Civil Society Organizations
- Academia

7. Duration:

90 minutes

8. Interpretation:

Simultaneous English/French/Portuguese/Arabic interpretation will be available.