47th session of the UN Human Rights Council
Oral Statement
Interactive Dialogue with the working group on Discrimination against women

Madam President,

My name is Sima Samar, former Chair of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. As a human rights activist, and medical doctor by training, living in crisis, I know how fundamental it is to uphold women’s rights to health in crises, particularly access to reproductive health.

In Afghanistan, facilities providing free contraception and reproductive health services are few and mostly run by foreign aid. Yet, the military withdrawal of the US and others creates uncertainty about the future and a reduction of the resources available to such programs. Donor States should not wait and see, but rather continue to provide assistance to the women and girls in Afghanistan.

The report highlights those responses to crisis often lack a gender perspective. This is also true regarding Afghanistan's security crisis and the ongoing negotiations with the Taliban, who are well known for depriving women and girls of their human rights. Afghan women were at the forefront of efforts for peace and stability. Yet only four are sitting at the table of the current peace talks. There is a risk of seeing women's rights compromised in the peace process.

Access to reproductive health is a basic human right, it is not luxury. Thank you.