Dear Committee Members,

**Re: Letter of support for application for inclusion of mifepristone - misoprostol on EML**

FIGO (The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics) sends this letter in support of the application for inclusion of mifepristone - misoprostol combi-packs on the EML due to be considered by the 22nd Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines in April 2019.

FIGO is the only organisation that brings together professional societies of obstetricians and gynecologists on a global basis. For over 60 years FIGO has collaborated with the world's top health and donor bodies. Representing Member Societies in 132 countries / territories, FIGO is dedicated to the improvement of women’s health and rights and to the reduction of disparities in healthcare available to women and newborns, as well as to advancing the science and practice of obstetrics and gynecology. We pursue our mission through advocacy, programmatic activities, capacity strengthening of Member Associations, education and training.

FIGO strongly supports all proposed changes to the EML with regards to mifepristone - misoprostol combi-packs, specifically:

1. Move mifepristone-misoprostol from the Complementary to Core Model List of Essential Medicines
2. Remove the asterisk that states that close medical supervision is required for administration of mifepristone-misoprostol for medical abortion
3. Include dosage form for combi-pack containing: mifepristone 200 milligram tablet and misoprostol 200 microgram tablet
4. Remove the statement “Where permitted under national law and where culturally acceptable”

FIGO regards the right of a woman to make decisions about her reproductive health as a key human right. Fertility regulation and reproductive choice, including access to safe and effective contraception and abortion, are basic and non-negotiable tools for ensuring the human rights of every woman which require equal attention in the areas of health services, medical education, policy and programmes.
There is no doubt that safe abortions save lives. When an abortion is provided by qualified providers in appropriate settings, it is one of the safest medical procedures known to science. Yet unsafe abortion continues to be a major public health problem causing thousands of deaths and resulting in many more women who suffer complications.

The right to safe abortion therefore is not an abstract idea for the thousands of women who die due to unsafe abortion or suffer from complications from unsafe abortion, it is rather an urgent and lifesaving need. FIGO remains committed to working towards a future where women of the world achieve the highest possible standards of physical, mental, reproductive and sexual health and wellbeing throughout their lives. This includes enabling access to safe, efficacious methods for medical abortion.

The mifepristone - misoprostol regimen for medical abortion is not only the gold standard for medical abortion supported by a plethora of evidence which demonstrated its use in outpatient and primary health care settings with a wide cadre of health workers and without need for direct medical supervision, but it also enables us to move towards the provision of woman centered care where girl’s and women’s preferences are taken into consideration. The combi-pack provides the opportunity to exercise preferences with regards to provider interaction and self-administration.

Moving towards improved access to women centered and comprehensive abortion care also enables movement towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially those pertaining to 3.1 reducing the global maternal mortality ratio, 3.5 ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, and 5.6 ensuring gender equality as access to safe abortion is as relevant to gender equality as women’s equal access to education, employment, adequate food and housing.

Effecting these changes in the EML will highlight to all countries that the combi-pack meets the standards of core essential medications and they in turn should consider their inclusion in country-level EML and commodity lists. It will also support efforts to ensure that quality assured products with consistent dosing and clear instructions are available for girls and women.

We thank you for considering our letter of support.

Yours respectfully,

Dr Carlos Fuchtner – President
On behalf of FIGO (International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics)