Dear Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines,

It is with great pleasure that we have learned that the WHO Maternal and Perinatal Health & Preventing Unsafe Abortion Team has submitted an application to modify the listing of mifepristone-misoprostol on the Essential Medicines List (EML). We are writing to you, as organizations and committed professionals of the Safe Abortion Supplies Workstream of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC), to signal our support for these critical, evidence-based changes in the Model List of Essential Medicines.

Since 2005, when mifepristone and misoprostol were initially included in the Model List of Essential Medicines, numerous clinical and programmatic studies as well as systematic reviews have documented the safe and effective provision of mifepristone-misoprostol for medical abortion without the need for specialized medical care and direct supervision. In light of the existing body of evidence supporting its safe and effective use, it is timely that mifepristone-misoprostol be reclassified as Core essential medicines on the Model List of Essential Medicines. Misoprostol is already listed as a Core essential medication for its incomplete abortion, labor induction and PPH indications. By moving mifepristone-misoprostol to the Core list, the WHO will highlight to WHO Member States that these drugs meet the standards of core essential medications meaning that they do not require specialized diagnostic or monitoring facilities and/or specialist care and/or training.

In its application, WHO provides evidence-based justification to support the following changes in the EML listing pertaining to provision of mifepristone-misoprostol medical abortion:

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
4. Remove the statement “Where permitted under national law and where culturally acceptable”

We agree wholeheartedly with these proposed recommendations and the science and service delivery practice that support these changes. The signatories below would like to jointly indicate their support, via this public comment, for serious consideration of this important EML application—that promises to increase women’s and girls’ access to medical abortion and quality reproductive healthcare globally.

Warm regards,

Signed by the members listed below of the Safe Abortion Supplies Workstream of the RHSC:
Chinese Resources Zizhu Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.
Concept Foundation
Fundación Huésped
Gynuity Health Projects
Ibis Reproductive Health
International Planned Parenthood Federation
Ipas
Marie Stopes International
Midwife Pilgrim Incorporated
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Population Council
Population Services International
Rutgers
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
WCG Cares