H.E Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation, Government of Belgium
H.E Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for International Development Cooperation, Government of Denmark
H.E Lilianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Government of the Netherlands
H.E Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, Government of Sweden

Brussels, 1 March 2017

Your Excellencies,

On behalf of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF), I would like to warmly congratulate you on your brave and yet so necessary decision to launch SheDecides Global Fundraising Initiative.

In 2015 the world promised universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, by 2030. America’s Global Gag Rule makes the attainment of this promise particularly challenging, as it has a chilling effect on health services for the world’s most vulnerable women and girls. According to the Euromapping 2016, between 2011 and 2014, the United States represented more than half of the total ODA commitments channelled towards Family Planning. With the reinstatement of the Global Gag Rule, millions of women and girls who access critical reproductive health services offered by NGOs might be added to the 225 million women and girls who want to avoid or delay a pregnancy, but they do not have access to contraceptives.

EPF will be present at the SheDecides conference in Brussels on 2nd March 2017 with a parliamentary delegation of over 20 MPs, joining forces to the global movement that seeks to protect the fundamental rights of the world’s most vulnerable. The political momentum for Europe to stand up united and defend women and girls is unprecedented, as the attached High-Level Statement, signed by 357 global parliamentarians -- they majority of whom are European -- demonstrates.

As world leaders, these parliamentarians stand by their promises and will fight for the rights of women and girls wherever they live. They champion all organisations that are committed to providing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services. They will work to provide a counterbalance to the Global Gag Rule and ensure that support is provided to help improve access to services to help stop unsafe abortion. They call on all governments to increase funding for contraceptive services and supplies and to support policies that will advance sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

Yours Sincerely,

Neil Datta
EPF Secretary

EPF is a network of members of parliaments from across Europe who are committed to protecting the sexual and reproductive health of the world’s most vulnerable people, both at home and overseas.