

## FIGO COMMITTEE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS:

### A NEW NAME FOR A GLOBAL MISSION

By Professor Chiara Benedetto-Committee Chair



We are happy to announce that from now on our Committee will be called “Women’s Health and Human Rights Committee” instead of “Women’s Sexual and Reproductive Rights Committee”.

The change in name was unanimously proposed as the integration of Human Rights and Women’s Health is so crucial in all contexts and this process requires universal collaboration. The new name, we believe, encompasses the fundamental principles of respecting Human Rights and Women’s Health , which should be indisputably common to all social and cultural settings in the new millennium.

We are grateful to the members of the FIGO Executive for sharing our idea and making the change possible.

The new name expresses more clearly our mission, as integrating Human Rights in Women’s Healthcare can make a difference and help face some of the most relevant women’s health challenges at a global scale.

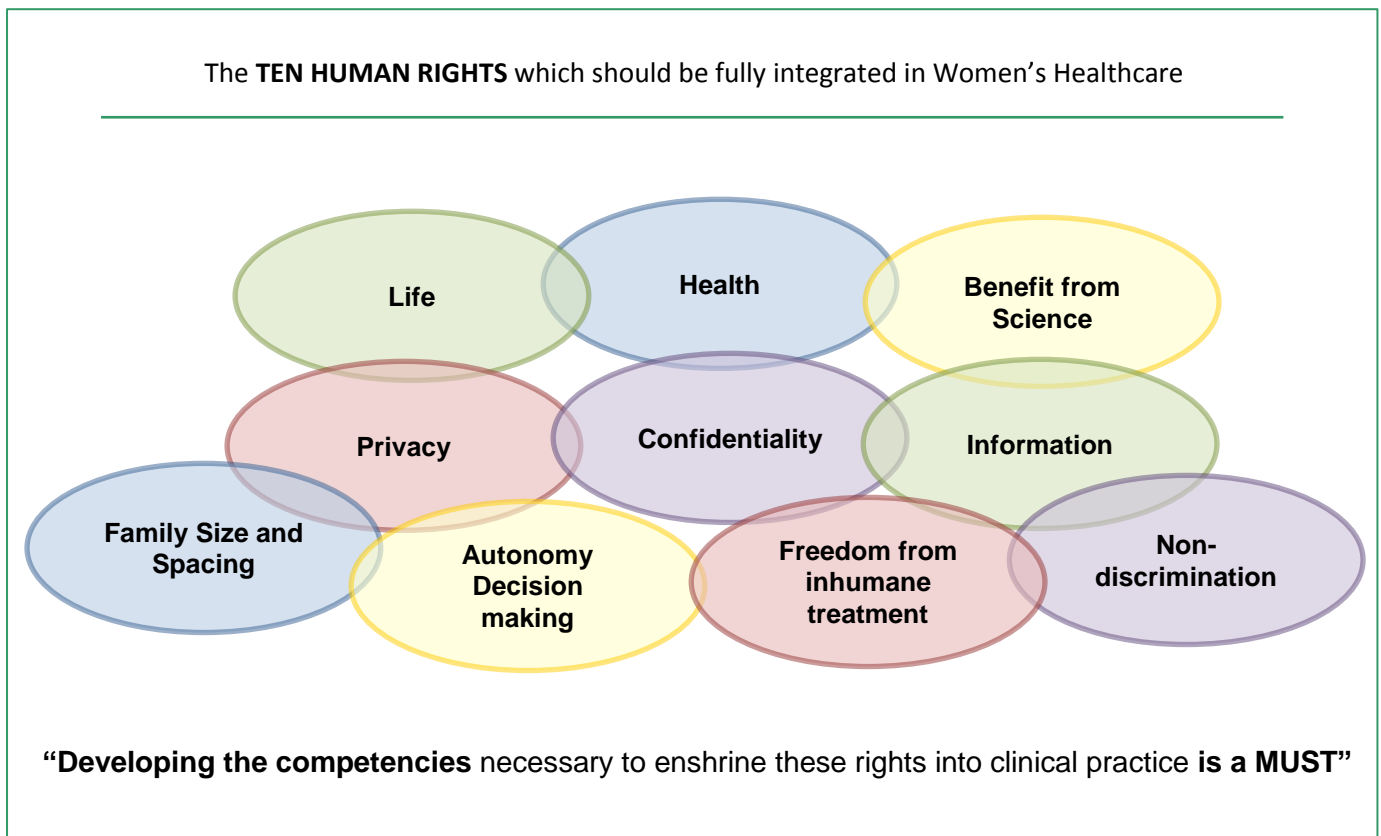
#### Women’s Health Challenges at a global scale

- 16 million girls aged 15-19 and 1 million girls under 15 give birth per year
- 303,000 maternal deaths per year
- 225 million women with no access to family planning per year
- 56 million induced abortions (safe/unsafe) per year
- 270,000 deaths for cervical cancer per year
- 1 in 3 women experience physical and/or sexual violence

data from WHO, 2014 - 2016

## Championing Human Rights

Most of these challenges can be faced by educating health care providers and the population at large to think differently, to act differently, in respect of all women, irrespective of personal beliefs; to do so, we are continuing the work of the previous Committee by developing the competencies necessary to enshrine into clinical practice the Ten Human Rights which should be fully integrated in Women's Healthcare.



In fact, winning rights for women is about more than giving opportunities, it is also about changing how countries and communities work, how the fabric of society evolves. It involves changing laws and policies, winning hearts and minds. In short, it means investing in a fairer, equal society where freedom from violence, access to education, and maternal health rights are assured to each and every woman. In order to better promote the work of our Committee, we have proposed a “FIGO Women's Health and Human Rights Committee Day” which could be part of either the International Women's Day on March 8 or International Day of Action for Women's Health on May 28. The decision will be left to each individual country. Checklist and toolkit will be prepared for this particular day with key messages promoting our goals.

## **Our plan of Action:**

We are developing a **communication campaign** to ensure that the information regarding the identified areas of priority be acknowledged: implementing respectful behaviour toward women; access to contraception; adoption of a healthy life-style; fertility preservation; preconception counselling; safe pregnancy and delivery; raising awareness of the risks of pregnancy with advancing maternal age; and prevention of STIs, pre-term birth, gender-based violence and unsafe abortion.

In particular, our priority is the production of **checklists** and **specific curricula for professionals** and **educational material for women and men** living in humanitarian settings, including refugees and people in Internationally Displaced Persons camps or allocations.

One of the first actions the Committee undertook was to prepare a lecture upon the request of the President of FIGO entitled "Rights-Based Approach to Women's Health" to be potentially used by FIGO Specialists to provide training and teaching on the topics considered to be priority issues of our Committee.

This is a step towards a closer collaboration with other FIGO Committees and Working Groups in the future.

As reproductive rights is a cross cutting issue in all FIGO committees and working groups, we intend to actively collaborate with all the committees and working groups so that women's rights are integrated into their work plans and are reflected clearly as a priority area of FIGO, thus helping the health care professionals in developing an attitude whereby ensuring reproductive rights as a part of the health care delivery package.

We are organizing **Workshops** at various locations around the world in both medical schools and during the course of national and international congresses, which will serve to disseminate our project. Cases of Human rights violation will be discussed during the workshops in order to stimulate professionals towards a thinking approach where women's health and human rights are wholly integrated.

## **FIGO WHHR Workshops for 2016**

11-12 July 2016 – Colombo, Sri Lanka *A two day emergency obstetric course for midwives and nurses*  
18-20 July 2016 - Baghdad, Iraq *Training on the main guiding principles and clinical management of Gender based violence/RAPE (MOH & UNFPA)*  
3 August 2016 – Harare, Zimbabwe, *School of midwifery, Harare Hospital*  
9 August 2016 – Colombo, Sri Lanka, *Annual Congress of the Perinatal Society of Sri Lanka*  
17 August 2016 – Harare, Zimbabwe, *First year postgraduate fellows*  
8 October 2016 – Lahore, Pakistan, *Postgraduate trainees for FCPS*  
19 October 2016 – Lahore, Pakistan, *Services Institute of Medical Sciences*  
20 October 2016 – Zimbabwe, *Annual Scientific Meeting, Zimbabwe Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*  
3 November 2016 - Turku, Finland, *National Meeting for Residents*  
5-9 November 2016 - Cancun, Mexico, *Congreso Latinoamericano de Obstetricia y Ginecologia*  
12 November 2016 – Lahore, Pakistan – *Meeting of Lahore Chapter of SOGP.*  
21 November 2016 - Torino, Italy, *School of Medicine, University of Torino*  
23 November 2016 – Helsinki, Finland, *National Meeting of the Finish Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*  
2 December 2016 - Toronto, Canada, *Regional Canadian Meetings*

## Money talk:

Our large scale goals and plan of action involve, both, developing countries and industrialized nations. To pursue these goals, some fund generation will be in order. We envisage tackling this issue by involving NGO's and Charitable Foundations through different strategies to raise funds. In so doing, we hope to raise awareness to the plight of women and human rights worldwide in order to create a sense of shared concern.

## New Committee:

The commitment to the project by the group was more than evident during the first meeting held in Torino on 30 June-1<sup>st</sup> July, 2016. Their ideas, contributions and shared enthusiasm for the work ahead will certainly pave the way towards a successful collaboration among the group and make our task easier.

### List of the Committee members

Professor Chiara Benedetto (Italy), *Chair*  
Professor Lesley Regan (UK), *Immediate Past Chair*  
Professor Sejia Grenman (Finland), *Ex-officio FIGO member*  
Dr Jan Elizabeth Christilaw (Canada)  
Professor Pio Ivan Gomez (Columbia)  
Dr Shaimaa Ibrahim (Iraq)  
Ms Silke Mader (Germany)  
Dr Colleen McNicholas (USA)  
Dr Paulo Felipe Meade Trevino (Mexico)  
Professor Stephen Munjanja (Zimbabwe)  
Dr Hemantha Senanayake (Sri Lanka)  
Professor Rubina Sohail (Pakistan)

## Women's Health & Human Rights

Working together towards a common goal! Cheers

