

# CONCEPT NOTE

**THEME: ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN A WORLD OF EMERGING THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK) will host its 8th Pan-African Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AYSRHR) Scientific Conference with the Ministry of Health as the official partner. The conference is an annual event that brings government officials, civil society, academia, the private sector, faith-based organizations, grass roots organizations and other partners, interested in the pursuit of sexual and reproductive health and rights across the region to share experiences in advancing access to comprehensive SRH information and services. The conference also provides a platform for stakeholders to network and engage with donor organizations.

Last year's conference themed "Priorities for Advancing AYSRHR in Africa" attracted more than 800 delegates from Eastern and Southern parts of Africa, with over 200 abstract (oral and poster) and over 22 panel discussions and side events presentations, which provided insights and learning on priorities for advancing AYSRHR that further provided directions for future efforts in advancing AYSRHR service delivery within the region. During the conference, stakeholder made commitments cutting across innovative digital health solutions, community-based norms shifting and narrative change interventions, integrating AYSRHR as part of the development agenda, gender equity and social inclusion, policy advocacy for AYSRHR inclusion in UHC agenda, funding models and best practices/innovations in service delivery.

### **BACKGROUND**

Adolescent and Youth across Africa face significant challenges to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. These challenges include lack of a rights-based approach to providing education, information and access to health services, sexual coercion and intimate partner violence, high rates of early and unwanted pregnancy, risk of STIs/HIV, gender inequalities and harmful cultural practices among others. These challenges are further exacerbated by the shifting global political landscape impacting regional SRHR policies and funding, climate change that strains the health system and diverts resources to disaster response, anti-rights movements, who are increasingly infiltrating policy making spaces, restricting access to information and services and perpetuates increased social stigma, violence, and discrimination; and rapid technological advancements such as artificial intelligence which offers both significant opportunities and notable threats to AYSRHR. These emerging issues threaten to create a vicious cycle of vulnerability and inequality, where adolescents and youth face greater obstacles in accessing SRH information and care, ultimately leading to poorer health outcomes and diminished empowerment.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE 2025 CONFERENCE

Against a backdrop of rapidly changing political, environmental, and technological landscapes, the 8th RHNK Pan African AYSRHR Scientific Conference seeks to address these dynamic aspects under the overarching theme of **"Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in a World of Emerging Threats and Opportunities."**

The 2025 conference therefore aims at;

- Increasing awareness and deepen the understanding of emerging threats to AYSRHR and share strategies to create resilient and adaptive health systems
- Providing a platform for sharing innovative strategies, best practices and success stories for harnessing and mitigating the impacts of rapid technological advancements, to enhance access to AYSRH information and services
- Strengthening collaborations among stakeholders to collectively harness and enhance the capacity of Generations Z and Alpha to leverage digital technologies for effective advocacy, social accountability and community engagement.
- Generating clear and actionable recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders to guide AYSRHR initiatives for impactful outcomes in a world of emerging threats

In order to achieve the aforementioned outcomes, there are six (6) conference sub-themes;

### 1. **Global Politics and Governance - The Impact of Political Shifts on SRHR Funding and Policies**

The impact of global political leadership on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is profound and brings significant changes to the SRHR funding landscape by influencing international aid and domestic policies. This sub-theme will analyse the effects of changes in global politics and governance on both domestic and regional SRHR funding and policies, explore potential strategies to mitigate negative impacts and identify opportunities for advancing SRHR in varying political climates and discuss best practices in protecting SRHR funding against the backdrop of fluctuating political commitments.

### 2. **Enhancing Bodily Autonomy and Self-Determination in AYSRHR**

Investing in self-care, de-medicalization, telehealth and e-health approaches offers the potential to considerably increase adolescent and young people's control over their SRHR. This sub-theme explores innovative approaches that integrate technology in SRH service delivery to enhance access by adolescents and youth. Discussions will also include age of consent for adolescents, successful case studies on digital health interventions, address the digital divide and privacy concerns, and explore strategies to incorporate mental health support in digital interventions.

### **3. Climate Change - Intersecting Impacts on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**

The impact of climate change remains a big concern globally. Extreme weather events like flooding, drought and intense heat are disrupting the delivery of essential SRH services in communities affected by climate crisis, with the most vulnerable populations such as adolescents and youth most affected. This sub-theme will explore ways in which environmental changes intersect with and SRHR. This sub-theme will explore climate resilience and adaptive strategies for SRH service delivery in affected regions, discuss innovative approaches to integrate SRH education and services into climate action plans and evaluate case studies where community-led initiatives have successfully mitigated the impact of climate change on SRHR.

### **4. Positive Use of Technology in Advancing AYSRHR**

The rapid evolution of technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), offers both significant opportunities and threats to SRHR. This sub-theme will examine how these technological advances are shaping the landscape of SRHR for adolescents and youth. This sub-theme will evaluate current AI applications in SRHR and their impact on youth, discuss strategies to safeguard privacy and ensure the ethical use of AI in SRHR, identify effective practices for combating misinformation and ensuring cultural and contextual appropriateness in AI-driven tools and explore ways to bridge the digital divide and make technology-driven SRHR solutions accessible to all youth, regardless of their socio-economic status.

### **5. Empowering Gen-Z's and Alpha - Refocussing Social Accountability and Community Engagement in Youth Advocacy**

In today's digital age, technology significantly impacts how young people, especially Generations Z and Alpha, engage with right holders to advocate for their rights. This sub-theme explores the role of technology in enabling these digitally native generations to amplify their voices and influence SRHR advocacy across geographic and cultural boundaries. It will highlight successful case studies demonstrating how youth-led tech initiatives have driven meaningful changes in society. Additionally, the sub-theme will delve into strategies to support and empower young advocates to refocus social accountability and enhance community engagement through technology.

### **6. Countering Opposition - Strategies to Combat Anti-Rights Movements Affecting AYSRHR**

In an era marked by rising anti-rights movements, it is important to devise effective strategies to safeguard and promote SRHR of adolescents and youth. This sub-theme will focus on understanding the opposition to AYSRHR and explore innovative approaches to counteract opposition, ensuring that young people have access to accurate information and services. Abstracts may include case studies detailing successful interventions that have effectively countered anti-rights movements. Contributions may also analyse the impact of anti-rights movements on AYSRHR and explore successful communication strategies that have shifted public opinion and influenced policy in environments hostile to AYSRHR.

## CONFERENCE DETAILS

### Conference Venue

Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort and Spa  
Mombasa County, Kenya

### Conference Dates

24th – 27th June 2025

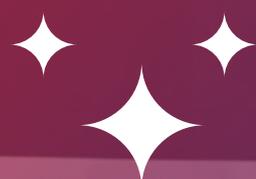
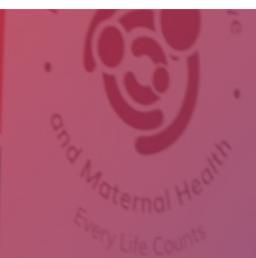
### Partner

Ministry of Health, Kenya

## KEY DATES

- Abstract submission deadline: **15th April 2025**
- Notification of abstract submission status deadline: **30th April 2025**
- Submission of corrected abstracts deadline: **15th May 2025**
- Conference registration deadline: **31st May 2025**

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ADVANCING  
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**8<sup>TH</sup> RHNK PAN-AFRICAN 2025**  
**ADOLESCENT & YOUTH SRHR**  
**SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE**

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