

# Foreword

This Handbook, which is long overdue, is an essential and invaluable resource for all those wishing to advocate for girls' and women's health and human rights. Indeed, applying a human rights-based approach to healthcare implies shifting away from the passive delivery of services to a culture of accountability for internationally recognized human rights.

The decision taken by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) and Women's Health and Human Rights (WHHR) Committee to meet the need for guidance in the field of advocacy to improve girls' and women's wellbeing is laudable.

I am particularly grateful to Professor Chiara Benedetto, the Chair of the Committee, for having found a way to turn the idea into reality by gathering together experts in the field of law and human rights, under the guidance of Carola Carazzone, and by producing a text that has found its momentum through the research and efforts of many.

There is little doubt that gynecologists and obstetricians are often witnesses of situations where girls' and women's human rights in the field of healthcare are infringed. They do their best to deal with these issues in a manner that complies with their duties. However, many of them feel that there is a paucity of detailed information that they can refer to when striving to make significant changes in social attitudes, behavior, and awareness.

This Handbook speaks primarily to them and is a tool for their empowerment. Its most immediate value resides in helping the reader to understand what rights-based advocacy and the United Nations mechanisms entail, if we are to implement a human rights-based approach to girls' and women's health. In addition, it gives an overview of the current situation for girls and women in Africa, The Americas, Asia, and Europe.

The editors set out to make the material accessible to the readers and list an important set of issues to consider when planning to take action. Despite the variety of processes and contexts, they deftly raise the practical issues and opportunities that should be considered and identify the core international bodies to interact with at each stage. They provide professional societies of obstetricians and gynecologists with a road map of how to improve women's health and rights and reduce disparities in health care available to women and newborns.

The chapter summary notes remind the readers of the main points to focus on so as to make a significant contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and follow-up processes. In addition, the Annexures make a clear outline of the links between the SDG targets relating to girls' and women's health and rights and corresponding international human rights obligations and provide a calendar of the Universal Periodic Review.

This Handbook clearly deserves to have a very wide readership if we are to meet the SDG and targets.

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