



DECLARATION ON SEXUAL PLEASURE

In recognition that sexual pleasure is a fundamental part of sexual rights, sexual health, and sexual well-being, the World Association for Sexual Health:

AFFIRMS that:

Sexual pleasure is the physical and/or psychological satisfaction and enjoyment derived from shared or solitary erotic experiences, including thoughts, fantasies, dreams, emotions, and feelings. Self-determination, consent, safety, privacy, confidence and the ability to communicate and negotiate sexual relations are key enabling factors for pleasure to contribute to sexual health and well-being. Sexual pleasure should be exercised within the context of sexual rights, particularly the rights to equality and non-discrimination, autonomy and bodily integrity, the right to the highest attainable standard of health and freedom of expression. The experiences of human sexual pleasure are diverse and sexual rights ensure that pleasure is a positive experience for all concerned and not obtained by violating other people's human rights and well-being.ⁱ

DECLARES that:

1. The possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences free of discrimination, coercion, and violence is a fundamental part of sexual health and well-being for all;
2. Access to sources of sexual pleasure is part of human experience and subjective well-being;
3. Sexual pleasure is a fundamental part of sexual rights as a matter of human rights;
4. Sexual pleasure includes the possibility of diverse sexual experiences;
5. Sexual pleasure shall be integrated into education, health promotion and service delivery, research and advocacy in all parts of the world;
6. The programmatic inclusion of sexual pleasure to meet individuals' needs, aspirations, and realities ultimately contributes to global health and sustainable development and it should require comprehensive, immediate and sustainable action.

URGES all governments, international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, health and education authorities, the media, private sector actors, and society at large, and particularly, all member organizations of the World Association for Sexual Health to:

- A. Promote sexual pleasure in law and policy as a fundamental part of sexual health and well-being, grounded in the principles of sexual rights as human rights, including self-determination, non-discrimination, privacy, bodily integrity, and equality;
- B. Ensure that comprehensive sexuality education addresses sexual pleasure in an inclusive, evidence-informed and rights-based manner tailored to people's diverse capacities and needs across the life span, in order to allow experiences of informed, self-determined, respectful, and safe sexual pleasure;
- C. Guarantee that sexual pleasure is integral to sexual health care services provision, and that sexual health services are accessible, affordable, acceptable, and free from stigma, discrimination, and prosecution;
- D. Enhance the development of rights-based, evidence-informed knowledge of the benefits of sexual pleasure as part of well-being, including rights-based funding resources, research methodologies, and dissemination of knowledge to address the role of sexual pleasure in individual and public health;
- E. Reaffirm the global, national, community, interpersonal, and individual commitments to recognition of the diversity in sexual pleasure experiences respecting human rights of all people and supported by consistent, evidence-informed policy and practices, interpersonal behavior, and collective action.

The World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) is a multidisciplinary, world-wide group of scientific societies, NGOs and professionals in the field of human sexuality which promotes sexual health throughout the lifespan and through the world by developing, promoting and supporting sexual health and sexual rights for all. WAS accomplishes this by advocacy actions, networking, facilitating the exchange of information, ideas and experiences and advancing scientifically based sexuality research, sexuality education and clinical sexology, with a trans-disciplinary approach. The Declaration of Sexual Pleasure was originally proclaimed at the 24th World Congress of Sexual Health in Mexico City in 2019 and a final version was ratified by the General Assembly at the 25th World Congress of Sexual Health in Cape Town, South Africa in 2021.

ⁱ Adapted from: Global Advisory Board for Sexual Health and Wellbeing. (2016). Working definition of sexual pleasure. Retrieved from <https://www.gab-shw.org/our-work/working-definition-of-sexual-pleasure/>