

CSW 60 Young Feminist Caucus Statement

Preamble

We are a diverse group of young feminist advocates, gathered in New York at the Sixtieth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), working for gender, reproductive, economic, ecological, and social justice and political transformation. We applaud the commitments governments have made under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to guarantee gender equality, eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against us, and achieve the full and meaningful realisation of our human rights. We emphasize that the Beijing Platform for Action and Agenda 2030 are linked and valuable strategies for women's and girls' empowerment, the realization of their human rights and sustainable development. We call on the CSW to play a strong role in monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action whilst establishing strong linkages with the relevant goals and targets of the SDGs. In both processes, the meaningful participation and engagement of all young people at all levels should be ensured. We, the young feminist caucus, affirm this statement as a supplement to the official CSW Youth Forum Declaration, further emphasizing our priorities.

Our diversity is our strength, and together we call for the full recognition and meaningful participation of youth, inclusive of age, race, caste, ethnicity, health status (including HIV and mental health status), ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, marital status, parenthood, class, indigeneity, migrant status, and others.

As we begin to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in coordination with the Beijing Platform for Action, we urge the CSW to address the following priorities for young people in all our diversity. Moreover, sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights and together we emphasize the cross-cutting centrality of realizing these rights to achieve social justice, women's and girls' empowerment, and sustainable development. We call on governments to:

Youth Participation

Ensure the meaningful, full and effective participation of young people and underrepresented groups in political spaces, decision making platforms and accountability mechanisms, at all levels, including in formulating, developing, implementing and evaluating laws, policies, plans and budgets. Therefore we call for the creation of safe, enabling and inclusive environments for building the leadership of young women, adolescents and girls in local, provincial and national governments, as well as at international convenings. We emphasize that youth participation cannot be tokenistic, needs to be paired with financial, educational, and logistical support, and must be free from all forms of gender-based harassment and violence.

Climate Change and Justice

Recognize that the current growth-led model of development directly contributes to climate change and the associated violations of human rights that disproportionately affect young women, adolescents, and girls. We urge all stakeholders to ensure equal access to land, property, and sustainable and environmentally safe development, including access to technology and capital for young women, adolescents and girls. Members states must preserve the right of indigenous peoples over their land and territory, especially in the face of encroaching private sector development. We ask for the implementation of gender-sensitive responses in reference to the Paris Agreement, ahead of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties 22 in Marrakech.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Legal Barriers

Ensure the full realization of sexual and reproductive rights through the repeal of discriminatory laws and policies such as parental and spousal consent laws, laws that criminalize abortion, and laws that criminalize individuals on the basis of age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sexual practices, HIV status and transmission, and labour choices, including sex work. We call on governments to protect and promote legal recourse and access to justice and remedies when the sexual and reproductive rights of young people are violated.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Ensure the provision of evidence and rights-based, universal, comprehensive, quality, accessible, affordable, non-judgmental, confidential, gender-sensitive, youth-friendly information and services for all young people without coercion, and including in humanitarian settings. This covers, but is not limited to, a full range of voluntary contraceptive options (including emergency contraception and long acting reversible contraception), mental health services, maternal health services, safe and legal abortion services, treatment, care and support for sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS, as well as freedom from forced, coerced, uninformed and non-consensual sterilization and medical testings. We call for an end to stigma and discrimination in healthcare provision, through increased awareness among health sciences students, doctors-in-training, physicians, healthcare professionals, and community workers on sexual and reproductive health and rights. We urge governments to promote and defend anti-discrimination legislation across health services.

Education

Prioritize the education of young women, adolescents and girls and strengthen policies and programmes that ensure equal access to longitudinal education for all young people. We emphasize the importance of gender inclusive quality education with relevant curricula which prioritises holistic learning methods, including mentorship and skills development, and that prepares young women, adolescents, and girls for decent work, equitable employment opportunities and entrepreneurship. We urge governments to train educators on gender-sensitive policies and practices to end discrimination and stigma in academic settings.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Prioritize the adoption and successful implementation of evidence-based, medically accurate, universally accessible, quality, non-judgmental comprehensive sexuality education. This must emphasize human sexuality, sexual pleasure, gender equality, human rights, healthy relationships, and sexual and reproductive health, and be provided in a safe and participatory environment that caters to formal and informal education systems, for all young people.

Gender Based Violence

Strengthen their response to gender-based violence, putting into action the measures outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These actions must take into account multifaceted forms of violence including early and forced marriage, sexual violence, online violence, intimate partner violence, coerced labour, rape (including marital rape), violence in educational institutions, harmful traditional practices, violence on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics, violence as a product of religious fundamentalisms, coerced and forced sterilization, and violence within conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings. Governments must recognize the psychological and emotional effects of trauma, including transgenerational violence, and include this in their response to gender-based violence.

Conclusion

In order for the 2030 Agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action to become a reality for all young people, it is necessary to fully integrate all of the above priorities across all implementation strategies. We call on governments to measure progress with gender-sensitive, and youth and adolescent specific indicators, supported with data disaggregated by gender and age and other necessary information in order to monitor inequalities and discrimination across intersectional identities. The above priorities must be supported by resourcing frameworks including flexible, core and long term funding for youth led organisations at the grassroots and international level.

We call on governments to recognize that we, as young people, are rights-holders as well as experts in our own experiences. We are not “vulnerable”, we are not a “dividend” to cash in on, we are not “the future”; we are here. We ask that our voices be heard and that our agency over our bodies, our lives, and our communities be acknowledged.

Endorsing youth organizations and allies:

ActionAid International
African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
AIDOS - Italian Association for Women in Development
ARC International
Argentinian Network of adolescents and Young people for SRHR - Argentina
Asociación Gojoven Guatemala
ASTRA Network, Central and Eastern Europe
ASTRA Youth
The ATHENA Network
Atria - Institute for Gender Equality and Women's History
Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud AC
Beyond Beijing Committee
The Center for Reproductive Rights, USA
The Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)
Center Women and Modern World, Azerbaijan
CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, the Netherlands
Coalition of African Lesbians.
Commonwealth Youth and Gender Equality Network
Curious Minds, Ghana
Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)
Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality, Fiji
Education as a Vaccine

Elige Red de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos, Mexico
Engajamundo, Brazil
Equality and Modernity, Poland
Equilibres & Populations, France
Federation for Women and Family Planning, Poland
Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Fiji
Fortress of Hope Africa, Kenya
FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund
Fundacion Arcoiris, Mexico
Fundacion para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, Argentina
FUSA Para la Salud Integral con Perspectiva de Genero y Derechos, Asociacion Civil and Center of Woman
The Gender Agency
Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS, an affiliate of the Public Health Institute
Haus of Khameleon, Fiji
Health Education and Skills Development initiative (HESDI), Nigeria
Hidden-Pockets, India
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
International Community of Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW), Chapter of Young Women, Adolescents, and Girls
IFMSA - International Federation of Medical Students' Associations
International Fellowship of Reconciliation
International HIV/AIDS Alliance
International Women's Health Coalition
Ipas
Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir A.C
International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region
The International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP Asia Pacific)
Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), Uganda
Kadinkoalisyonu/ Women's Coalition Turkey
The Liberia Girl Guides Association
The Lotus Identity, Zambia
MenEngage Alliance
Mosaic Training, Service & Healing Centre for Women, South Africa
Mother of Hope Cameroon (MOHCAM)
Mujer y Salud Uruguay (MYSU)
National Tertiary Education Union, Australia
Nepal Policy Institute (NPC)
Noemi Gruetter, Swiss Youth Representative
Pacific Network Against Violence Against Women and Girls
Pacific Young Women's Leadership Alliance
Pacific Youth Council
Pari o Dispare, Italy
Le Planning Familial, France
Positive Youth Network of Latin America and the Caribbean
REDefine Mexico
Red Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos- RedLAC
Republika Libre, Dominican Republic
RESURJ
SPECTRA: Diverse People, Diverse Interventions, Rwanda
Taller Salud, Puerto Rico
TierrActiva, Peru
Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health, Kenya
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights
Vecinas Feministas de América Latina y el Caribe por la Justicia Sexual y Reproductiva
Vision Spring Initiatives, Nigeria

Women's Action Network, Sri Lanka
WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)
Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights
Women United Together, Marshall Islands
Women for Women's Human Rights - New Ways, Turkey
World YWCA
YouAct, European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights
Youth Champions Advocacy Network, Nepal
Young Women's Leadership Institute, Kenya
Youth Advocacy Network, Sri Lanka
Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights
Youth Engage, Zimbabwe
YWCA Australia