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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by World Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.



Statement

The World Alliance of YMCAs is a youth organisation with 45 million members worldwide, of whom half are girls and women. YMCAs are working in 124 countries and are advocating for and promoting the rights of the girl child.

Committed to empowering all, especially young people and the most vulnerable, the World Alliance of YMCAs is deeply concerned about the widespread forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

Committed to work in solidarity with the poor, dispossessed and oppressed, the World Alliance of YMCAs is particularly concerned about the plight of girls from marginalised communities, for example girls from indigenous and tribal communities, Dalit girls, girls living in poverty and refugees and immigrants. Millions of girls face double discrimination and increased risk of violence because of their marginalised status and their gender. Girls from marginalised communities are much more likely to suffer violence in all its forms, be denied access to education, economic independence and decision making, suffer from ill health, malnutrition, early death, early marriages and sexual abuse.

As a result of its work with marginalised communities around the world, the YMCA calls for state-parties and civil society to take urgent action to ensure that:

- Policies and strategies are designed and implemented to support girls to become aware of their rights and are empowered to overcome the culture of silence when their rights are denied and there is violence against them. Girls are supported to collectively raise their voices against all injustices done to them and to combat patriarchy in all its forms. That a special focus is given to girls from marginalised communities.
- Policies and strategies are designed and implemented for boys to become aware of the deep-rooted patriarchal systems of oppression, discrimination and violence against girls and women and are engaged to strive for equal relations between girls and boys, women and men.
- Governments ensure that structural systems promoting discrimination and violence against the girl child are dismantled; that schemes for the empowerment of the girl child are established such as free education and income generation programmes for parents in impoverished communities; that a clear national gender policy with special focus on the girl child is developed and implemented; that all who oppress the girl child are prosecuted. In all these efforts there should be a special focus on overcoming the double discrimination and increased risk of violence faced by girls from marginalised communities.
- The international community monitors the enforcement of the various conventions, protocols and legal systems in place to protect the rights of the girl child, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with a particular focus on assisting girls from marginalised communities.

The YMCA is mobilising both girls and boys, women and men, at local, national and international levels to address these issues and welcomes further efforts to develop practical strategies and tools for a lasting end to discrimination and violence against the girl child.
