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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 12 October 2023

54/19. Realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the human right of everyone to education, which is enshrined in, inter alia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

Recalling all relevant Human Rights Council resolutions, in particular resolution 47/5 of 12 July 2021,

Recalling also that gender equality and the right to education have been recognized in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences,

Recalling further that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances,

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that States have the primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of all human rights,

Recognizing that the full realization of the right to education for all is an essential condition for achieving sustainable development and contributes to enhancing the adaptive capacity and resilience of individuals and communities in the face of the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, and in this regard encouraging States to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, underlining the commitment therein to eliminate



gender disparities in education, and Goal 5, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,

Recalling the need to ensure that all children enjoy the right to education and are ensured equal access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education, the need to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2030 and the need to build and upgrade education facilities that are child-focused, disability- and gender-sensitive, provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, accessible and effective learning environments for all and, wherever possible, are climate-resilient,

Noting with appreciation the work carried out by all relevant organs, bodies and mechanisms of the United Nations system within their respective mandates, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the efforts of organizations and civil society, to promote all girls' full and equal enjoyment of the right to education,

Deeply concerned that, according to the United Nations Children's Fund, approximately 43.1 million children have been displaced in the past six years due to weather-related disasters, and 95 per cent of those displacements were driven by floods and storms, and that approximately 1 billion children are at risk from the impacts of climate change, which can disproportionately affect the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to education, by all women and girls, in particular the most marginalized, those who are internally displaced, those with disabilities and those living in rural areas,

Deeply concerned also that the effects of climate change can impose additional demands and pressures on households where girls are already disproportionately affected, including through ingrained gender inequalities, stereotypes and structural discrimination that may prevent many girls from gaining access to and completing at least 12 years of quality education,

Deeply concerned further that natural disasters and disasters driven by climate change are increasing in severity and occurring almost five times as frequently as 50 years ago, disrupting the education of 40 million children per year through effects such as school closures, reduced funding and resources and the provision of education by State actors,

Deeply concerned that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 122 million girls are out of school, 11.1 million girls are at risk of dropping out of school, 15.2 million girls will never enter a classroom, 18.7 million school-age children will be affected by natural disasters and climate change and, if current trends continue, by 2025, natural disasters, including those related to climate change, could be a contributing factor in preventing approximately 12.5 million girls from completing their education each year,

Noting with deep concern that girls in vulnerable situations affected by the negative effects of climate change and environmental degradation face higher barriers to the enjoyment of their right to education, such as forced displacement, child, early and forced marriage, sexual and gender-based violence, including in school and in online spaces and during their journeys to and from school, threats of attack and violence related to attending school, lack of security and essential facilities that meet the needs of female students and learners and women teachers and lack of infrastructure that meets and responds to the needs of girls, as well as lack of empowerment, including economic empowerment,

Deeply concerned that those facing the greatest threats from the negative effects of climate change and environmental degradation are often those from the most vulnerable and marginalized communities, especially girls, and are the least empowered and the least well equipped in terms of education, capacity and resources,

Reiterating that access to quality education is essential for girls, including adolescent girls, those who are the most marginalized, those living with disabilities, those living in poverty, those living in rural areas and those who are on the move, in order to promote,

protect and fulfil their human rights, and to protect them from the potentially harmful impacts of climate change and environmental degradation,

Deeply concerned that the lack of access safe and adequate water and sanitation services, including for menstrual health and hygiene management, especially in schools and in vulnerable situations and situations of displacement due to the adverse effects of climate change, negatively affects gender equality and women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to education and to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and that widespread silence and stigma surrounding menstruation and menstrual hygiene mean that women and girls often lack basic information and education thereon, are excluded and stigmatized and are thereby prevented from enjoying their human rights and realizing their full potential, including gaining access to at least 12 years of quality education,

Recognizing that education and access to technology and the Internet can play a key role in prevention, mitigation and life-saving actions during natural disasters, including those related to climate change and other environmental issues, by educating girls, adolescent girls and young women on how to prepare, respond, utilize technology and take action during climate crises and disasters, and stresses that equal access to inclusive, equitable and quality education provides them with opportunities, capacities and understanding that enable women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and strengthens the voice, agency and leadership of women and girls in climate, environmental and disaster risk reduction action,

Recognizing also that the right to education is a multiplier right that supports the empowerment of all women and girls to claim their human rights, including the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, such as dealing with climate and environmental action and disaster risk reduction, as well as in economic, social and cultural life, and to fully, equally and meaningfully participate in the decision-making processes that shape society, and the transformative potential of education for every girl,

Recognizing further the transformative potential of access to free, safe, inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning in developing girls into powerful leaders and agents of change for tackling and responding to the impacts of climate change, as girls' education has been identified as one of the most important socioeconomic determinants in reducing vulnerability to climate change, with every additional year of schooling for girls leading to significant improvements in a country's overall resilience to climate-related disasters,

Determined to give full effect to the right to education and to guarantee that this right is recognized and exercised without discrimination of any kind,

1. *Reaffirms* that the right to education, enshrined in international human rights law, can help to enable the realization of many other human rights, in particular for girls;

2. *Recognizes* that the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 4 and 5, by promoting tolerance, increasing all girls' agency and autonomy and empowering their full, equal and meaningful participation in society;

3. *Also recognizes* the critical role of access to at least 12 years of safe, free inclusive and quality education, including informal education, for all girls which increases girls' agency, autonomy and empowerment and can contribute to their involvement in addressing climate change and other environmental issues;

4. *Welcomes* the education and gender equality focus in the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in the United Arab Emirates from 30 November to 12 December 2023, in particular with the inclusion of thematic days on gender equality and youth, children, education and skills;

5. *Urges* all States:

(a) To strengthen and intensify their efforts to take deliberate, concrete and targeted steps for every girl to fully realize the equal enjoyment of the right to education, to eliminate legal, administrative, financial, structural, physical, communication, social and

cultural barriers that hinder girls' equal enjoyment of the right to education and to appropriately ensure non-discrimination in the admission of any child at all levels of education, in particular when designing policy measures, programmes and resource allocations;

(b) To review, repeal and eliminate, as appropriate, laws, policies and practices that negatively affect the right to education of every girl, in accordance with international human rights obligations, including discriminatory laws, policies, practices or customs, barriers resulting from traditions or the misuse of religion, financial barriers, violence, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from school and in the school environment, including online, the worst forms of child labour, early pregnancy, harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, gender stereotypes, child, early and forced marriage and barriers to menstrual hygiene management;

(c) To recognize that discriminatory gender norms deny girls the enjoyment of their right to education, prevent them from fulfilling their leadership potential as agents of change and undermine opportunities to tackle climate change, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity;

(d) To ensure that all girls, including married and/or pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, can continue and complete their education before, during and after climate-related disasters, and in this regard to design, implement and, where applicable, revise educational policies to allow them to remain in and return to school, providing them with access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, as well as social services and financial and psychosocial support;

(e) To strengthen efforts to address climate change and environmental degradation in and through education, by building resilient school systems that equip all learners with the knowledge, skills and agency to adapt to the challenges of a changing climate and act as agents of change for their future, including by promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects for all girls;

(f) To ensure that educational institutions teach all children the basic foundational skills of literacy, numeracy and lifelong learning, to allow them to progress, and equip them with the skills, qualifications and support to transition from education into work, in particular by supporting girls and adolescents to have equal access to good quality employment, including within the fields of environment and science;

6. *Calls upon States:*

(a) To promote the progressive realization of girls' right to education by providing them with equal access to at least 12 years of safe, quality and inclusive education, by implementing appropriate measures, as applicable, including in situations of crisis and unusually severe weather or climate conditions that cause devastating impacts on communities and ecosystems, including the use of schools as shelters, and during extreme weather events, such as floods, cyclones, typhoons or earthquakes;

(b) To strengthen and intensify their efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of school-related gender-based violence and harassment against girls, including in crisis situations and extreme weather or climate conditions, and to hold accountable those responsible for such acts;

(c) To promote and protect the rights of women and girls, including married and/or pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, to equal access to quality education through an enhanced emphasis on free and quality primary and secondary education and by providing targeted support for girls as they reach adolescence, when gender-specific barriers start to multiply and increase the risk of girls dropping out of school;

7. *Also calls upon States*, as part of efforts to support the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by all, to integrate education sector resilience objectives into national climate plans and policies and to develop an inclusive action plan for equal access for women and girls to more sustainable and resilient education systems;

8. *Encourages States* to consider investments in smart learning and teaching methods, including offline educational tools, which could sustain the educational and

learning process, especially during and after extreme weather events, such as cyclones, flash floods and typhoons;

9. *Also encourages* States to assist in efforts to build capacity, through training and financial support for developing countries, towards alleviating the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl;

10. *Further encourages* States to strengthen the collection and use of more and better data, including on the impacts of climate change, to support girls' access to skills development and technical and vocational education and training, and integrate climate and environmental education into curricula and vocational education and across subjects to enable them to become future leaders and decision makers, including in countries transitioning to sustainable economies and to tackle gender-based discrimination against girls, which can prevent this;

11. *Encourages* States to support the global initiative of the Greening Education Partnership in its aims to harness the role of quality education in tackling climate change and environmental degradation and build inclusive resilient education systems, which is an important contribution in the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by all;

12. *Also encourages* States to increase financing, investments and international cooperation to provide equal opportunities for all girls to complete at least 12 years of free, equitable, inclusive and quality education and be equipped with the knowledge, skills and agency for climate action, including by scaling up and strengthening national, regional and international initiatives, as appropriate, such as the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, the Out-of-School Children Initiative, the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait and the United Nations Population Fund-United Nations Children's Fund Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, and to explore additional innovative mechanisms based on models combining public and private resources, while taking appropriate action to ensure that all education providers are qualified and adequately trained, and to give due respect to human rights, including the right to education;

13. *Encourages* States and the international community to scale up the emergency response to crises in the education sector to ensure that children and youth are safe and learning, if they are displaced from school, and can return to school when conditions allow, including by ensuring that Education Cannot Wait and the Global Partnership for Education are obtaining the necessary funding to respond to natural disasters and emergencies;

14. *Urges* States to support the efforts of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to progressively realize the right to education, in particular efforts to ensure the right to education of every girl, by allocating appropriate resources, including financial and technical resources, in support of country-led national education plans;

15. *Requests* States to engage with relevant national human rights institutions, civil society, women's rights organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, local communities, the private sector and other stakeholders in developing strategies to harness the power of education to tackle climate change, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, by empowering women, youth, families and religious, cultural and education leaders, as well as community leaders, including members of racial and ethnic minorities, persons with influence and authority within communities and all other concerned civil society groups;

16. *Encourages* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council to give the required attention to realizing the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl in carrying out their mandates and in their reporting and to work collectively towards its realization through practical and efficient steps;

17. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in consultation with States, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender

Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Education Cannot Wait, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, the treaty bodies, civil society organizations and other stakeholders, to prepare a report on how climate change can have an impact on the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl, highlighting how the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl can contribute to the climate change agenda and making recommendations, for submission to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-seventh session;

18. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

*47th meeting
12 October 2023*

[Adopted without a vote.]
