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Statement submitted by International Planned Parenthood Federation, and Western Hemisphere Region, non-governmental organizations 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

As a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights and a global service provider, International Planned Parenthood Federation works through 134 member associations in 145 countries and 26 collaborating partners in 21 countries to empower women, men, and young people in vulnerable situations to access life-saving services and programs and to live with dignity. We have had general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1973 ([E/2010/INF/4](#)).

Introduction

2020 is a landmark year for women's, adolescents', and girls' human rights, especially sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality. The year celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the twentieth anniversary of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and the 10th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The importance of ensuring that these milestones result in stronger political support for the implementation of international commitments to gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and the fulfillment of their rights, cannot be underestimated. In the past 25 years, we have seen advancements towards gender equality and the fulfillment of women's and girls' rights. Urgent action is needed to protect the gains made over this time, particularly regarding evidence-based implementation. The sixty fourth Commission on the Status of Women, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provides a key opportunity to renew political and financial commitments to ensure human rights – including sexual and reproductive health and rights – are protected and respected and to make gender equality a reality, while redoubling our efforts to reach the most marginalized and underserved women and girls.

Beijing+25 priorities

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains a benchmark for women's, adolescents', and girls' rights. Progress is urgently needed to review challenges and opportunities for achieving the agenda. To move forward, we must understand the interlinkages of global priorities: gender, racial, and ethnic equality; migrant, indigenous, disability, and labor rights; climate justice; and sexual and reproductive health and rights. None can be achieved without addressing all these issues:

1. Women's, adolescents', and girls' rights

In Beijing, 187 countries committed to “ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”. Despite reiterated commitments over the past 25 years to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, many are far from implemented. Women and girls continue to suffer violations of their human rights.

2. Leave no one behind

The Beijing+25 review must focus on the most marginalized and underserved populations. Women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination experience disproportionately more barriers to realizing their human rights. In too many cases, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, queer or

questioning, intersex people are harassed, experience violence and discrimination, and killed because of who they are.

3. Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services

Timely provision of sexual and reproductive health and rights services prevents death, disease, and disability related to unintended pregnancy, obstetric complications, sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, HIV infection, and a range of reproductive disorders. Sexual and reproductive health and rights is an essential component of the right to health and universal health coverage.

4. Sexual and gender-based violence

Sexual and gender-based violence takes many forms, including intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, rape (including marital rape), femicide, and violence based on gender identity or expression. Sexual and gender-based violence is rooted in historical, structural inequalities and unequal power relations between men and women and is more prevalent in contexts where women and girls experience increased vulnerability.

5. Harmful practices

Practices, such as child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilation are derived from discriminatory and harmful traditional, cultural and social norms meant to control women's, adolescents', and girls' lives, bodies, and sexualities.

6. Access to education and comprehensive sexuality education

The human rights of girls and women across social, economic, and political life are intertwined and indivisible. Girls are continuously marginalized in accessing education, especially comprehensive sexuality education, a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality that is proven to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights outcomes.

7. Financial resources

Women and girls are marginalized from financial resources and poorly represented in economic decision-making at all levels. Globally and domestically, gender equality institutions and programs must be prioritized and well-funded.

8. Accountability

Accountability mechanisms are essential to inform and implement policies and programs, within a context of transparency, and are vital to ensuring the success of Beijing+25.

9. Data

Accurate disaggregated data are critical for informing policies that advance gender equality, and ensure the fulfillment of women's and girls' rights.

10. Civil society engagement

Recent years have seen a global rise of coercive movements, with gender equality, women's rights, and reproductive freedom increasingly under attack. Women human rights defenders and groups working on issues considered sensitive must be protected and their experiences valued in intergovernmental spaces.

We recommend that governments undertake the following actions:

- a. Ratify and fully implement the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and its optional protocol, as well as other relevant international and regional human rights treaties, withdrawing any reservations to United Nations human rights treaties, formally or in practice incompatible with their objective and purpose.
- b. Guarantee the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights for all women, adolescents, and girls, including their right to bodily autonomy and integrity.
- c. Review and eliminate all laws, policies, programs, and practices that discriminate against women and girls, and promote gender-transformative legislation, policies, and action.
- d. Ensure the fulfillment of human rights and equal access to justice, without discrimination of any kind, including based on age, sex, marital status, disability, migratory status, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- e. Address barriers to information, education, and services, so that women, adolescents, and girls know their rights and have access to services.
- f. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services, including in humanitarian settings.
- g. Provide access to safe and legal abortion care.
- h. Develop and/or enforce legislation and information campaigns on zero tolerance of sexual and gender-based violence, including multidisciplinary and gender-sensitive preventive and protective health, legal and informative measures and services, and access to appropriate remedies.
- i. Collect data on sexual and gender-based violence, disaggregated by gender, sex, age, marital status, geographical location, wealth quintile, sexual orientation, and gender identity to inform and implement policies and programs.
- j. Develop and/or enforce laws and policies that prohibit harmful practices, and collaborate with communities and religious leaders to eradicate these practices.
- k. Remove unnecessary barriers for young people to access sexual and reproductive health and rights, such as age restrictions and parental or third-party consent requirements.
- l. Develop and/or revise age-appropriate and evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education curricula for young people in and out of school, which is fully resourced for implementation nationwide and in accordance with the United Nations' Technical Guidelines on Sexuality Education.
- m. Guarantee appropriate training for teachers on comprehensive sexuality education, free from stigma and discrimination.
- n. Increase domestic and donor spending to address gender inequalities and empower women and girls, particularly allocating funding to sexual and reproductive health and rights services.
- o. Ensure that global commitments are supported by robust, accessible accountability and follow-up mechanisms that allow partners to monitor and evaluate progress.
- p. Ensure rights-bearers are informed of their rights and have adequate opportunities to participate in monitoring progress, prioritizing the involvement of the most marginalized and underserved communities.

- q. Ensure that women, adolescents, and girls have the necessary tools to engage in accountability processes at all.
 - r. Strengthen high-quality, timely, and reliable research and routine data systems shaped by technology.
 - s. Provide data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics so information on essential health services, as defined in Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development's indicators, is available.
 - t. Develop meaningful and effective partnerships with civil society organizations, including women-focused, people living with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, queer or questioning, intersex , indigenous organizations, and other stakeholders.
 - u. Protect and respect the work and lives of human rights defenders, including women and girls working on sexual and reproductive health and rights-related issues.
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