

Annual Discussion on integration of a gender perspective

Joint CSO statement urging member states to take an intersectional approach when addressing discrimination against and SRHR of young people and adolescents

Thank you Madam President,

Rutgers with the Right Here Right Now Partnership makes this statement on behalf of 61 CSOs and 30 individuals from across the globe.***

Through numerous regional and international commitments, member states agreed to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of adolescents and young people, including their rights to life, bodily autonomy and education, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education. However, many member states are reluctant to recognize the structural and systemic barriers adolescents and young people face in seeing their SRHR fulfilled. These long-standing disparities have been exacerbated by the pandemic and civic space for young people has further declined.

Human rights violations affecting adolescents and youth must be located within the context of multiple and intersecting oppressions. Millions of young people are survivors of sexual or gender-based violence and abuse, harmful practices including child, early and forced marriage, or genital mutilation and cutting, putting them at risk of unwanted or early pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV, and life-threatening childbirth¹. Around 1.3 million adolescents die every year as a result of various causes including pregnancy and childbirth, infectious diseases and injuries². 12 million girls under 18 are married each year³. And in 2019 around 460,000 young people were newly infected with HIV⁴. Whereas, the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of youth friendly sexual and reproductive health-care services is not guaranteed to enough of them. The current pandemic further exacerbates the situation of young people in vulnerable positions or who are facing multiple and intersecting forms of oppression.

Treaty Monitoring Bodies (TMBs) and Special Procedures (SPs) have repeatedly called on States to respect, protect and fulfill the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents, including through removing third party authorization to access services and through including in their legislative frameworks a presumption of legal capacity of adolescents to access SRH information and services.

¹ Abdul Cader, A. (2017). Ending Child, Early, and Forced Marriage: SRHR as Central to the Solution. Kuala Lumpur: Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW). Retrieved from <https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Thematic-Paper-on-Ending-Child-Early-and-Forced-Marriage.pdf>

² UNICEF, A Statistical Snapshot of Violence Against Adolescent Girls (New York: UNICEF, 2014), accessed July 6, 2018, https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/A_Statistical_Snapshot_of_Violence_Against_Adolescent_Girls.pdf

³ <https://www.unicef.org/stories/child-marriage-around-world>

⁴ UNAIDS 2020 estimates.

The Human Rights Council is characterized by its single-axis approach to human rights violations and discrimination; limiting discrimination on the basis of gender to understanding only women, excluding young people and adolescents from resolutions or recommendations and discussions that affect them - for example in 2019 only 24% of resolutions mentioned youth in more than one sentence - and leaving out grounds of discrimination, amongst which are on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics.

We urge the Human Rights Council to reaffirm the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all adolescents and young people through its resolutions, dialogues, debates, and UPRs. Furthermore, we urge member states to respect, protect, and fulfill the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all adolescents and young people, with particular attention to those facing multiple and intersecting forms of oppression, including through full recognition of their legal capacity to access comprehensive sexuality education and youth friendly sexual and reproductive healthcare-services autonomously.

Thank you.

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The Right Here Right Now partnership consists of Rutgers, the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women, Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries, stichting Choice for Youth and Sexuality, dance4life, IPPF African Regional office and the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network (LACWHN).

** Signatures

CSOs

FEDERACIÓN PLANIFICACIÓN FAMILIAR ESTATAL
ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality
Accountability international
African Youth Safe Abortion Alliance (AYOSA) Africa
AIDOS - Italian Association for Women in Development
Alliance for Choice
Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
Asian Pacific Resource and Research Center for Women
Cabinet International de Recherche et d'Expertise en Droits et Santé Sexuels et Reproductifs (CIRE)
Canadian HIV/aids Legal Network
Center for Reproductive Rights
Centre for Girls and Interaction (CEGI) Malawi
Centre for Social Concern and Development (CESOCODE) Malawi
CHANGE (Center for Health and Gender Equity)
Cheka Sana Uganda
CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality
Coalition of African Lesbians
Dance4life
Danish Family Planning Association
Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung

DUKINGIRE ISI YACU

EngenderHealth

Feministas em Movimento - Associação (FEM)

FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development

Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries

Initiatives des Femmes en Situations Difficiles pour le Développement Durable et Intégré, IFESIDDI

International Planned Parenthood Federation African Region (IPPFARO)

International Service for Human Rights

Intrnational Planned Parenthood federation

Ipas

JAGO NARI

Justice and Economic Empowerment for Women and Girls Uganda

Marie Stopes International

Muvubuka Agunjuse Adolescent sexual Reproductive health Information and service provision Centre

OutRight Action International

P&D Factor - Ass.para a Cooperaçao sobre Populaçao e Desenvolvimento

Participatory Development Action Program

Pathfinder International

Plan International

Promundo-US

Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe

Restless Development Uganda

Right Here Right Now-Uganda Platform

Rights Evidence Action (REACT)

SAfAIDS

Sensoa

SERAC-Bangladesh

Sex og Politikk (IPPF Norway)

Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG)

Sexual Rights Initiative

SEXUL vs BARZA (SEX vs The STORK) Association

Swedish Federation of LGBT Rights - RFSL

Tripla Difesa Onlus

Uganda Network Of Young People living with HIV/AIDS (UNYPA)

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights

WGNRR AFRICA

Women and Media Collective

Women Deliver

Women Fund Azerbaijan

Young People's Network on SRHR, HIV and AIDS

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