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## **2016 YouthCSW Declaration on Gender Equality and the Human Rights of Young Women and Girls**

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### **Preamble**

In 2030, we, the youth, in all our diversities, want to see a fully inclusive world where....

- We lead gender-just implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Young women and girls are at the table, making decisions on issues that affect us.
- We are the last generation who can solve climate change.
- We choose what happens to our bodies.
- Youth of all genders live free from violence.
- Young women and girls have built a peaceful world with other generations.
- Opportunities, responsibilities and resources are equally shared.
- Migrants are not victims of systemic injustice.
- We are not sexual objects.
- Faith leaders act upon faith principles to uphold our dignity.
- We are not told who can play which sports.
- Young men and boys are partners in sustaining gender equality.
- Youth are civil society leaders at all levels.

Delegates between the ages of 10-30 at the Youth Forum of the 60th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) celebrate all work toward gender equality and all human rights of all young women and girls. Knowing that gender equality is necessary to reach all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the 2016 YouthCSW Forum joins the United Nations in calling on Member States to ensure gender-just and youth-accountable implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Delegates of the Youth Forum note that while leaders worldwide speak to the need for young women's and girls' empowerment and leadership to achieve sustainable development, youth voices are nevertheless marginalized within, and excluded from, official CSW and SDG processes. The 2016 YouthCSW Forum calls on the 60th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women to fully resource and implement UN Women's LEAPs framework and formally adopt the following gender-just and youth-centric policy recommendations into the Agreed Conclusions:

### **Gender-Just Implementation of the SDGs**

1. Recognize that 'gender' refers to a socially constructed system of classification that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity, that gender characteristics can change over time and are different between cultures, and that this is how individuals perceive their identity as male, female, both or neither, regardless of our physical bodies. Recognize that gender is separate from biological sex which is also socially constructed and that genders include Trans, gender non-conforming, agender, genderqueer, women and men (based on Yogyakarta Principles Article 3B).
2. Act for and achieve gender equality and all human rights of all young women and girls as an integral part of achieving sustainable development and the SDGs,

including transforming discriminatory social structures, norms and practices that perpetuate and deepen gender inequality and human rights violations.

3. Take all necessary legislative, administrative and other measures to fully respect and legally recognize each person's self-defined gender identity.

4. Make baseline data and data on implementation of the SDGs accessible and available to everyone so that citizens can hold governments accountable, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, and ensure data disaggregation by sex, gender, age (including for the age group 10-14), income, race, ethnicity, caste, migration status, disability, geographical location, HIV and AIDS status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and other relevant variables necessary for monitoring inequalities and discrimination in order to understand and respond to the specific needs and priorities of young women and girls and to ensure no one is left behind.

5. Actively participate in mutually-respectful partnerships between governments, NGOs, civil society, the UN and the private sector so that there can be collective ownership of and action on implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

6. Take ownership of implementing, monitoring and evaluating to promote gender equality and the human rights of young women and girls through targeted domestic reforms in areas such as policy, laws and budgets.

7. Respect that Indigenous peoples and individuals, including youth, have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs, including the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature and the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture (based on UNDRIP Articles 8.1 and 11.1).

### **Youth Right to Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making**

8. Institutionalize and adequately resource an annual Youth CSW Forum on Gender Equality and the Rights of Young Women and Girls as an integrated component of the Commission on the Status of Women, ensure that a young woman delegate is able to present the Youth Declaration to the Commission and that the priorities outlined herein are included in the decisions of the Commission, and ensure that every high-level panel, side and parallel event at every CSW includes at least one young women.

9. Share power and create space to ensure - beyond tokenism - full and meaningful participation of young people in all their diversities in leadership and decision-making at all levels and across all sectors, including in governments and parliaments. Youth in all their diversities include young women and girls; Indigenous youth; Afro-descendant youth; youth of all castes, ethnicities and communities; LGBTQI youth; youth of all gender identities; youth members of language minorities; youth living with disabilities; youth living without economic security; youth who have been displaced from their homes; youth migrants; youth living in the context of war and humanitarian crisis; youth who do sex work; youth living with HIV; youth who have left school early; youth who use drugs; and youth who have been incarcerated (based on the Bali Declaration and CEDAW General Recommendation 28, para 18).

10. Fulfill women's and girls' right to full and equal participation in leadership and decision-making at all levels and in all spaces by implementing gender-just and youth-accountable policy, laws, national action plans, programs and budgets.

11. Respect that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination and that by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (UNDRIP Article 3).
12. Partner and collaborate with youth human rights defenders and gender equality and feminist activists and their organizations to transform social, cultural, economic and political structures and norms to ensure meaningful participation of youth in all their diversities.
13. Ensure and support political participation of youth, including through information about and access to voting, the right to run for political office at all levels, and Youth Parliaments.
14. Ensure that government policies on citizen registration and identification include youth, leveraging grassroots youth advocacy and particularly young women's leadership to incentivize youth identification.
15. Partner with and resource youth-led human rights and feminist organizations to ensure leadership, mentorship, skills development and paid employment opportunities, which are reflective of their lived realities, for young agents of change in all their diversities, particularly young women and girls, to further strengthen youth leadership in the implementation of the SDGs.
16. Assign a quota at all levels of government of at least 33% youth as equal participants in national policy-making processes.
17. Ensure that youth gender equality advocates have the support and resources to participate fully and equally in international forums for advocacy and policy-making, and remove barriers to meaningful participation including visa refusals, lack of financial support, and lack of access to leadership skill development and mentorship opportunities.

### **Gender Equality and Climate Change**

18. Recognize - with alarm - that today's youth are the last generation who can solve climate change, a systematic cause of gender inequality.
19. Recognize that young women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change.
20. Include leadership of young women and girls in climate change decision-making processes, including policymaking and scientific research.
21. Equally include young women and girls in education, training, awareness-raising and decision-making for emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction.
22. Achieve equal access to clean water for young women and girls, with urgency (based on A/Res/70/69).
23. Enable young women and girls to participate in commerce, social entrepreneurship, and capital investments for renewable energy.
24. Strengthen resources for implementing Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, which calls for the enhancement of climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information for youth.
25. Strengthen systematically gender-just national public health measures for communicable diseases accelerated by the changing climate.
26. Engage young men and boys to act in solidarity to end gender-based violence (GBV) worsened and spread by the changing climate and agricultural patterns.

## **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and HIV and AIDS**

27. Recognize that the behaviors and identities of youth in all of their diversity do not make them at risk or vulnerable, but stigma and discrimination do.
28. Ensure the promotion and protection of the human rights of youth in all their diversities to have control over their lives and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (based on the Bali Youth Forum Declaration and the Beijing PFA, para 96).
29. Strengthen health systems to make comprehensive and youth-friendly, universally accessible, high quality, and confidential sexual and reproductive healthcare services, commodities, information, and education tailored to the needs, rights, and desires of youth in all their diversities delivered by ethical and well-trained healthcare providers (based on CSW58, para 42(o)).
30. Address the sexual health needs of Trans youth by ensuring that comprehensive sexuality education addresses their realities, that specifically-tailored commodities are available and affordable, and eliminate all forms of discrimination against Trans youth.
31. Ensure universal access to a range of reproductive health services, including safe and effective voluntary contraceptives, maternal health care, safe and legal abortion and post-abortion care free from coercion, discrimination and violence (based on CSW58 AC, para 42(o))
32. Develop and implement comprehensive evidence-based sexuality education, including information on all sexual orientations and gender identities, that is free of religious intolerance, based on gender equality and human rights, that promotes a positive, healthy and pleasurable, sex life, for youth in all their diversities delivered in a manner consistent with their individual needs and evolving capacities (based on CSW58, para 42(x) and ICPD Review Bali Global Youth Declaration, para 3.11).
33. Provide unrestricted access to affordable, youth-centered, high quality HIV and STI prevention and treatment tools, and prioritize and ensure funding for research to expand the evidence base on youth-centered and young women-controlled HIV and other STI prevention methods, and SRHR and HIV programming.
34. Ensure unrestricted access to youth-centered HIV and AIDS information, care, and support services, including mental health services, free from coercion and discrimination, to guarantee informed consent for all youth to make decisions on whether and when to get tested, begin treatment, and receive care and support.
35. Ensure the meaningful participation of youth in the decision-making forums that dictate laws, funding, programs and policies on their SRHR, and ensure that youth and adolescents are involved at all levels across design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
36. Repeal and reform all discriminatory laws and provisions, including laws that criminalize drug use, sex work, HIV transmission, abortion, and diverse sexual or gender identities, and remove legal barriers to ensure that youth in all their diversities are able to access SRHR, including repealing the age of consent and parental consent laws.

## **Ending Gender-Based and Sexual Violence, Which Particularly Impacts Young Women and Girls**

37. Recognize that gender inequality is the root cause of GBV. Therefore, gender equality and ending violence against youth in all their diversities must be achieved simultaneously.

38. Recognize the links between poverty and violence as drivers of systemic and structural inequality, and ensure economic justice by economically empowering young women and girls through access to resources, housing, land and property ownership, and economic decision-making at all levels.

39. Work with all people, peoples and groups, including young women and girls, young men and boys, youth-led and feminist organizations, and community and faith leaders, to co-create new social norms and structures that ensure an end to violence against young women and girls, including sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, the sexualization of young women and girls; female genital mutilation and cutting; child, early and forced marriage (CEFM); and forced and coerced sterilization including of young women living with HIV.

40. Take all necessary policing and other measures to prevent and provide protection from all forms of violence and harassment related to sexual orientation and gender identity (Yogyakarta Principles Article 5A).

41. Ensure accountability of health and justice systems to young women and girls impacted by gender-based and sexual violence, including children born as a result of rape.

42. Actively work to create safe spaces in which young women and girls in all their diversities can learn about and begin to claim their rights, recognizing that creating safe spaces is an ongoing process and that no space is guaranteed to be safe at all times or for all people.

43. Respect, support, partner with, and resource grassroots movements to end GBV, which disproportionately affects young women and girls.

44. Support and resource formal, non-formal and informal education, beginning in early childhood, that tackles the root causes of GBV, promotes positive masculinities and femininities, challenges social structures and norms that perpetuate and deepen violence against young women and girls, gives young women and girls a voice, and serves as a prevention tool.

45. Engage community and faith leaders in partnership with young women and girls to end CEFM and female genital mutilation, through action such as addressing gender inequality as a root cause and ensuring accountability of police and justice systems, including ending police brutality, to realize young women's and girls' rights.

46. Prevent and eliminate all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse by ensuring, inter alia, respectful gender-just and person-centred assistance and support for youth with disabilities, including through the provision of information and education on how to avoid, recognize and report instances of exploitation, violence and abuse (CRPD Article 16.2).

### **Young Women and Girls, Peace and Security**

47. Recognize and fully implement UNSCR 1325 and all UNSCR resolutions on women, peace and security, UNSCR 2250 and the Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security developed by young peacebuilders.

48. Recognize and support the agency, actions, and leadership of young peacebuilders on sexual and GBV in conflict as a result of patriarchal power, which disproportionately affects women and girls.

49. Recognize that conflict catalyzes an increase in child, early and forced marriage and in all other forms of gender-based and sexual violence, and work alongside young

women and girls who are leading the movement to end violence against young women and girls.

50. Recognize and respect that Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples, acknowledge that Indigenous peoples continue to be subjected to acts of genocide and violence, including forcible removal of children, and ensure that all human rights of all Indigenous peoples are upheld (based on UNDRIP Article 7.2).

51. Recognize that growing militarization and violent fundamentalisms disproportionately affect young women and girls including through targeted recruitment, human trafficking, sexual exploitation and violence, and create spaces for women to thrive as leaders in peacemaking and peacebuilding.

52. Recognize and address the links between economic injustices, insecurity and conflict, which disproportionately affect young women and girls. Ensure that peace-building processes include young women and girls' equal access to economic resources and land and property ownership.

53. Ensure young women and girls are part of peacekeeping negotiations through full and equal participation in leadership and decision-making.

54. Provide support and resources for intergenerational collaboration on peace, security and an end to occupation to acknowledge the contributions, creativity, innovation and actions of all generations.

55. Actively monitor women's safety in UN peacekeeping operations and end impunity by upholding a zero-tolerance policy for gender and sexual based violence by peacekeepers.

56. Support and resource youth in all their diversities to strengthen their leadership skills and meaningfully engage in prevention and response efforts related to violent extremism. Ensure that a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism are committed to youth-led, youth-centric projects, encouraging international financial institutions, foundations and other donors to provide small grant funding mechanisms to women and young social entrepreneurs to enable them to develop their own ideas on strengthening community resilience against violent extremism (based on A/70/674 para 52 (f)).

### **Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship of All Young Women**

57. Realize the rights of youth in their diversities to decent work through effective policies and programmes that ensure stable, safe, secure, non-discriminatory employment, decent wages and opportunities for career development (based on the Bali Declaration, Article 4.1)

58. Transform global economic systems that deepen and perpetuate global inequalities and poverty, which particularly affect young women and girls and are thus an impediment to sustainable development. Partner with youth-led human rights and feminist organizations to implement economic policies, laws, norms and practices based on respect for human rights, gender equality and empowerment of all young women and girls, Indigenous peoples, and the planet.

59. Strongly encourage national governments to provide women access to and control of personal finances, bank accounts, and lending through legislative reform and public-private partnerships

60. Promote and achieve the dignity, quality of life, equal recognition and leadership of youth of all genders across all forms of work, empowering sectors of the

workforce often subject to exploitation and discrimination especially in work traditionally done by young women, youth with disabilities, youth who do sex work, youth living with HIV and AIDS, youth migrant workers, and other groups (based on the Colombo Declaration, Article 30)

61. Respect, create space for, and support young women's leadership in the workforce by eliminating gender disparities in all sectors and at all levels of the workforce and implementing and enforcing policies that address discrimination against young women, providing quality accessible affordable child care, and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value (based on the Bali Declaration, Article 4.8)

62. Provide human rights education to ensure that youth in all their diversities know their human rights and eliminate institutional and social barriers to ensure that youth can claim human rights in employment.

63. Implement policies and programs that increase the number of young women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in secondary and tertiary education and employment.

64. Enable youth entrepreneurship through policy and financing that focuses on young women-led businesses, including start-ups, apprenticeship and alternative models of enterprise such as co-operatives and business incubators (based on the Colombo Declaration, Article 27).

65. Ensure the rights of all youth in all types of employment and entrepreneurship including rights to fair hiring and organizing labour unions (based on the Bali Declaration, Article 4.2).

66. Support and robustly resource UN-Women's LEAPs framework to support young women's economic empowerment as well as leadership and decision-making on economic policies, laws, programs and budgets.

### **Youth Migration amidst Global Inequality and Humanitarian Crisis**

67. Recognize and take urgent action to address the root causes of intraregional and inter-regional migration including military occupation; climate injustice; and poverty rooted in systemic colonialism and global capitalism that treats young women as labourers and commodities rather than as rights holders.

68. Hold authorities accountable for empowering youth migrants in their new communities (based on E/CN.5/2007/8).

69. Support and fund youth-led and civil society organizations to implement programs that connect migrant young women and girls with resources in their new communities.

70. Ensure that Indigenous peoples, including youth, are not forcibly removed from their lands or territories, and that no relocation takes place without the free, prior and informed consent of the Indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return (based on UNDRIP Article 10).

### **Social and Traditional Media and Technological Solutions for Achieving the Human Rights of All Young Women and Girls**

71. Facilitate access to social media in youth movements, recognizing that it amplifies the voices of youth in all their diversities within their larger communities.

72. Implement strong, concrete policies and laws that protect digital spaces from cyber-bullying, harassment, threats, and violence, especially for young women and girls,

and prevent sharing without informed consent of pictures, videos, and other content, including revenge pornography.

73. Ensure accountability of the private sector for creating safe digital spaces that empower all youth, including by reporting, blocking, muting mechanisms and newsfeed algorithms.

74. Resource and support formal, non-formal, and informal education to promote media and technology literacy and access across all generations, including within marginalized communities.

75. End the objectification and sexualization of young women and girls in digital spaces, combat the disempowering content in the media, and support and resource young women's and girl's leadership as users and creators of technology in order to promote and support positive media representations of gender equality and young women's and girls' rights from the point of view of young women and girls.

76. Support technology that encourages intergenerational learning so that everyone can access the power and value of social media and technology.

77. Protect free and open internet and close the digital divide, with special attention to underserved and remote communities and the disproportionate impact on young women and girls.

### **Youth, Faith, Feminism, and Gender Equality**

78. Recognize that faith principles are sources of inspiration and motivation for promoting gender equality and the rights of all young women and girls.

79. Recognize that gender equality and the rights of all young women and girls cannot be achieved without the support, commitment, and action by all faith communities.

80. Recognize further that irresponsible use of religion perpetuates patriarchal and colonial social norms and violates the rights of youth in all their diversities.

81. Strongly urge faith-based leaders to intentionally reassess culturally religious practices that do not match up to the faith principles, degrading the dignity of young women and girls.

82. Support and resource youth-led organizations that are working at the intersection of faith and feminism.

83. Create space for people of all generations from faith-based and spiritual communities and feminist social justice movements to define a new narrative on faith and feminism.

84. Support young women of faith to speak out and be heard, including through social media platforms, within their faith communities and collaborate with young men, intergenerational and interfaith partners, faith leaders, and feminists to reclaim faith that affirms, promotes and protects the human rights of young women, girls, and youth of all genders.

### **Young Women and Girls in Sport**

85. Recognize that the potential of sport to further gender equality and the human rights of all young women and girls is limited by gender-based discrimination.

86. Ensure young women's and girls' full and equal participation in sport, which contributes to the realization of sustainable development, gender equality, human rights and the empowerment of all young women and girls including by promoting respect and



facilitating social inclusion, conflict prevention and peacebuilding (based on A/Res/69/6, para 4 and Agenda 2030 para 37).

87. Ensure opportunities and adequate resources for young women's and girls' full and equal participation in sport, athletics and physical activities at the national, regional and international levels including training, competition, wages and prizes (based on Beijing PfA para 95 (h), 280 (a)).

88. Ensure that young women and girls are not involuntarily segregated into different types of sports, events and competitions based on gender-discriminatory social norms.

89. Adequately resource and implement policies and programs to raise awareness about and transform the relationship between perceptions of men's dominance, physical strength and power traditionally portrayed in men's sports with exploitation, harassment and violence against young women, girls and Trans youth.

90. Ensure that young women and girls in all their diversity are able to fully and equally participate in leadership and decision-making in sport at all levels (based on Beijing PfA para 183).

### **Engaging Young Men and Boys in Solidarity Work for Gender Equality and the Human Rights of Young Women and Girls**

91. Recognize that young men and boys can use and share their power and privilege to end patriarchy, shift socio-cultural norms, and adopt, promote and respect an intersectional approach to gender equality that recognizes the intersecting nature of racism, sexism, colonialism, patriarchy, ableism and gender inequality in order to achieve gender equality, social justice, and the human rights of all young women and girls.

92. Encourage young men and boys to take joint responsibility for and participate fully in all actions towards gender equality including changing social norms to achieve shared power and responsibility between people of all genders at home, in the community, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities (based on CSW48, para 1).

93. Support and resource formal, non-formal, and informal education that supports all young men and boys to act in solidarity to achieve gender equality and all human rights of all young women and girls, to practice healthy relationships based on consent<sup>1</sup> and end gender-based and sexual violence in all its forms, and to promote positive masculinities and femininities. Take the example from youth-led and feminist organizations that are doing this work and ensure meaningful mentorship for young men and boys who are engaged in solidarity work for gender equality.

94. Create safe spaces beginning in early childhood for young men and boys to learn about and engage deeply in the work of promoting, respecting and supporting efforts to achieve gender equality and the rights of young women and girls.

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<sup>1</sup> Consent is a mutual verbal, physical and emotional agreement between partners that happens without manipulation, coercion or force. Consent must be continuous - just because a person said yes to one thing doesn't mean they have consented to anything else and just because a person said yes once doesn't mean they have consented forever.

## **Youth-led Civil Society for Gender Equality and the Human Rights of All Young Women and Girls**

95. Support and ensure robust resources for gender-just youth-led organizations and networks, young women's and girls' human rights groups, and young gender equality advocates at the local, national, regional and global levels (based on E/CN.6/2016/3, para 49 (s) and CSW58 AC, para 42 ddd).
96. Respect, support and resource grassroots movements for gender equality and the human rights of young women and girls.
97. Support and invest directly in youth at the grassroots, including young women and girls who have experienced CEFM, youth living with HIV and AIDS, and survivors of violence, because they are powerful leaders mobilizing their communities to achieve human rights, gender equality and sustainable development.
98. Create a safe and enabling environment at all levels for youth-led civil society - including gender-just and feminist youth-led organizations and groups as well as young women's and girls' human rights groups - to fully and equally participate national, regional and global follow-up and review and accountability processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (based on E/CN.6/2016/3, para 49 (r) and (v)).
99. Respect, support and resource young women's full and equal participation in leadership and decision-making at all levels and in all areas of sustainable development; social, political and economic (based on E/CN.6/2016/3, para 49 (q)).