

YOUTH DECLARATION

GENDER-JUST IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:
YOUNG WOMEN'S RIGHT TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND
PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND YOUTH CSW FORUM IN
PREPARATION FOR THE SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

CSW61

Commission on the Status of Women

Youth Forum
Women's Economic
Empowerment In The
Changing World Of Work

11-12th March 2017, New York, USA



Preamble

Anchored in the voices, expertise, rightful opinions and experiences of young people - especially young women and SOGIGESC persons - to inform discussions of CSW61 on its priority theme of “Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work,” we present the Outcome Document: Gender-just Implementation of the SDGs: Young Women’s Right to Economic Empowerment and Participation in Leadership and Decision-making.

Recognising that gender is not binary, it is crucial to adopt and implement policies, resource programs, and foster partnerships to economically empower all young women and girls, and sensitizing men and young men to embrace this and share decision-making space;

Prioritizing marginalized voices requires the creation of 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, parliaments and the private sector;

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), makes integral the achievement of gender equality and fulfillment of human rights for all young women and girls, including ending all forms of discrimination against young people in all their diversities;

Actively engaging all young men, male-identifying, and trans-masculine people is a necessity to promote the rights and equal standing thereof in supporting work toward gender equality, human rights, and economic empowerment of young women, female-identifying, trans-feminine, and gender and/or sex diverse people through activism and advocacy in all spaces.

We, the diverse and equally valued attendees of Youth CSW61 Forum, have collectively identified the following priorities:

Young Women’s Leadership

1. **Request** strongly that equal value be attributed to women’s leadership, as that of men, including equal leadership opportunities for young persons of any association on the gender spectrum;
2. **Support** - technically and financially - the meaningful participation of young women in the creation and implementation of policies and programs that affect their lives;
3. **Protect** and promote the work of young human rights defenders by ensuring favorable conditions for their activism and facilitating access to information;
4. **Prioritize** public education campaigns - especially leveraging various media forms to ensure broad reach and transparency - to transform discriminatory social norms, stereotypes, and harmful practices, which hold women

and girls back from fully participating in the workforce and acquiring leadership positions;

5. **Ensure** safe and inclusive spaces in education, workplace, and public and private spheres - at all levels - for opportunities for young women to develop, improve and practice leadership skills¹;
6. **Ensure** systematic and devolved mechanisms for young women to meaningfully participate in decision making, especially that which directly affects them, and ensure that young women in these positions are visible as role models;
7. **Invest** in youth-led organizations and campaigns, especially at the grassroots;

Young Women’s Economic Empowerment

8. **Break down** barriers created by social norms preventing young women and girls from reaching their full potential - especially in non-traditional fields and leadership roles;
9. **Urgently address** the crisis of vast youth unemployment and underemployment, from which young women and marginalized groups are disproportionately and unjustly affected and left behind²;
10. **Prioritize** the mitigation of time poverty, which disproportionately affects young women due to burdens such as - but not exclusive to - unpaid care work³;
11. **Prioritize** policies and programs that foster the financial literacy for young women;
12. **Recognize** unequal pay for equal work and adopt and implement policies that will close the unjust wage gap;
13. **Partner** with relevant private sector actors to scale up investments to improve young women’s employability through training, education, and workforce development to aid the transition to decent work;
14. **Recognize** the reality of corporate capture of governments and its disproportionately negative impact on the lives of young - as well as marginalized - women and girls, especially as it concerns the evasion of taxes, environmental preservation, inclusion of communities and ignorance of the human right to decent work;

Partners and Allies

15. **Recognize** allyship as an action that applies intergenerationally and amongst genders;
16. **Recognize** that gender is not binary, rather encapsulates equality between people of all genders and the reality of

¹ 2016 YouthCSW Declaration, clause 10

² ICPD Review Bali Global Youth Forum Declaration, Article 4.1

³ Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work: Report of the Secretary-General. E/CN.6/2017/3, para 49 (q)

SOGIGESC persons' experience and human rightfulness to gender identification of choice⁴;

17. **End** discrimination and stereotypes between generations and create and strengthen opportunities for intergenerational dialogue, leadership, and decision making;
18. **Take action** urgently to transform and eradicate discriminatory societal, cultural, familial, and/or religious norms around gender socialization and stereotypes;

Violence Against Girls & Women

19. **Increase** investments in prevention education, especially around discriminatory norms;
20. **Implement** and enact policies and legislative protection that mandate zero tolerance for all types of violence against women and girls, including but not limited to gender-based violence, sexual-based violence, early, child and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and gender based violence in conflict environment;

Education and Skill Development

21. **Increase** the understanding of the essential value of girls education at all levels, to increase girls and young women's participation, continuation and investment;
22. **Call** for increased investments of domestic resources and official development assistance in ensuring all girls - including marginalised, displaced and refugee girls - have access to safe and affordable quality education through secondary school, or twelve years of schooling;
23. **Ensure** educational curriculums for both girls and boys to include human rights & gender equality education, and essential skills for economic empowerment including leadership, problem-solving, financial literacy, self-esteem, digital literacy and entrepreneurship skills⁵;
24. **Call** also for the provision of non-formal education and skills development, noting its critical role in for girls' empowerment and complementary to formal education.;
25. **Encourage** young women of leadership and teaching positions in diverse and non-traditional fields to act as role models;

Marginalized Young Women; Peace and Security

26. **Set** and enforce universal gender-sensitive minimum standards for refugee camps, settlements, shelters, ensure the mental and physical wellbeing needs of young women refugees;
27. **Harness** the human capital of young women refugees and migrants, through the support of the private sector and legal frameworks, to provide full and productive employment and decent work;

28. **Ensure** full and meaningful participation of indigenous young women in public sector, private sector, and civil society leadership and decision-making;
29. **Preserve** indigenous persons' cultural identity, connection to land and traditional knowledge - especially in their formal education⁶;
30. **Ensure** access to quality education for all disabled persons⁷;

Health; Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)

31. **Ensure** access to comprehensive youth-friendly health services and information, especially for sexual and reproductive health rights;
32. **Ensure** that all girls and young women have autonomy over their own destiny and body⁸;
33. **Prioritize** the collection and public dissemination of gender disaggregate data;
34. **Ensure** access to high-quality youth-friendly mental health services for young women and girls to support, develop, and maintain wellbeing and resilience;

Climate Change

35. **Increase** leadership of young women and girls in climate change decision-making processes, including policymaking and scientific research, enable young women and girls to participate in commerce, entrepreneurship, and capital investments for renewable energy away from fossil fuels, with full recognition that today's youth are the last generation who can solve climate change⁹, a systematic cause of gender inequality that disproportionately affects young women and girls;

Interreligious Cooperation

36. **Welcome** interreligious and intercultural dialogues and partnerships that are safe and empowering for young women's economic empowerment, recognizing the positive values in each religion.

Conclusion

With only 13.5 years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we call upon Member States to continue and increase their political and financial support for young women's leadership and economic empowerment. We call for continued support of Youth CSW Forum to stand with us toward the achievement of SDG 5: gender equality.

⁶ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, A/RES/61/295, Articles 8.1 and 11.1

⁷ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, A/RES/61/106, Article 16.2

⁸ Acknowledge young women's diversity and heterogeneity with respect to SOGIGESC in access to and the delivery of SRHR

⁹ Paris Agreement, FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1

⁴ [The Gender Agenda](#): Youth Perspectives from across the Commonwealth, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics

⁵ CSW58 Agreed Conclusions, E/CN.6/2014/L.7, section A, para (u)

AT THE YOUTH CSW61 FORUM, ENTITLED YOUTH CREATE GENDER EQUALITY: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK, AHEAD OF THE 61ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, MORE THAN 650 YOUNG LEADERS CONVENED TO DISCUSS EMERGING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN - IN PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUNG MEN, PERSONS OF ALL GENDERS AND GENERATIONS - TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY, JUSTICE, ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL PERSONS, LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND.

Final statement made at opening of 61st Commission on the Status of Women, General Assembly Hall, United Nations Headquarters
13 March 2017, 11:14AM



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