

Madame Chairperson and distinguished representatives. Thank you for this opportunity to present this intervention. The NGO Caucus on Girls at the 49th meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, supported by the Working Group on Girls of the NGO Committee on UNICEF, representing over 80 NGOs, from 90 countries and all UN regions, reaffirms the Platform for Action and calls for its full implementation.

We believe that the Millennium Development Goals must be reached. So we ask governments to work with their people in support of programs that eliminate social, cultural and economic barriers to girls' education and increase budgets for girls' education.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a vital international agreement. We believe it must be fully implemented. Girls are more vulnerable because of their low economic and social status. They suffer from sexual exploitation and harmful traditional practices. Please remember that:

- Out of the estimated 10.3 million young people infected with HIV/AIDS, 6 million are girls, many of whom are infected as a result of sexual exploitation. We ask you to put measures in place to protect girls, to increase sex education for girls and boys, and to provide confidential, accessible and youth friendly health services.
- We ask you to take immediate action to prevent early forced marriage
- We ask you to ensure violence against girls in every form is eliminated and impunity of the perpetrators is stopped.

We believe the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols is important as it states that trafficking must be stopped. We ask you to stop trafficking at source and put in place adequate measures in transit and destination countries. Prostitution of girls must be eliminated.

Girls suffer more than anyone else in times of conflict and post conflict, so we ask you to make sure that Security Council Resolution 1325 is put into practice and is not just promises. Wherever there are measures for women, girls should be included. In addition proper measures should be put in place to ensure the protection, safety and human rights for girls in conflict and post conflict regions.

We believe there are no grounds, social, economic, or moral, for gender inequality to be perpetuated or allowed. If rights for girls are not included in all international agreements, the future for humanity is bleak. We therefore call for your governments, working together with civil society to:

- Ensure that a human rights based approach is always taken in regard to girls

- Ensure the provision of sustainable and sufficient funding for all measures pertaining to girls
- Establish, develop, maintain and improve programs to eliminate the poverty of girls, noting that they are often among the most poor
- Recognize that macroeconomic policies adversely affect girls and call upon policy makers to undertake adequate research and to make substantial progress for girls
- Ensure that migrant girls are given rights and protection
- Ensure that girls with any disability are guaranteed all human rights as well as equal and affordable access to education, health care, economic and leisure opportunities
- Ensure that girls are enabled to celebrate linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious identity
- Ensure that legal systems give priority to cases relating to sexual assault on girls
- Ensure that measures be implemented to encourage men and boys as champions of gender equality

We believe that those involved in global governance should celebrate girls as full citizens, future leaders and role models for the next generation. They should increase empowerment and participation of girls at all levels and in all spheres, in order to create the peaceful and prosperous world to which we all aspire.

We thank you Madame Chairperson and representatives for your time.