



## **Written and Oral Statement of the World Alliance of YMCAs**

### **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 28 February — 11 March, 2005**

The World Alliance of YMCAs is a youth organisation with over 40 million members worldwide of which half are women. The YMCA seeks to empower all, especially young women and men, to assume leadership at all levels and to work towards a more equitable society. YMCAs working in 125 countries are advocating for and promoting the rights of women and upholding the rights of children.

As a member of the community of peoples that stand for justice, the YMCA is concerned about the current status of women, especially young women and girls, who are being excluded from exercising their full political, economic, cultural and social rights.

In its review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and based on its experience as a worldwide grassroots organisation, the YMCA continues to see injustices against women, despite government commitments. The YMCA considers that the Beijing + 10 Review can only be seen in the context of examining the global forces which are affecting women and impede the achievement of the Platform, including militarism, fundamentalism's and globalization.

The YMCA considers that a chief obstacle to fulfilling the twelve critical areas of the Platform for Action is the predominance of the neo-liberal model which accords priority to economic growth over people's welfare, through the implementation of economic policies that have devastating consequences for women.

The YMCA stresses that women's perspectives should be incorporated in all areas of global and regional policy of the United Nations and multilateral institutions, otherwise the gender impacts of policy choices will continue to be ignored. It is also important to integrate a gender perspective in the implementation and review of the Millennium Declaration.

The YMCA further recognises that urgent action is needed to obtain commitments from governments and the United Nations to more targeted and time bound indicators and measurable goals for the implementation of the Beijing Platform, as well as adequate resources and technical support. The YMCA ratifies its support to the NGO

Committee on the Status of Women position that called for no renegotiation of the agreed text of the Beijing Platform for Action.

In relation to the challenges for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls, the YMCA recognises that urgent action is needed to ensure that:

- the current patriarchal system is changed through educating boys and men that gender inequalities are an abuse of human rights and through mobilising boys and men to advance women's rights and gender justice
- mechanisms are set in place to increase participation and access for young women in United Nations processes
- laws recognising women's equal rights and opportunities are created and, where they already exist, that they are enforced.

The YMCA is mobilising both men and women members, young and adults, at grassroots, national and international levels to address these issues and welcomes further efforts to develop practical tools for implementation.

The YMCA also welcomes cooperation among women's organisations, NGOs, UN bodies and governments in addressing gender inequalities and reaching gender justice.

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