



World Association
of Girl Guides
and Girl Scouts

Soroptimist International



World YWCA

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Soroptimist International and World YWCA welcome this opportunity to speak and to contribute to the ongoing work undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women and its partners here today. Our organisations, representing the voices of young women and girls from all corners of the globe, would like to highlight the unique barriers that violence against girls and young women present when accessing education, training and later the labour market. We would also like to suggest that ensuring girls and young women have equal access to education can prevent violence from occurring across a woman's life course.

We are greatly concerned that girls and young women remain vulnerable and exposed to violence in every sphere of their lives, including educational and work settings.

Violence does not affect girls alone, but it is the girl child who is both the most at risk of violence, and suffers the most from the consequences of violence. Whilst violence against girls and young women can prevent education, good quality education of both boys and girls can prevent violence.

We urge governments to take the following measures

strengthen legal frameworks and systems of justice, and where necessary enact new laws to prevent, prosecute and punish all cases of violence against girls, and in particular violence that prevents girls and young women from receiving an education or actively taking part in the labour market.

ensure that girls are not at risk of violence, assault or abuse on their way to and from school, and that the school environment is not one where violence can easily occur, for example by designing the school so that facilities such as toilets and drinking water are easily and safely accessible.

recognize the great potential of education to eliminate violence by ensuring that girls have accessible, acceptable, available, and good quality education, formal as well as non-formal. Awareness-raising programmes that inform girls of their rights and how to claim those rights must be widely implemented, as well as programmes that educate men, boys, families, educators, community, political and religious leaders about the rights of girls and the unacceptability of any form of violence. Governments should take steps to support those organizations already working with non formal education to implement these activities.'

Girls are the most crucial constituents for change, now and in the future

We encourage you to stand with and listen to girls and young women around the world, to invest in their future, and to intensify efforts to ensure they can live a life free from violence and the fear of violence. Thank you very much for your attention.