

56th Commission on Population and Development
Soroptimist International Oral Statement – April 2023

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During the last CPD Briefing, we asked member states to not continue the acrimonious negotiations that occurred during CSW... especially the renegotiating already agreed language and to recognize that CPD is exactly where CSE language should be included.

Unfortunately, that didn't happen ... while compromises had been offered some member states were not open to conciliation. If the UN is not the place where member states can sort out those differences how will we achieve the SDGs? This year's theme Population, education and sustainable development begs for solutions to move forward, sadly we are "halfway there but nowhere near!!"

Education is a fundamental human right and is a central obligation of States under CEDAW, CRC, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each additional year of schooling for girls improves their employment prospects, increases future earnings and is a pathway to employment.

The SG's report "Worldwide, discrimination in education is based on gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language migration, displacement, incarceration, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion and other beliefs and attitudes: the covid 19 pandemic brought these inequalities in sharp relief".

Education equips girls, adolescents, and women in all their diversity with skills and knowledge to make autonomous decisions to delay the age of marriage, prevent unintended pregnancies and access healthcare; to claim their rights and fundamental freedoms, to participate in the conduct of public affairs, in political, economic, social, and cultural life, and to participate in the decision-making processes that shape society.

Access to quality education at all levels including life skills development and re-education/training throughout the life course is fundamental to achieving gender equality.

We regret that more advancements on the area of CSE were not achieved given the education focus, as well as the robust evidence base that demonstrates that CSE is a preventative education and health intervention that prevents gender- based violence and promotes healthy and consensual relationships and gender equality.

We recommend putting gender equality at the heart of education sector plans, budgets, and policies, identifying, and addressing gender disparities and their underlying factors, to transform harmful gender norms, stereotypes and practices that are often perpetuated in and through education.

Thank you for the opportunity.