

Girls' Statement

59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
March 2015

The Beijing Platform for Action outlined eleven comprehensive sections about the problems women face but only one section about the girl child. Twenty years later, it is time girls are further addressed, and empowerment put at the forefront. We the girl delegates of the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women demand that steps be taken to ensure that all girls, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, ability, socio-economic status, and ethnicity, feel empowered.

While Beijing addressed the issue of girls' education, more action must be taken. A high global standard for education is vital to the advancement of society in the fight for gender equality. With a high quality primary, secondary, and tertiary education accessible to all, gaps in education around the globe will be closed. It is imperative that all girls have a secure and productive learning environment, as well as a safe journey to school. All schools must adopt a diverse and substantial curriculum that equips all teachers and meets the needs of all students.

We demand an accurate and comprehensive sexual education in all learning environments to ensure that no girl's sexual health is put at risk. We demand an education that will prepare us for life after our schooling career, in areas such as STEM, economics, and politics. When girls are educated, we have the power to share our knowledge, making a qualitative difference in our communities and in the world.

Access to comprehensive, non-discriminatory health care is a human right. Although progress has been made in global health infrastructure, medical care and facilities still remain inaccessible for many girls, particularly girls in poverty, with disabilities, and in the LGBTQIA+ community. Regardless of cultural and religious stigma, reproductive and mental health must be treated as a right, not a privilege.

We demand that girls no longer die unnecessarily in childbirth, are no longer at a heightened risk of contracting STIs, and no longer suffer from lack of menstrual supplies. Ignoring girls' health issues prevents them from engaging in the public sector.

Gender based violence is still widely practiced through degrading cultural traditions such as honor killings, female genital mutilation, breast ironing, and female infanticide. These must be combatted through active leaders and supportive programs. We demand programs to prevent violence through education, awareness, and the breakdown of harmful stereotypes and societal norms, especially in the media.

We demand services and support for girls who have suffered any and all forms of violence, as well as an end to victim shaming. No girl should fear being assaulted; empowerment rather than fear should be the force that unites all.

It is imperative that girls are fully aware of their rights and their implications. We call on all men and boys to be our partners in this endeavor. We demand all girls have the opportunity, tools, and support to reach their full potential.