



Wednesday, 10 August 2022

Written Contribution on the Formulation of an Elements' Paper for the Declaration on Future Generations: Gender Equality and Feminist Leadership.

On behalf of UN Women National Gender Youth Advocates (NGYAs):

1) What practical ideas/suggestions could be included in the Declaration to deliver on the commitment to take the interests and needs of future generations better into account?

To deliver on the commitment to take the interests and needs of future generations better into account, the Declaration must adopt and put an intersectional approach into practice by shedding light on the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that are experienced by many women and girls because of their identities, realities, backgrounds, and unequal access to power and resources, and thus, address them. It requires recognizing the unique challenges faced by people who experience intersecting forms of discrimination and the power dynamics and systems that reinforce them, and meaningfully and intentionally working to counter them.

The Declaration must also embody feminist leadership that aims to explicitly and intentionally redistribute power and responsibility in a way that is inclusive, participatory, and mindful of gender, age, race, social class, sexual orientation, ability and other intersecting identities. It involves a continuous commitment to keep vigilant about – and challenge – the (re)production of practices and behaviours that deter collaboration, and proactive listening and that benefit a few at the expense of others.

Furthermore, the Declaration must seek to transform structures, systems and power that reinforce inequalities as an end goal. In doing so, the Declaration must seek to build a collective vision through approaches that value co-creation, dialogue, shared perspective, and centring the voices of historically marginalized groups. Youth leadership, especially of women and girls in all their diversity, is critical to the transformative vision of the Declaration.

In this regard, we recommend, in the strongest terms possible, that the following practical ideas and suggestions are included in the Declaration to deliver on commitments now, and to take the interests and needs of future generations better into account:

Centring young women, girls and youth, in all their diversity and intersectional identities, in decision-making:

1. *Commit* to centring the full, effective, meaningful and substantive inclusion, engagement and participation of women, girls and youth, in all their diversity and intersectional identities of gender and sexual orientation and expression, at all levels.



2. *Commit* to adopting a feminist leadership approach that explicitly and intentionally redistributes power and responsibility in a way that is inclusive and participatory, taking into account gender, age, race, social class, caste, sexual orientation, ability, Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent and other intersecting identities.
3. *Commit* to promoting practices and behaviours that foster intergenerational and feminist collaboration and cocreation, and proactive listening that benefits all young people, especially young women and girls and young people marginalised along the axes of sexual orientation, gender expression and identity.
4. *Commit* to taking concrete action to transform youth participation and youth engagement to meaningful, inclusive and substantive youth leadership and co-ownership, providing youth, especially young women and girls and youth in all their diversity, with co-leading, co-creating power, decision-making as well as agenda-setting power, ensuring youth in all their diversity are being valued as equal partners across all decision-making and efforts, as co-leaders, co-creators and co-owners.
5. *Commit* to forming an intergenerational intersectional Working Group on Gender, comprising the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Member States, UN Women and UN Women National Gender Youth Advocates (NGYAs), that oversees, monitors and evaluates the implementation of the “Our Common Agenda” from a young feminist and gender perspective.
6. *Call on* the General Assembly to adopt a new resolution entitled ‘Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation’ that aims to institutionalize and concretize the full, effective, meaningful and substantive inclusion, engagement and participation, of young people in all their diversity across the UN system, and at all levels.
7. *Recognize* the Generation Equality Forum’s 5-year action journey to implement the agreed actions outlined in the Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality and reaffirm their commitment to the Global Acceleration Plan by UN Women and Generation Equality Partners.
8. *Recognize* the important contribution of youth, in all their diversity, especially women and girls, in maintaining and promoting the peace and security agendas.

Gender-transformative education:

1. *Recognizing* the disproportionate impact of the education crisis on women and girls, commit to mandating universal, free, accessible and inclusive education, prioritizing gender transformative approaches.



2. *Commit* to eliminating all forms of discrimination in educational settings and services by identifying and amending harmful rules, norms and practices, concerning, inter alia, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, and class.
3. *Commit* to ensuring all young people, especially women and girls and young people marginalized along the axes of gender orientation and Sexual preference and relationships in all their diversity, have access to stigma-free sexual and reproductive health and rights in educational settings, and in this regard, commit to mandating and increasing the delivery of quality Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), in and out of school.
4. Strengthen legal and policy frameworks by making Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) aligned with international guidelines part of national education curricula (guaranteed/compulsory from early childhood education through to university, examinable) and by ensuring girls and adolescents have equal access to inclusive education, free from limitations related to disability, marital, pregnancy, or childbearing status.
5. Strengthen human and financial resources for in-school Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) (educator training and accreditation, link educators with NGOs) and out-of-school and non-formal settings, including humanitarian and crisis settings. Approaches should include group-based workshops, youth-led initiatives, peer delivery, traditional modes of information distribution, and digital media including apps, TV, and community radio.
6. *Commit* to integrating Indigenous, local, and traditional knowledge sharing into education systems and decolonising methods of teaching.
7. *Recognizing* the negative, profound and detrimental impact of the compounding crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss ('triple planetary crisis') on education, especially for women and girls, commit to intensifying efforts to ensure schools, institutions, educational settings and educational services are equipped with substantive and appropriate resources to respond to these needs, especially persons facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
8. Enhance and leverage the capacity of millions more women and girls in all their diversity to build resilience to climate and disaster risks, mitigate climate change, and address loss and damage, including through the provision of quality education, community-based cooperative models and land rights and tenure security.
9. *Commit* to integrating gender equality across national curricula, at all levels.
10. *Commit* to investing in access to education that promotes decent work, capacity-building opportunities, and improves education for green jobs and green careers, and subsequent job placement processes.



11. Ensure increased access at all levels to educational tools and services needed to build careers in green economy sectors.
12. Increase access to educational tools and services to achieve resource independence and build resilience.
13. *Recognizing* the increase in the use of technology and the digital world in education, commit to investing, improving and implementing accessible, inclusive and safe digital environments, including online safety protections, for all children and youth, incorporating digital citizenship, digital literacy and internet safety into school curriculums, and in this regard, implement teachings on cyberbullying and digital harassment, especially to protect young women and girls.
14. *Commit* to implementing policies and programmes to strengthen digital access and literacy of women, girls, and youth, and in this regard, increase investment in digital infrastructure in rural areas, prioritizing people facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
15. *Commit* to promoting the participation of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and increase funding for girl-centred opportunities.
16. Scale up investment and promote education for all girls and young women and vocational training to enhance essential skills for critical future work, bearing in mind the specific needs of those in vulnerable contexts.
17. *Commit* to centring gender equality in education sector plans, budgets and policies, and prioritize public education budgets and funding to the most marginalized people and areas.
18. *Strongly encourage* participating stakeholders to fulfil financial commitments made at the Generation Equality Forums regarding education.
19. *Commit* to increasing investment in gender-transformative social protections.
20. Build cross-sector alliances and support pairing, co-learning, experience and capacity sharing for and with feminist activists, organizations, movements in all their diversity, and leaders and encourage and support intersectional, intercultural and multi-generational dialogue.
21. Invest in creative initiatives that strengthen co-learning and critical thinking skills and tools for girls and young feminists, including those who have been historically marginalized, and support them in claiming their rights and exercising their independence and agency (individual and collective) both in socio-political processes and their lives.

Eliminating all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination:



1. *Reaffirm in the strongest terms possible* their commitment and strong will to fully, effectively and meaningfully ratify and implement, as a matter of priority, all relevant international instruments relating to countering, eliminating and addressing all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, and to take concrete action to address these issues in all their forms, wherever they may occur.
2. *Commit* to implementing concrete new comprehensive commitments to address all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, especially against women, girls and youth in all their diversity.
3. *Commit* to ratifying international and regional conventions and public and private sector institutions to strengthen, implement and finance evidence-driven laws, policies and action plans to end sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.
4. *Commit* to scaling up and increasing comprehensive, accessible, and quality services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence especially young women and girls in all their diversity, and in this regard, commit to ensuring legal frameworks are in place and implemented for all survivors of sexual and gender-based violence to safely access comprehensive support services.
5. *Commit* to the full respect of the human rights of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, recognizing their roles as agents of change, acknowledging the need to incorporate their perspective and experience in all efforts, and commit to centre the full, effective, and meaningful engagement, participation and inclusion of survivors in all efforts and decision-making, as co-leaders, co-creators, and co-owners, at all levels.
6. *Commit* to addressing the root causes of sexual and gender-based violence, including, *inter alia*, poverty, gender inequalities, the education crisis and climate change, and in this regard, recall and reaffirm the commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing that each of the Sustainable Development Goals intersects with the issues of sexual and gender-based violence, and in this regard reaffirm the importance of multistakeholder and intergenerational partnerships to fulfil such commitments.
7. *Commit* to adopting intersectional, evidence-driven approaches that are consistently integrated across and into all efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.
8. *Commit* to scaling up implementation and financing of evidence-driven prevention strategies by public and private sector institutions and women girls and youth rights organizations to drive down the prevalence of gender-based violence against women, adolescent girls and young women in all their diversity.
9. *Commit* to enhancing support and increasing accountability and quality, flexible funding from states, the private sector, foundations, and other donors to autonomous girl-led & women's rights



organizations working to end sexual and gender-based violence against women girls and youth in all their diversity, ensuring young women and girl's rights organizations are recognized for their expertise on sexual and gender-based violence and well-resourced to match the scale of the problem.

10. *Reaffirm* the understanding that gender inequality in its social, economic, cultural, and political contexts are factors that make girls, and youth vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, and in this regard, reaffirm the crucial importance of adopting a gendered lens, addressing negative social norms that sustain gender inequality and discrimination, including the culture of tolerance towards sexual and gender-based violence that makes women, girls and youth particularly vulnerable; and commit to taking strong efforts to promote the inclusion of more girls and youth in leadership positions and all decision-making processes.
11. *Express serious concern* over the significant impact of crises, from conflict to climate, on sexual and gender-based violence, recognizing the disproportionate effects on girls and youth in light of crises, and in this regard, call upon Member States to enact or update national laws and establish comprehensive policies, programs and other measures that provide for the protection of survivors from revictimization and appropriate assistance and protection, stressing the importance of coordinating both national and international cooperation to enhance the positive effects of all efforts.
12. *Commit* to mainstreaming considerations to counter sexual and gender-based violence in all humanitarian responses, including through the implementation of multi-pronged action plans in all humanitarian responses across all forms of internal crisis displacement, including climate-induced displacement; recognizing that girls and youth, who already face disproportionate risk to sexual and gender-based violence are even more vulnerable during climate-induced crises, with particular note to the increased vulnerability girls and youth in Pacific Island Countries faced in the wake of natural disasters and where limited land rights intersected with climate change to increase risks of trafficking in persons, sexual violence, forced marriage and domestic servitude.
13. *Recognizing* that sexual and gender-based violence are exacerbated by climate change, commit to fulfilling existing commitments and intensify climate action efforts, recognizing that sexual and gender-based violence often occur alongside environmentally destructive industries, including illegal logging, mining, agricultural and fishing activities that further contribute to environmental degradation, and in this regard, implement and increase the frequency of monitoring of high-risk sites to identify sexual and gender-based violence including sexual exploitation, and flouting of labour laws; provide targeted education to those working in such high-risk industries on labour rights; and encourage the introduction of human rights and environmental due diligence legislation requiring traceability of supply chains in both the private and public sector to identify risk areas to increase due diligence efforts towards eradicating sexual and gender-based violence in supply chains.



14. *Note with concern* that sexual and gender-based violence increased globally during the (COVID-19) pandemic, including encouraging Member States to commit to intensifying efforts in public and private spheres.
15. *Recognize, express deep concern, and commit* to taking concrete action to address the increasing links between armed groups, conflict zones and settings, armed conflict, including terrorist groups, and sexual and gender-based violence, involving the coercion of victims, in particular girls, and youth, into forced marriages, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, forced labour, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation, and subjecting young men and boys to forced labour or actors as combatants.

2) How can the needs of future generations best be linked to present priorities, like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the principle of intergenerational equity?

To ensure the needs of women, girls and youth, in all their diversity, are met and fulfilled, currently and in future generations, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be achieved, especially Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality, to ensure no one is left behind.

To link the needs of future generations to present priorities, there must be accountability systems in place. This means concretely implementing mechanisms which hold those with power and resources to account, through which it is possible to create a more equal world.

It is equally as important to create a culture of transparency at all decision-making levels, which will support accountability and create trust, allowing for more meaningful participation from civil society.

Furthermore, processes need to be made accessible to all, simplified and integrated where possible, allowing for meaningful participation of those most marginalized.

Finally, the needs of future generations must be linked to the present principles of young feminist leadership, co-leadership, co-creation, co-ownership, substantive participation, transformative design and leadership, and intersectionality. For further details on these principles, we direct you to the ‘Young Feminist Manifesto’ (<https://gefyouthmanifesto.wixsite.com/website>).

3) What are substantive issues relevant to future generations that should be reflected in the Declaration? Please list no more than three.

- Centring young women, girls and youth, in all their diversity, in decision-making.
- Gender-transformative education.
- Eliminating all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination.



4) Written input:

This submission is on behalf of the UN Women National Gender Youth Advocates (NGYAs). We are a network of over 300 global youth who are championing gender equality in all regions of the world. With the support of UN Women, we work at the grassroots, local, national, regional and international levels, to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls and youth, in all their diversities, are fully, effectively, meaningfully and substantively centred across all efforts, processes and decision-making, at all levels.

Recognising the principles, processes and outcomes of the Generation Equality Forums, Journey and Agenda convened by UN Women in a multi-stakeholder manner, as well as the Young Feminist Manifesto, it is crucial for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and youth in all their diversity to be centred within, and across the Elements Paper.

This means acknowledging that the global issues we are facing today, from conflict to climate change and the ‘triple planetary crisis’, the COVID-19 pandemic, the education crisis, organized crime, and many more - disproportionality and will continue to adversely impact women, girls and youth in all their diversity in existing and future generations.

It is clear that gender inequalities are deeply rooted in our global socio-economic and political structures, societies, and systems. Nearly all dimensions of life have been constructed in this way – created to maintain power imbalances and uphold patriarchal ideas. Gender inequality is about history, structural racism and discrimination, politics, and economics - all broad topics that have hundreds of years of theories, work, data, research, and cultural context to them.

This Declaration must be built on the foundational principles of intergenerational solidarity and accountability, acting as a bold and comprehensive document that concretises the commitments of Member States. In this regard, all processes relating to the Declaration, Our Common Agenda, and beyond, across the UN system, must adopt the principles of feminist leadership, ensuring young women, girls and adolescents in all their diversity, are meaningfully included and participating as co-leaders, co-creators and co-owners across all processes, at all levels.

We need Member States to make bold gender data commitments to make gender equality real. Through multi-stakeholder approaches, governments, donors, civil society and the private sector must commit to collecting and disaggregating gender data, fund gender data gaps, use gender data for policymaking, share best practices, and increase accountability for gender data.

Therefore, the Elements Paper must include provisions that call for the urgent need to increase and significantly advance efforts to achieve gender equality including, while not being exhaustive: centring and promoting the full, effective, meaningful and substantive inclusion, engagement and participation of women, girls and youth, in all their diversity across all efforts, procedures and decision-making, at all levels;



addressing sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, including in the context of conflict and climate change; contemporary forms of slavery and trafficking in persons, especially of women and children; the gender-digital divide; the full, safe and equitable access to sexual and reproductive health and rights; dismantling harmful patriarchal laws and cultural and social norms; realizing gender-transformative education; and addressing in more broad terms, the root, structural causes that contribute to gender inequalities.

Gender equality in its entirety must be one of the foundational pillars upon which this Declaration is built. It must be centred, and the commitments outlined must be bold, concrete and transformative to ensure that all human rights of all women and girls, in all their diversity are respected, promoted, protected and fulfilled, truly leaving no one behind.

5) How would you summarize your input into a few works?

The Elements' Paper and Declaration must centre gender equality, including achieving the substantive participation of girls and youth, in all their diversity, in decision-making; gender-transformative education; and eliminating all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination.