



14<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council

### **Annual full-day discussion on Women's Human Rights**

Joint oral statement on behalf of the World Alliance of YMCAs and Defence for Children International, international non-governmental organisations with Special Consultative Status

Thank you Mr President,

The YMCA and Defence for Children International want to thank the Human Rights Council for convening this Annual discussion on Women's Human Rights. It is our hope that it will lead to the greater realisation of the Human Rights of women around the world.

As a group of young advocates from a number of countries in Europe, Africa and Latin America, who speak from our experience and from our own research and advocacy, education is not accessible and available to all young women and girls.

Some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged young women and girls are currently in the juvenile justice systems of states across the world. We believe that a key challenge to the empowerment of young women through education, is to fully implement international standards on juvenile justice, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and this Council's resolution 10/2

Detention and imprisonment has an enormous impact on the education of a young woman at a crucial time. International law is clear that detention should only be used a last resort for children and young people.

Once in prison, our experience tells us that fewer educational opportunities are offered to young women in prisons. Girls and young women are often detained with adults in police stations and prisons and are also highly vulnerable to rape and sexual assault.

Resolution 10/2 states we need to provide education and rehabilitation programmes to people on release. Education is a key way to help former young prisoners reintegrate into society yet these opportunities are often being denied to young women.

If the right to education is so crucial to supporting Women to the full realisation of their human rights, then all women, even the most marginalised and neglected, those in prison, must be afforded this right to help them take their equal place in society. Only the full implementation of juvenile justice standards enshrined in treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, can make this a reality.

We thank you.