

UN Human Rights Council 35rd Session – 13 June 2017
Oral Statement on Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women

Check against Delivery

Thank you Mr. President.

This statement is delivered by Plan International, in collaboration with Defence for Children International and Terre des Hommes International Federation, who are working together in the Girls Advocacy Alliance¹ to affect policy change for girls' rights and gender equality.

We welcome today's discussion, and believe that it represents a positive shift towards seeing men and boys as advocates of positive change.

Stemming from patriarchal structures and norms, the perpetuation of gender-based violence is intergenerational. Breaking this cycle requires changing these patriarchal structures and challenging notions of masculinity that value violent behaviour and sexual dominance.

Research done by Plan International has shown that many adolescent boys believe that being violent is part of a man's nature. It is these norms that must be challenged if we are to break the cycle of violence.

Meaningfully engaging boys and men in reframing healthy and non-violent definitions of masculinity has benefits for all, *both men and women*.

We would like to highlight two elements that we believe are particularly important:

1. First, it is critical to work with boys and girls from early childhood to create positive and healthy relationships from the start, when stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes are being internalised.
2. Second, we need to be gender transformative and challenge the social and cultural norms and practices that perpetuate inequality in all its forms.

In light of these comments, we recommend that States:

- Ensure that curricula are gender-transformative, starting in early childhood and continuing through the educational programme, as well as incorporate gender training into teacher education;
- Incorporate comprehensive sexuality education into school curricula for *both* children and adolescents, including information on gender equality, violence and sexual abuse;

¹ Plan International, Defence for Children International, ECPAT International, and Terre des Hommes International are implementing partners in the Girls Advocacy Alliance, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

- In consultation with girls and women, ensure that all policies developed to address violence against women and girls are gender-transformative and address root causes of violence and discrimination.

Thank you, Mr. President.