

UN Human Rights Council 45th Session – 28th September 2020
Oral Statement on Annual Discussion: Integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms

Thank you, Madam President.

This statement is delivered by Plan International, in collaboration with Defence for Children International and Terre des Hommes International Federation, as part of the Girls Advocacy Alliance, an initiative working to ensure that all girls and young women enjoy equal rights and opportunities, are free of gender based violence and are economically empowered.

We welcome this annual panel, as we believe that a gender perspective requires addressing gender inequality both by analysing the different forms of discrimination that women and girls face based on different facets of their identity and by developing policy that takes into account this diversity. We also strongly welcome resolution 44/17 on the elimination of discrimination against women and girls and highlight its importance.

Intersectionality recognises that individuals have multiple identities, attributes and behaviours and that the intersections of these multiple aspects give shape to different experiences of stigmatization and discrimination. In order to be truly transformative, laws and policies must aim not only to address discrimination against women and girls, but inequalities within these groups.

The concept of intersectionality also recognises that those affected by forms of discrimination are most equipped to discuss their own issues and propose solutions to them. These are often the voices that are most side-lined in decision-making processes, facing a myriad of challenges including patriarchal norms, digital divide and lack of financial support to participate. It is therefore imperative that this Council centres the voices of girls and young women, including by institutionalising their participation in its mechanisms.

Therefore, we urge Members States to:

1. Institutionalise the participation of girls and young women in UN mechanisms, ensuring that they are truly accessible for girl and young women advocates;
2. Ensure that UN spaces are truly accessible for girls and young women advocates;
3. Systematically analyse how different groups are differentially affected by an issue;
4. Integrate an intersectionality approach as well as an age dimension in the renewal or creation of Special Procedure Mandates;
5. Hold to account perpetrators of intimidation and reprisals.

I thank you.