



Terre des Hommes
International Federation



Annual Day of Discussion on Women's Human Rights
Gender-equal socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

47th Session of the Human Rights Council
Tuesday 6 July 2021
Joint NGO Statement

Oral Statement

We thank you for giving us the floor for this vital panel discussion on a gender-equal socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This statement is submitted on behalf of She Leads, which includes Plan International, Defence for Children International, and Terre des Hommes International Federation, and on behalf of Save the Children, Child Rights Connect as well as World Vision International.

As has been reported across the world, the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and put into the spotlight gender-based discrimination and violence as well as harmful practices, such as child marriage, which affect the daily lives of women and girls. In addition to the right to live free from violence, the rights to education and health of girls have also been specifically impacted. It is feared that up to 11 million more secondary school-aged girls will not return to school following the pandemic.¹

Of further concern is the devastating impact on sexual and reproductive health information and services for girls and young women, which were already difficult to access before the pandemic. Plan International research indicates that Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is often not included in distance learning packages when there is a shift online, despite its lifesaving importance.²

At Plan International, we have undertaken several consultations of girls and young women to map out how they were affected by the pandemic and understand their aspirations for the future. At the heart of their concerns there is education and health, in particular mental health.³

In order to shape adapted responses and truly “Build back better”, it is fundamental for the voices of girls and young women to be heard. We must listen to girls and young women and commit to and adequately resource the meaningful participation of girl-led groups and girl activists in key national and global decision-making processes on COVID-19 recovery.

We call on the UN and its Member States to apply a child rights-based and gender transformative approach to the pandemic recovery and to:

- Ensure that all COVID-19-related measures are designed and implemented without discrimination and with due consideration to age, gender, and diversity;

¹ <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/girlseducation>

² <https://plan-international.org/sexual-health/how-covid-19-threatens-girls-women>

³ <https://plan-international.org/publications/halting-lives-2-in-their-own-voice#download-options>



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- Strengthen the leadership and meaningful participation of girls and young women in all decision-making processes, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including in COVID-19 response and recovery plans;
- Prioritise child-friendly and gender responsive support and protection services, including mental health, as well as access to and funding of sexual and reproductive health services, which should be recognised as lifesaving, along with essential health services for young children's survival and growth as part of universal health coverage; and
- Implement targeted and fully-funded measures to support girls' and young women's right to safe, quality, inclusive education and their economic empowerment, including through gender-responsive social protection, catch-up classes, life skills programmes, livelihoods support and inclusive economic recovery interventions.

Thank you.