



Working Group on discrimination against women and girls

Women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights in crisis

47th Session of the Human Rights Council
Friday 25 June 2021
Joint NGO Statement¹

Madame President,

Plan International, together with a group of NGOs, welcomes the Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, and the call for States to urgently recognise the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women and girls as essential and life-saving services requiring full integration into crisis prevention, response, assessment, management, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction plans. We also appreciate the specific attention and recognition that is given to girls and young women's SRHR in humanitarian settings.

International human rights standards continue to apply in humanitarian situations. We know that humanitarian situations exacerbate gender inequality and harmful social and gender norms, and correspond to rising rates of unintended and unwanted pregnancy, maternal mortality and morbidity, and harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage and unions as well as female genital cutting/mutilation.

Investing in realising young people's SRHR is not only right in itself, but also contributes to other humanitarian objectives, including survival, education and protection from violence. Yet, the SRHR of children, adolescents and young people (particularly for girls) continue to fall between the cracks as SRH programming and gender-based violence (GBV) interventions tend to be age-blind while child focused interventions tend to overlook these needs, and are far too often gender-blind. Adolescent girls and young women therefore face double marginalisation and invisibility due to their age and gender.

We call on States and all humanitarian actors to take the following actions:

- Recognise and fully fund SRHR of children, adolescents, and young people as life-saving and essential in humanitarian settings, including prevention, planning and response. This must include both access to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and quality age- and gender-responsive SRH services.

¹ This statement is co-sponsored by the Centre for Reproductive Rights, Child Rights Connect, Choice for Youth and Sexuality, CRIN, Defence for Children International, IPPF, Save the Children and World YWCA

- Commit to and fully implement the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for SRHR, including awareness raising about services and interventions that support access to SRH information and CSE. The MISP should also be strengthened to incorporate specific criteria on adolescent SRHR.
- Promote and fully resource the systematic and meaningful participation of affected populations, including adolescent girls and young women, in all decisions that affect their lives. This means they must be included in the design, implementation and evaluation of humanitarian policies, programmes and processes.
- Under the leadership of the health sector, the humanitarian system should promote integrated, multi-sectoral approaches that address SRHR and work with the protection sector, including child protection actors, to prevent and respond to GBV in crises, and ensure survivor-centred approaches that take into account the unique needs of children, adolescents and young people.

Thank you.