



## The Working Group on Girls SUMMARY REPORT CSW69 Adolescent Girls' Shadow Report for Beijing +30

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As preparations began for the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995, The Working Group on Girls (WGG) formed at the request of UNICEF and out of the need (and insistence of advocates) to recognize the particular realities girls around the world face: that by the time they become adults, many of their rights have already been lost during their childhood. Many lacked schooling and/or were prevented from attending due to household chores and family responsibilities, early marriage and child-bearing, and societal preference given to boys. Many girls also faced gender-based violence in their homes, communities, and through harmful cultural practices, and lacked protections.

With strong leadership from women from the African regions, The WGG and women from all over the world collaborated, networked, strategized and met with numerous NGOs and government delegates to convince them that girls must be included in the Beijing Platform for Action. As a result, Section L on The Girl-Child was unanimously adopted by the 189 Member States, and the Commission on the Status of Women has been mandated to review the Platform annually. The mission of the WGG continues: to maintain a strong voice to ensure that the rights of the girl-child are implemented.

This year, as part of that mission, the WGG developed and distributed throughout its network a toolkit and facilitation guide for girls to lead local conversation circles with each other on the progress of Section L. These local consultations were hosted by and among girls from May 2024 through July 2024. This CSW69 Adolescent Girls' Shadow Report encompasses the information received from these local consultations.

Based on girls' reports, since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action thirty years ago, *not one of the strategic objectives of Section L- The Girl Child has been achieved*. They note that **achieving the strategic objectives of Section L requires a concerted multi-stakeholder approach that includes girls' recommendations, involving committed and immediate efforts by multilateral institutions, all levels of government, civil society organizations, communities, and families to ensure girls can thrive throughout their lives**. We hope that this report will inform Member States' declaration for CSW69 for Beijing +30 and subsequent actions for girls' rights and priorities at the local and regional levels.

### SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Evident throughout girls' discussions, girls continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violations of their rights that prevent girls from exercising and enjoying their



rights and developing their full potential. Many of the issues discussed cut across multiple strategic objectives in Section L of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Girls' local reports highlight the many challenges faced by girls including discrimination, educational disparities, health access barriers, economic exploitation, various forms of violence against girls, and biased family dynamics. Key points include the need to address discrimination in all facets of girls' lives, promote girls' participation in decision-making, respond to and eliminate all forms of violence against girls, enhance and ensure education opportunities, and strengthen the role of families in supporting girls. Additionally, the report calls attention to the importance of addressing emerging issues like Artificial Intelligence and gender equality, as well as girls' inclusion in environmental sustainability and climate crisis response mechanisms.

Girls' recommendations and priorities for the implementation of Section L include: promoting gender equality in education at all levels, changing cultural attitudes, implementing policies that promote girls' health and wellbeing, investing in disaggregated data collection, protecting girls from violence, and instituting accountability mechanisms for girls' rights. Girls also highlighted the importance of education, awareness-raising, and girls' participation to eliminate discrimination and promote their well-being in society, including involving girls in policy-making.

### **Participant Representation:**

This shadow report includes insights from approximately 670 participants in 40 consultations, primarily between the ages of 10-19 from 18 countries: Australia, Brazil, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Mauritius, México, Nepal, Paraguay, Perú, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, United Kingdom, USA, Zimbabwe.

Responding to optional demographic questions, 220 participants identified as coming from a rural community, and 100 participants reported coming from or living in a region affected by conflict. 148 participants identify as a member of a Native, Indigenous, or Tribal community. Furthermore, 32 participants with disabilities took part in consultations, and 53 participants noted they represent or are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Below are girls' overarching recommendations for each Strategic Objective in Section L and additional emerging issues girls are facing. Please see the full report for the detailed and extensive recommendations.

#### **Strategic objective L.1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child.**

- Address gender-based discrimination in education, society, policy, and data collection:



- **Education Initiatives:**
  - Schools should implement programs to educate communities and students on gender-based discrimination, menstruation, and sexual assault.
  - Schools should also promote safe spaces, encourage girls to take on leadership roles, and ensure zero tolerance for gender-based discrimination.
- **Societal Education and Support:**
  - Communities should educate citizens on gender-based discrimination, consent, and the harms of child marriage.
  - Parents should be encouraged to invest in their daughters' education and discuss taboo topics to support their daughters.
- **Policy and Legal Protections:**
  - Governments should enact and enforce laws against gender-based violence, sexual assault, child marriage, and FGM.
  - Governments should also provide support networks for victims and ensure educational policies do not discriminate against girls.
- **Comprehensive Data Collection**
  - To develop effective intervention plans to address gender inequality, support girls' well-being, and enable girls to succeed in all aspects of life, collect reliable, disaggregated data on various aspects of girls' lives with girls' perspectives, including on education, health, cultural norms, safety, legal protections, and civil and economic participation.

**Strategic objective L.2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.**

- **Raise Awareness About Gender Equality:** Educate communities and parents on the importance of treating daughters equally and the benefits of girls in STEM.
- **Prevent Harmful Practices:** Governments should intervene in situations with a risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), and prevent child marriage.
- **Improve Access to Resources:** Make menstrual products readily available in public places and improve access to reproductive health.
- **Promote Equal Treatment in Education:** Ensure teachers treat students equally regardless of gender and address harassment in schools with strong deterrents.
- **Empower and Support Girls:** Build girls' confidence, expose them to female role models, and support girls.



**Strategic objective L.3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.**

- **Education and Awareness:**
  - Gender equality should be promoted through education.
  - Spread, educate, and promote actions in favor of equal treatment for girls using social media and various platforms.
  - Integrate gender studies into the school curriculum to educate children from a young age about gender equality and rights.
- **Community and Family Engagement:**
  - Engage local community leaders, elders, and influencers in discussions to gain their support and promote gender equality as a community value.
  - Encourage families to ensure equal access for both girls and boys within the family in all aspects - socially, economically, educationally, and healthily.
- **Legal Protections and Policy Reform:**
  - Advocate and enact legal reforms for stronger legal protections and policies that safeguard girls' rights.
  - Ensure the implementation and the effective enforcement of laws to protect girls' rights.
- **Support Systems and Safe Spaces:**
  - Create safe spaces where girls can discuss their issues and receive support.
  - Establish helplines and support networks for girls facing violence, abuse, or discrimination.
- **Economic Support and Opportunities:**
  - Provide scholarships and financial aid to support girls' education and reduce the economic burden on families.
  - Offer vocational training and skill development programs for girls to enhance their economic independence.

**Strategic objective L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.**

- **Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development, and training:** Ensure equal access to educational opportunities, skills development, and training for both girls and boys without favoritism.
- **Make quality education and training available to all:** Offer economic support for fees, transport, supplies, books, uniforms, etc., to make education accessible.



- **Ensure equal access to STEM coursework and training:** Address negative gender stereotyping and harassment in STEM fields, and provide more role models and mentors in STEM, finance, and politics.
- **Promote online platforms for career acceleration:** Help connect girls to people in the workplace to accelerate their careers and allow for more engagement.
- **Strengthen girls' financial literacy and skills:** Engage girls in income-generating activities and savings, and provide more scholarships and awareness about future opportunities that education might provide.

#### **Strategic objective L.5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.**

- **Access to Healthcare Services:** Governments should ensure free or affordable access to healthcare services and information for girls, including reproductive health services, regular checkups, and mental health care.
- **Community Outreach and Education:** Invest in community outreach programs and provide funding to expand access to health education and healthcare. Inclusive community workshops and campaigns should educate everyone on sexual and reproductive rights and the prevention of gender-based violence.
- **Mental Health Support:** Promote mental health awareness and make counseling accessible. Increase the number of mental health providers for girls and provide more resources to these programs.
- **Menstrual Health:** Make period products free and accessible. Provide free menstrual products in schools, and ensure proper water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities are available for girls to manage their periods.
- **Nutrition and Food Access:**
  - Ensure equal access to nutritious food and water for girls. Parents should distribute food and water evenly in the household.
  - Nutrition programs should be started in schools to ensure girls receive nutritious meals.

#### **Strategic objective L.6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.**

- **Educate and Spread Awareness:** Educate children and raise awareness among parents about the importance of education and the dangers of child labor. Encourage parents to enroll their children in school and inform them about labor laws and policies.
- **Enact and Enforce Laws:** Implement and strictly enforce laws to prevent the employment of children below the legal working age.



- **Regular Inspections and Reporting Mechanisms:** Authorities should conduct regular inspections to ensure compliance with labor laws and provide confidential reporting mechanisms for child labor violations.
- **Equal Wages and Safety Measures:** Ensure equal wages for girls of minimum legal working age, and establish safety committees to protect girls in the workplace.
- **Community Involvement:** Encourage communities to make ethical investments, avoid purchasing from businesses employing child labor, partner with NGOs, and report suspected child labor through existing channels.

### **Strategic objective L.7. Eradicate violence against the girl-child.**

- **Raise Awareness and Education:**
  - Increase awareness about different types of violence and prevention methods, including educating boys and men on their role in respecting and protecting girls.
- **Structural and Cultural Changes:**
  - Implement structural changes in education and culture to deconstruct gender stereotypes and challenge harmful practices.
  - Promote gender equality and girls' empowerment at home and in society.
- **Online Safety and Digital Literacy:**
  - Provide comprehensive digital literacy and safety education, integrate online safety into school curricula, and encourage the use of safe browsing tools.
  - Governments and tech companies must work together to ensure online environments are safe for children.
- **Support and Reporting Mechanisms:**
  - Establish comprehensive support services for survivors of gender-based violence, including hotlines, counseling, and legal aid.
  - Ensure mechanisms to report all forms of violence are readily available and accessible, and encourage anonymous reporting.
- **Law Enforcement and Legal Frameworks:**
  - Implement well-orchestrated government and law-enforcement safeguards, regulations, and systems to prevent violence against girls, including all forms of tech-facilitated violence, and ensure swift prosecution and accountability for perpetrators.
  - Strengthen the capacity of law enforcement and judicial systems to handle gender-based violence cases effectively.



**Strategic objective L.8. Promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.**

- Invest in, protect, and ensure girls' right to education, for all girls, everywhere.
- Improve girls' access to information.
- Promote gender equality in the family.
- Create and maintain space, platforms, and programs for girls to participate in civil society and engage in issues that matter to them.
- Incorporate digital literacy, financial education, and economics into school curricula.

**Strategic objective L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.**

- **Promote and prioritize girls' education:** Parents play a crucial role in improving the status of girls' education by encouraging and supporting their daughters' academic pursuits and career aspirations.
- **Educate and sensitize parents and caregivers on gender equality:** Parents and caregivers should be educated on the importance of gender equality and the need to support their daughters' self-development and aspirations.
- **Challenge and address traditional notions and societal and cultural norms:** Families should actively work to challenge and change traditional gender roles and stereotypes that limit girls' potential and opportunities.
- **Encourage girls to pursue their goals independent of stereotypes:** Girls should be encouraged to follow their dreams and interests, regardless of societal expectations or traditional norms.
- **Foster strong partnerships between schools and families:** Creating a supportive environment for girls' education and development through regular communication and collaboration between schools and families is essential.

**Artificial Intelligence and Gender Equality**

- Implement regulations for AI that require transparency from tech companies, including social media companies.
- Establish and enforce ethical guidelines for AI development that include gender equality principles.
- Encourage and support girls in STEM from an early age, including through coding and AI education to develop unbiased algorithms that prevent gender discrimination.
- Ensure that the AI industry, including AI research and development teams, have diverse representation and talent that include women.
- Implement rigorous testing to identify and mitigate gender biases in AI algorithms.
- Conduct regular audits of AI systems to ensure they are fair and unbiased.



- Increase general community awareness about AI and the impacts of AI on gender equality through education, public campaigns, advocacy.

### **Addressing Environmental Sustainability and the Climate Crisis**

- **Education and Awareness Raising:** Provide girls with quality education on climate change and environmental sustainability, integrate environmental education into school curricula, and use social media, workshops, and community events to educate and inspire action.
- **Participation in Policy-Making:** Include girls in policy discussions on climate change and sustainability, create platforms for their participation in local, national, and international environmental policy-making processes, and involve them in youth advisory councils and climate summits.
- **Practical and Collective Engagement:** Encourage girls' participation in environmental education programs and clubs, support their involvement in local and global environmental campaigns, and provide platforms for them to share their ideas and solutions for sustainability.
- **Funding and Grants:** Provide accessible and flexible grant programs to support the development and implementation of girls' sustainability initiatives and community-based projects, and establish awards and recognition programs to celebrate their environmental efforts.
- **Mentorship and Career Development:** Establish mentorship programs connecting girls with professional women in green industries, offer scholarships, internships, and training programs in environmental fields, and foster partnerships between schools, communities, and environmental organizations to create opportunities for girls.

### **CONCLUSION**

Recognizing that girls continue to face multiple forms of discrimination and rights violations that hinder their potential, this report underscores the need for a multi-stakeholder approach involving governments, civil society, communities, and families to address these issues. Key recommendations include promoting gender equality in education, changing cultural attitudes, implementing protective policies, and ensuring girls' participation in decision-making processes.

The insights and recommendations of girls included in this shadow summary report for CSW69 and Beijing +30 aim to inform future actions and policies to uphold and advance girls' rights globally and calls for immediate and committed efforts to ensure girls can thrive.





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