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## Commission on the Status of Women

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### Statement submitted by Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (YCSRR), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

As the Young Feminist Caucus, we come together at a crucial moment to reflect on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and its implications for our generation. Our commitment is to engage with the core issues that the BPfA seeks to address while acknowledging the significant challenges we face today.

We recognize the urgency of creating a world where young women, girls, and gender-diverse youth, in all their diversity, have the opportunity to thrive and lead. Our generation is unafraid to confront discomfort, challenge existing structures, and hold one another accountable. We seek to reshape our societies and systems based on decolonial, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-classist, intergenerational, rights-based and feminist frameworks. We honour the long-fought struggles of youth and adolescents, especially young women, girls and gender-diverse youth belonging to marginalized, vulnerable, and historically criminalized communities such as Dalits, Bahujans, Adivasi and Indigenous Tribes, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, religious minorities, LGBTQIA+ youth, youth with disabilities, youth from rural and remote areas, young farmers, youth living in poverty, migrant, refugee, and forcibly displaced youth, young survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and other vulnerable groups who have and continue to suffer from historic injustices and are left out of all systems of power, as they fight for basic human rights, fundamental freedoms, and dignity, and who have paved the way for our intergenerational work.

We are witnessing eroding democracies, and a rise of authoritarianism, fascism, nationalism, militarization, patriarchy, austerity and growing debt, and corporate capture of the United Nations and government agendas. Our governments are targeting our human rights and environmental defenders. Yet still, we rise in resistance, cross-movement mobilization, and solidarity as we fight for our human rights and a just and resilient recovery from the compounding crises of conflict, climate change, increasing cost of living, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the Young Feminist Caucus, reaffirming the relevance of the BPfA, we call for:

- **Young Feminist Leadership:** Ensure that young feminist movements, networks, organizations, collectives, and coalitions engage not only as observers or beneficiaries but as partners with equal rights, power, and concrete influence across decision-making and policy development, implementation, monitoring, governance, and accountability at all levels. Young feminist civil society has the experience and technical expertise to contribute to constructive political debates based on our work from the grassroots to the global levels. Ensure that their full and effective, substantive, and meaningful leadership and influence is institutionalized across all multilateral and governance processes, at the local, national, regional, and international levels, through mechanisms that are built with and by youth and adolescents themselves, centering young women, girls, and gender-diverse youth from marginalized, vulnerable, and historically criminalized communities.
- **Feminist Movements and People-Led Agendas:** End the trend of regression and corporate capture within the UN halls through the prioritization of feminist, decolonial, and people-led agendas. Ensure participatory democracy and bottom-up processes that enable women's, girls', and gender-diverse youth movements to define political agendas and outcomes. Support and provide long-term, sustainable, accessible, and flexible resourcing to local movements and communities that are dedicated to building women's and girls' capacity and strengthening their bargaining power to engage effectively in broader political processes and policy debates, and to community-led movements that foster

knowledge and resources on women's and girls' human rights, gender equality, participatory methods, and community organizing tools. Support feminist political agendas and demands and steer political will towards their robust implementation.

- **Decolonial Frameworks:** Reject the economic growth and neo-liberal and capitalist development models and ensure development justice that focuses on reducing inequities between countries and people. Stop the transfer of wealth, power, and resources from developing countries to wealthy countries, from the Global South to the Global North, and from the working class to the rich. Develop and deploy new decolonized feminist social contracts, free from discrimination, created by the peoples, especially women, girls, and gender-diverse youth who are most impacted. Ensure recognition, apologies, and reparations to all persons affected by colonization and historic injustices, eliminating the ongoing harm, inequalities, and violence. Acknowledge that debt cancellation, symbolic apologies, and token payments for historic harms are not a substitute for the transformative demands of reparations movements and approaches.
- **Reclaiming Rights, Civic Spaces and Democracies:** Ensure participatory democracy and put an end to the attacks on and criminalization of activists and human rights and environmental defenders. Ensure the creation of democratic spaces and processes that foster youth and adolescent movements, especially those led by young women, girls, and gender-diverse youth, building a more equal, gender-just, and democratic future for all. Ensure our governments uphold all their human rights obligations guaranteeing the rights of all individuals, our freedom of speech, expression, organizing, unionizing, and collective bargaining - on the streets, offline, and online. Eliminate restrictions on foreign funding opportunities for civil society, youth, and non-governmental organizations. Put an end to all forms of disinformation and misinformation, hate campaigns against minorities, and the resourcing and political backing of state and non-state anti-gender and anti-rights movements.
- **Accountability:** Ensure robust, transparent, and community-led accountability mechanisms that centre the voices of those most impacted by inequalities. Ensure the creation of and strengthening of binding accountability measures and mechanisms at local, national, regional, and international levels that are just, rights-centred, transparent, multistakeholder, and participatory, centering the active influence and leadership of feminist and women's and girls' communities at the grassroots in their creation and implementation. Ensure that gender equality and gender justice remain at the centre of policies and decision-making at national, regional, and global levels.
- **Ending Corporate Capture:** Transform the mindsets of the United Nations, governments, corporations, and other international institutions that shy away from the so-called contentious issues, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, sex workers' rights, decriminalizing abortion, climate change, and women's and girls' human rights, among others. End the continuing austerity measures, including the financial and liquidity crisis experienced by the United Nations, that has led to further shrinking of civic space, and the privatisation of essential social services including education, health, and agriculture. Control the rise of technological giants and the constant drive for digital innovation that has led to exploitation of the resource-rich lands and human rights violations of the working class, disproportionately impacting women and girls. End the domination and influence of corporations in policy and decision-making spaces, including in intergovernmental processes, and enable a just, rights-based, and sustainable recovery and development for people and the planet. Hold

corporations and governments accountable for the damage they cause, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and International Labour Organization standards, treaties, and frameworks.

- **Strengthening Generation Equality:** Continue to support and strengthen the Generation Equality Action Coalitions and Compact, including the Generation Equality Commitment Makers and broader Generation Equality youth, National Gender Youth Advocates, Adolescent Girls, and youth movements and constituencies, as transformative practices of multistakeholder multilateralism, mobilizing gender-transformative financing, building feminist movements, and accelerating gender equality. In this regard, fully implement the Generation Equality Global Acceleration Plan and Young Feminist Manifesto as well as the recommendations of the UN Gender Equality Acceleration Plan and the Independent Review of the UN System's Capacity to Deliver on Gender Equality.

The BPfA is a powerful framework, but without genuine accountability and its heart rooted in feminist values, its promises remain unfulfilled. As we reflect on these promises, we reaffirm that feminist movements and leadership are essential to creating a more just and equitable world. Our vision is a future where young feminists and feminist movements lead the way in transforming systems of power, challenging inequality at its roots, and fostering solidarity across generations and movements. The challenges we face demand bold action and it is through our collective power that we will secure a future rooted in gender justice, equality, and dignity for all.

The urgency of our existential challenges demands that the United Nations realizes its full potential as our global compass, true to the essence of its Charter. This requires nothing less than a paradigm shift in its processes. Only then can the United Nations meet the moment, address the crises we face, and support in our demands for a future rooted in gender justice, equality, dignity, and human rights for all.

This statement is submitted by the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, which works in collaboration with the following organisations: Feminist Manch, Fridays for Future MAPA, The YP Foundation, Young Feminist Europe, Nala Feminist Collective, UNA-Language Group, and the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations.

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