

This is the Moment: A Call for Strong, Deliberate Action for Adolescent Girls in the Post-2015 Agenda

September 2014, New York City

The rights and needs of adolescent girls were featured more prominently than ever before at high-level events during the opening of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Amidst a focus on global issues such as climate change, security and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, global leaders and adolescent girl champions emphasized the critical need to ensure that gender equality, the rights of women and girls, and girls' voices are central to discussions that will craft the post-2015 global development agenda.

As a group of organizations that share a commitment to see adolescent girls embedded in the design, content, monitoring and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda,¹ we welcome the increased focus on adolescent girls during the opening events of this year's session. The return on investing in adolescent girls is high; so are the costs of excluding them. We are united in our belief that a strong and deliberate investment in adolescent girls is necessary if we are to succeed in accelerating progress on the toughest global challenges, achieve equality, advance human rights and end global poverty.

Adolescent girls are not just a population – they are crucial to every sustainable solution. We are encouraged that adolescent girls gained important ground in the Open Working Group deliberations, and we welcome progress made in those discussions on issues such as, nutrition, ending harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), as well as the emphasis on data disaggregation. We want this language maintained and strengthened, and support specific references to both the rights and needs of adolescent girls.

Adolescents currently make up 17.3 percent of the world's population and adolescent girls represent approximately half of that demographic.² Adolescent girls face tremendous discrimination and rights violations both as females and as young people, yet, when girls grow up healthy, educated, safe and empowered, they emerge as adults better able to ensure their own success and wellbeing, and that of others. This requires working with girls, not just for them, so they can fulfill their potential to be leaders in their communities, countries, and the world.



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Over the next year, world leaders have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the lives of adolescent girls, and in turn, the world. Looking ahead, we see an opportunity to increase the success, impact and sustainability of the post-2015 framework by ensuring that the following focus areas for adolescent girls are prioritized:

1. Adolescent girls are empowered to reach adulthood with relevant skills and knowledge to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life;
2. Adolescent girls have access to safe health and nutrition information and services and possess the confidence they need to make healthy transitions to adulthood;
3. Adolescent girls are free from violence and exploitation and are supported by enforced laws, strong and adequately resourced child protection systems and their communities;
4. Adolescent girls know how to build and protect their economic assets and transition to adulthood with the skills, including technical and vocational, needed to earn a safe and productive income. Governments, communities and the private sector respect and uphold girls' economic rights; and
5. Adolescent girls have equal access to services, opportunities, legal rights and personal freedom, and thus are able to fully participate as citizens of their communities and countries.

We ask that governments uphold and advance the rights and needs of adolescent girls during intergovernmental negotiations and directly engage them in a meaningful way throughout the future process. This will result in a more sustainable, impactful and successful post-2015 framework for all.

¹ Our organizations are united in our support of the [Girl Declaration](#), a call to action urging global leaders to put adolescent girls at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. The Girl Declaration was developed through consultations with more than 500 adolescent girls living in poverty around the world and more than 25 leading international development organizations and issue experts. Since its launch in October 2013, the Girl Declaration has galvanized signatories and supporters across sectors and backgrounds, demonstrating strong support for adolescent girls and solutions to the issues that affect their lives and communities. Learn more at girlEffect.org/2015.

² <http://esa.un.org/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm>



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