

Reaction Statement to CSW65 Draft Agreed Conclusions

Rev. 2 of 2 - 7 March

The World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) welcomes the CSW 65 Draft Agreed Conclusions. As the only global movement geared entirely to every girl and any girl, with 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 152 countries, we express our support for the language included so far. However, more needs to be done to ensure the outcome document addresses the underlying causes of inequality that girls and women face when accessing social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructures that take into consideration the COVID-19 impact on all aspects of girls lives. We want to highlight the paramount need for more urgent language as the current global pandemic is disproportionately impacting girls and young women.

We, therefore, urge Member States to protect and include the language proposed below:



PARTICIPATION AND AGENCY

The inclusion of a call to **“strengthen their [Adding: girls and women’s] full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and leadership in all stages of COVID-19 response and recovery”** in paragraph 31 is vitally important. We urge Member States to protect paragraph 31 and to **ADD the importance to “Consult and engage girls and women in all COVID-19 response planning and decision making, both through digital and offline mechanisms”**.

We strongly believe in the magnitude of paragraph iii. (u) **‘Ensure members of civil society organizations have full access to debates and decision-making processes, where appropriate, to voice their opinions, share their expertise, and hold elected representatives, leaders, executives and managers to account;** hence we encourage Member States to keep the language proposed and add the recognition of girls’ agency and consult them in the design of all national and local programmes, legal frameworks and policies, including girls and youth organisations.

Further recognition is needed by Member States of the need for the involvement of girls and young young women in decision making. We encourage adoption of **“measures that are needed to ensure a pipeline for girls’, adolescent girls’ and women’s increased participation in decision-making and leadership and their successful transition into these roles, in both the public and private spheres, by ensuring their full and equal access to education, technology and skills development, leadership and mentorship programmes, increased technical and financial support, and protection from violence and discriminatory legislation”** in paragraph 29.

In responding to COVID 19 we believe more girls and women should be encouraged into leadership positions. Therefore in **xx. ((q), cc.9) and zz. (z.5, z.13, (q))** the following language should ADD: “By ensuring more girls and women into leadership positions through capacity-building”.

Girls and women deserve to have a seat at the decision making table and therefore, Member States should make sure when strengthening gender mainstreaming into policies, women and girls are behind the creation of that legislation. We want to **add** the following language to **zz. (z.5, z.13, (q))** “**Give girls and women a seat at the decision making table and recognise that the absence of women’s voices in health related policy making impacts their ability to succeed.**”

We further emphasize that “it is necessary to address **gender inequalities and ensure that women have the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and stand for elections to all publicly elected bodies. It recognizes that not all women enjoy full and equal representation and participation and that they may be discriminated against on the basis of income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics**” in paragraph 24.

We appeal to the Member States to specifically **ADD: “funding”** to the language that follows: “**The Commission recognizes that increased political will by leaders to support women’s equal access to and eligibility for all executive positions at all levels of government, inter alia, through temporary special measures, would contribute to accelerating the pace toward achieving gender balance and promoting gender parity**” found in paragraph 26.

We believe that no girl or woman should be left behind. We appeal to Member States to **ADD:** ‘the need for non-formal education programmes and initiatives pre-empting capacity-building to ensure girls, women and men are aware of the barriers that girls and women face upon entering the decision making space’, to the language that follows in: **sss. ((z), cc.3, e.2, z.17)** “...Facilitate the entry of women into decision-making in public life at the national and subnational levels on an equal basis with men, through capacity-building, training and awareness raising”.



TACKLE HARMFUL SOCIAL NORMS AND GENDER STEREOTYPES

The inclusion of a call to **tackle “negative social norms and gender stereotypes” in public and private spheres** in paragraphs 34 and 72 are vitally important.

We commend the inclusion of the language on promoting long-term awareness-raising initiatives in non-formal education spaces and we stress the importance of government **funding** for those organizations and programmes in paragraph **tt. (m.3., bb.17)**.

We further emphasize the importance of practical measures such as ‘**fully engage men and boys as strategic partners and allies in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls**’ and to protect the language in paragraph **bbbb. (p.3, p.10, aa.3, (aa))**.

We agree with the inclusion to “adopt all appropriate measures, including training, education programs and awareness raising measures and sensitize community and traditional, religious and **indigenous** leaders, **political parties**, the media, men and boys and women **and girls** to **modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices and address gender stereotypes and negative** social norms that restrict women’s rights” in paragraph zzz. ((aa), p.6, p.2, b.9), aaaa. (k.4, aa.1)

PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

We strongly appeal to Member States to specifically mention ‘all forms of violence against women and girls’ (ADDING: **girls**) throughout the document.

We urge Member States to protect language present in paragraph 39, condemning ‘all forms of violence against all women and girls including violence that takes place in ‘public and private spheres’ which is ‘**including sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, gender-related killings, including femicide, online violence and abuse, psychological and economic violence, harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and trafficking in persons, is pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, particularly at the community level.**” And in relation paragraph, pp. (m.10) and 79.

Gender-sensitive measures for the protection, prevention and punishment of all forms of violence against women and girls mentioned in paragraph f. + ((b)) + g. and y. ((i), b.15) are critical and should be kept in the Agreed Conclusions.

Additionally, we urge Member States to insert language regarding the multi-dimensional approach to victims’ included and support with ‘**safe, accessible, affordable and gender responsive’ mechanisms and protections against all forms of violence against women and girls.**

Member States also should protect language on ensuring safe practices that avoid re-victimization on paragraph hh. ((k), k.1, k.3, f.6, i.8) “**Ensure that cases related to victims and survivors who are marginalized, including children, adolescents and persons with disabilities, are brought to justice swiftly through comprehensive measures that are gender-responsive, accessible and survivor-oriented, and reduce survivors’ re-traumatisation**”.

We urge Member States to add the following language to ss. (o): ‘**Governments should recognise all forms of violence against women and girls as an issue of security and liaise with technology companies to provide security to women and girls online.**’

We highly urge Member States to protect the language present in paragraph 40, particularly: ‘**The Commission further recognises that the growing impact of violence against women and girls in digital contexts, especially on social media, its impunity and the lack of preventive measures**

and remedies underline the need for action by Member States, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, such as civil society and women human rights defenders. It also recalls that such violence in digital contexts, including trolling, cyberbullying and other forms of cyber harassment, is increasingly common against women active in public life with a view to discrediting them and/or inciting other violations and abuses against them, and has a negative impact on the fulfilment of the rights of girls, affecting a high percentage of girls and compromising their health, emotional well being and academic work. It further recognises that the promotion of and respect for the right to privacy are important to the prevention of violence.'

We also commend Member States for including “measures to ensure girls’ path to effective participation in public life” to ensure the safety of girls in their education by “improving transportation and infrastructure to ensure that they are sustainable, safe, accessible, affordable and gender responsive” in paragraph 52.

GIRLS EDUCATION AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

At a minimum, we would like to see the document continue to include the proposed language in relation to ‘Develop and implement.. formal and non-formal education programmes’ for girls and young women in vvvv. (cc.10., cc.7)

We call on Member States to invest in “the right to education for all women and girls” and “stress that equal access to inclusive, equitable and high quality education significantly contributes to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”, as proposed in paragraph 53 . This is critical to ensure their meaningful participation. We agree to the inclusion of girls in the paragraph and that there should be an increase in young women’s and girls’ representation and participation in public life in all programs, which would aid in their educational advancement.

By including the term ‘formal education’ we can ensure people of all genders are educated around gender equality as part of their compulsory education. In aaaa. (aa.1, proposal under education - safety) “In formal education” should add to “Create and improve training and education programmes”. Similarly in bbbb. (p.3, p.10, aa.3, (aa)) “In formal education, and again, upon entering the workforce” should be added to “...by designing and implementing national policies and programmes”

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

We urge Member States to include the term “women and girls”: “Take appropriate measures to address the specific physical, mental and psychological health needs of, and psychosocial support for all women [ADD: and girls], especially women [ADD: and girls] front-line health workers, and to create a safe, enabling and violence-free working environment for them;

provide appropriate personal protective equipment, including essential hygiene and sanitation items, and access to safe and affordable water, particularly for those who are quarantined; and ensure universal and equal global access to therapeutics, medicines and vaccines, as well as health technologies and products to face COVID-19” in paragraph aaa. (q.4, bb.12.).

We believe that language on physical and mental health should contextualise the impacts of COVID-19. With particular reference to paragraph kk.(i.6) “**Implement measures to promote and improve women’s and girls’ mental health and well-being as an essential component of universal health coverage, including by scaling up comprehensive and integrated services for prevention, including suicide prevention, as well as treatment for people with mental health conditions as well as neurological disorders, providing psychosocial support, promoting well-being, strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, addressing social determinants and other health needs, and fully respecting their human rights, noting that mental disorders and other mental health conditions as well as neurological disorders are an important impediment for [ADD: girls’ and] women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in public life**”. We suggest the language in kk.(i.6) recognises the impact of COVID-19 on the physical and mental health specifically of girls and young women. This calls for implementation of urgent social protections mechanisms to support the wellbeing of girls and young women during and after the pandemic.

For further information, please **CONTACT**:

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