



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixtieth session

14-24 March 2016

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Advocates for Youth, 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

Advocates for Youth welcomes the theme of “women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development” and the review theme of “the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls” at the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Commission’s emphasis on women’s empowerment and its review theme are of particular interest to Advocates for Youth. We call on governments to ensure that young women and girls, in and out of school, married, unmarried, disabled, rural, marginalized, displaced, and young women and girls of all sexual orientations and gender identities, are actively and meaningfully involved at every decision-making level, including in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies that impact their human rights. In order to be meaningfully engaged, governments must promote and provide capacity-building opportunities, including financial and technical support to enable young women and girls to inform programs and policies to prevent gender- and sexual-based violence.

Violence and discrimination against young women and girls violates their human rights and jeopardizes their lives, bodies, psychological integrity, freedom, and sexual and reproductive health. Advocates believes that societies — meaning governments, communities, teachers, health providers, parents, the media, and young people themselves, among others — have the responsibility to ensure an environment where young people can access comprehensive reproductive and sexual health information and confidential services to make healthy choices, free of stigma and discrimination. Yet, the over 1 billion young people worldwide, and particularly young women worldwide, face significant challenges that obstruct them from meeting their full potential. We are committed to remedying these challenges and to ensuring that young women and girl’s rights are not ignored nor sacrificed for political expediency.

Advocates for Youth is committed to advancing young women’s and girls’ rights within a human rights framework and supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995); the Cairo Programme of Action (1994); and the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

All young women and girls have a right to live free from violence and coercion, to sexual and reproductive health, and to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. Involving young women and girls in relevant policy dialogue and programming; providing comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services; promoting an enabling legal and sociocultural environment; and ensuring systematic collection and use of data in the context of violence prevention and promotion of gender equity are critical to ensuring a world where young women and girls can exercise their rights and live free from violence and coercion.