

The “Girls’ Statement” to the United Nations

In March 2010 the Girl Scouts of the USA co-sponsored a “Girls Only” event at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women where Girl Scouts worked with other girls to create the “Girls’ Statement” below. This document is an example of the typical “cockroach in the ice-cream” scenario we find at the United Nations where the abortion and sexual rights agenda is cleverly disguised in lofty sounding words and presented along with other lofty objectives.

In the “Girls’ Statement” the language regarding reproductive and sexual health information and services found in the paragraph three can be considered the “cockroach” in this document. It states governments “must ensure that girls have access to information and services regarding reproductive and sexual health.”

At past UN conferences UN Member States have engaged in all night debates over phrases containing the words “reproductive and sexual health” and especially over linking the word “services” to “reproductive health” in any way.

This is because abortion rights activists insist that all services related to “reproductive health” include abortion.

In other words, those familiar with United Nations documents will easily recognize that the “Girls’ Statement” contains some of the most controversial abortion-related language debated at the UN. In fact it contains a very creative formulation which places the word “services” just far enough away from “reproductive health” to make it seem disconnected.

When Girl Scouts of the USA was confronted about this statement they claim was worked on by the girls at their workshop (their workshop was co-sponsored UNICEF, The Grail, and Girls Learn) they claimed they do not support the statement.

Girls' Statement

54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
March 2010

We, the girl delegates of the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, hereby recognize the human rights of girls and stand to address the needs, experiences, and concerns of girls with respect to the review of the Beijing Platform. We demand that our voices and rights be taken seriously, and we stand to highlight the topics of health, education, violence against girls, and the media.

Havvi was married when she was only 13 years old and became pregnant shortly after. Because of her young age, Havvi's suffered a stressful labor resulting in a condition known as fistula and was ostracized by her community. If Havvi had access to proper health care services, her story could have been very different.

Everyday, girls are denied adequate health care and States have fallen short of the BPfA's aim to eliminate discriminatory practices in food allocation, nutrition and access to health services. States must ensure that girls have access to information and services regarding reproductive and sexual health, adequate bathroom facilities in schools, and access to feminine products. To become full and equal citizens, we need access to adequate and accurate information about our sexual and reproductive health. Girls deserve to know how to protect ourselves from unintended and early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections and diseases.

We demand that States, families and communities provide girls with proper nutrition, health, sexual, and reproductive information so that we can live longer and healthier lives.

In January 2009, girls in Kandahar, Afghanistan were attacked by men on their way to school. The men pulled off the girls' burqas and sprayed their faces with acid. Girls have the right to pursue their education without fear of violent persecution. The security of girls attending school must be guaranteed and this includes safe transportation and safe schools.

Fifteen years after the Beijing Platform, two-thirds of the world's uneducated children are girls. This blatant discrimination against girls is detrimental to our advancement in society. Section L calls upon States to, "eliminate the existing gap between girls and boys" in education and to, "increase enrollment and improve retention rates of girls." Yet fifteen years later, it is clear that the actions taken are not enough and girls' right to education continues to be violated.

We demand that States ensure girls' equal access to education by employing initiatives targeted at keeping girls in school. Local schools should provide girls with proper sanitary products and facilities. We have the right to go to school without fear or embarrassment.

Indicators show that violence against girls starts in the earliest stages of our lives and extends into our adulthood. Substantially fewer girls than boys survive their childhoods and many experience harmful practices and attitudes such as, FGM, son preference, female infanticide and prenatal sex selection.

Girls are more vulnerable to violence within the home and society, including sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking, forced and early marriage, pornography, prostitution, forced labor, and the selling of their organs and tissues. Girls deserve to feel safe in our homes and communities. Immediate action must be taken to eradicate violence against girls and protect our futures.

We demand that all States, societies, communities and families take an active role in protecting girls from all forms of violence; this includes taking appropriate legislative, social, and educational measures to protect girls in our homes, communities and societies.

The media has a major impact on the psyche and self-esteem of girls. The rise in eating disorders gives evidence to the power of media messages and as girls, we are tired of the negative and destructive messages used to sell products.

Everyday girls are bombarded with media images. We can't walk down the street, listen to music, go online, watch television, or open a magazine without being reminded that somehow we don't measure up. It is time for States and communities to take responsibility for the media and its' impact on girls. Simply making legislation to reduce stereotyping is not enough. We want to see positive role models, images, and messages about girls and women in the media around the world.

We demand that States regulate the negative images put forth by the media and make incentives for creating positive media messages.

We do not share these stories as simplistic depictions of our global and local vulnerabilities, but rather seek to emphasize the opportunities lost when girls cannot enjoy their full human rights. Girls play a vital role within all societies, communities, and families; and it is time for us to be globally recognized as valuable and crucial partners in the efforts to advance girls' status and rights throughout the world.

Listen to Girls, Respect Girls, Educate Girls, Empower Girls, Celebrate Girls.