



Written Summative Statement on the United Nation's 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls – March 2014

PREAMBLE:

This statement is written on behalf of Made Equal, which is a UK-based NGO with a global reach. Made Equal was founded on the principles of ending gender inequality, empowering women and girls, educating men, and ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). We firmly believe that everyone can be powerful advocates in ending gender inequality, in speaking out, and in taking action against VAWG. We give a platform to women in their 20s and 30s, and encourage men to work alongside women to combat gender equality in way that respects women's leadership, expertise, experiences and needs. Made Equal promotes the ending of gender inequality by adopting and formulating programmes that are geared towards prevention, education and campaigning, and achieving gender equality whilst combating VAWG.

On behalf of the young adults of Made Equal and those who we represent, we are here at the United Nation's 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls to urge Member States and civil society to make gender equality central to the post-2015 development agenda. This must be achieved through ensuring women's human rights, including for young adult women and girls.

1. *Calling* for the recognition that gender equality cannot be achieved without addressing the multiple and intersecting oppressions and discriminations that women face, including but not limited to: age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, marital status, nationality, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status;

2. *Urging* governments and civil society to take strong and comprehensive measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls;

i. Preventative measures must be sensitive and appropriate, including but not limited to: addressing social norms, education, media representation and political mechanisms;

ii. We urge governments to set aside long-term funding for sustainable and innovative programmes, both preventative and responsive. Partnerships and investments must be directed to young adults in order to facilitate a new generation of transformative programmes;

iii. Response services must cater to young women in a way that is sensitive to their work or education commitments and personal lives, and without discrimination regarding their marital status and family lives;

3. *Recognising* that gender inequality affects all people, and that men and boys must be included as part the solution. We call for groups with structural privilege, including men and boys, to work alongside women and girls, including those who face multiple oppressions, in a way that is sensitive to and respectful of their experiences. We call for the creation of safe spaces where men and boys may participate as allies in a dialogue that is led by the needs of women and girls;

4. *Calling* for governments to recognise the lack of progress made in women's economic empowerment.

i. Whilst we welcome the progress made in education for women and girls, we urge governments to recognise their responsibility in ensuring an economic structure that provides every woman with opportunities for decent work at a fair living wage and economic advancement. We call for these opportunities to fairly reflect women's abilities and education;

5. *Calling* for the recognition of issues around young women's unpaid work, particularly with regards to care work, domestic work, volunteerism and unpaid internships;

i. We call for governments to recognise the disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic and care work that women do as a significant factor in preventing women's economic empowerment outside the home. This is caused by both economic structures and social norms, and we urge governments and civil society to recognise that any attempt to ensure women's economic empowerment will fail if the issue of unpaid labour is not also addressed;

ii. We also call for recognition of issues surrounding a culture of expectation of unpaid internships as a requirement for entry-level employment. The exclusionary impact this has on sections of the population who are not in a financial position to engage in such unpaid work fosters elitism and hinders diversity. We also recognise that the culture of unpaid internships and volunteerism frequently leads to financial and employment insecurity. We urge governments to monitor this situation, and we call for a culture change within business and NGO sectors;

6. *Calling* for accessible and appropriate sexual and reproductive health services to be made available for all young women, in order to ensure they can exercise their bodily autonomy.

i. This must be provided in a way that is supportive, non-stigmatising and does not discriminate according to age, gender identity, relationship status or sexual orientation;

ii. We urge governments and civil society to implement and support programmes that provide comprehensive age-appropriate sex education, ensuring access to reliable and accurate information and promoting a positive culture where consent is central;

Made Equal believes that all people, including governments, civil society, men, women and those of other genders have a role to play in securing gender equality. We believe that young women play an integral role, but must be supported by wider society. We strongly believe that gender equality must be at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda in order for it to be successful.