



Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism

Session 5. High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Presented by Souvik, UN MGCY, Youth and Children Constituency

Respected Chair,

As a part of the Youth and Children constituency, I want to reiterate the importance of gender equality from a youth perspective in achieving SDGs. The seeds of gender inequality are set in from birth and perpetuates through the growing years. Largely, gender equality incorporates gender binary approach which marginalizes the identity of LGBTQI. Thus, intervention at the structural and institutional aspects which sustain gender inequalities needs to be targeted. All forms of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life thus needs to be addressed for all and necessary knowledge around it often has the farthest reach for young people especially women and LGBTQI. These are critical areas for all young people to be informed about, aware of and to be able to grapple with and strategize on.

The education sector has a critical role to play in preparing children and young people for their adult roles and responsibilities by equipping them with necessary skills and imparting them adequate information to make responsible choices in their social and sexual lives.

The health sector often assumes a gender blind approach by placing adolescent and young women as 'future mothers' further deepening gender norms and stereotypes.

In light of the immense potential youth have to contribute for achieving SDGs but would not make the desirable impact if gender inequalities continue to exist, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- Ensure adequate quality of comprehensive sexuality education which promotes gender equality. The curriculum should align with best practices in the region and worldwide to integrate 7 key elements of gender, SRH and HIV, sexual rights, pleasure, freedom from violence, diversity and relationships.
- Ensure gender sensitive as well as gender transformative adolescent health programs and policies
- Implement rights based approach in alignment with international covenants and treaties to address gender inequality by repealing discriminatory laws
- Recognize the role of media in shaping young minds towards harmful gender stereotypes and norms and address them adequately
- Overarching, across all SDGs ensure meaningful youth participation in all stages including planning, implementation and monitoring to promote gender equality
- Incorporate process and qualitative indicators and not just quantitative and outcome indicators to address gender equality