

# West Africa Adolescent Girls Summit

April 2022

John W. Gbedze Beach Resort  
– Marshall, Liberia



## **CALL TO ACTION DEVELOPED BY ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND BOYS**

*Presented to the Vice President  
of Liberia on April 15, 2022*

Call to action for various stakeholders and duty bearers, including the girls and boys themselves.



## Girls and Boys

- We should respect and support each other and be one another's advocate.
- We should speak out and report any violence perpetrated against others.
- We should not abuse our powers or privileges.
- We should strengthen relationships with our peers and have peer-to-peer support services for each other.
- We should abide by our responsibilities.
- We should continue to advocate with the government and other duty bearers for the fulfillment of our rights, through different forums or platforms.
- We should stop encouraging sexual abuse.
- We (both boys and girls) should engage in sex when we are physically, emotionally, and financially ready.
- Boys should stop sexual harassment and rape and always seek consent before engaging in sex.
- Boys should stop limiting girls.
- Boys should be change agents in their homes, communities, and schools.
- Boys should support girls in their career choices.
- We should engage schools and communities to create awareness of issues affecting children and adolescents, to break taboos, and to change their mindsets.

## Parents/community and religious leaders

- Parents should understand their children and involve them in decision-making on issues affecting them.
- Parents should make time for their children and serve as role models and examples for their children.
- Parents should encourage and support their children in their learning.
- Parents should prevent and stop female genital cutting/mutilation and sexual and gender-based violence.
- Parents should allow children to make their own decisions.
- Parents should not compromise in cases that affect the wellbeing of their children.
- Parents should not force children to do things against their will.
- Parents should not force girls and boys into traditional practices that are harmful to their wellbeing, health, or education.
- Parents should give children their full attention.
- Parents should stop domestic violence.
- Parents should be our guides.
- Parents should prioritize children's education and not prioritize early marriage.
- Community leaders should encourage gender equality.
- Community leaders should create safe spaces within their communities for community members.  
Community leaders should have good relationships with schools in their communities.
- Community leaders should enforce laws that protect community members.
- Community leaders should serve as guides for adolescent boys and girls.  
School leaders



## School Leaders

- School leaders should stop the practices of sex for grades and money for grades. They should not force children to do what they don't want to do.
- School leaders should not drop girls from school because of pregnancy.
- School leaders should ensure that boys and girls have separate and clean bathrooms and water in schools.
- School leaders should help break the taboo around menstruation in schools and provide sanitary pads for emergencies.
- All teachers should be qualified and trained.
- Women should be trained and recruited as high school teachers and principals, and women should be allowed to be leaders in schools.
- School leaders should stop discrimination between boys and girls and allow girls to practice the sport of their choice.
- Students' voices should be heard in schools.
- School leaders should allow female students to participate equally in school elections and allow girls to take leadership roles.
- School leaders should ensure that sexual harassment and sexual abuse are eliminated in schools. Teachers should stop harassing girls in schools.
- School leaders should allow peer-to-peer counseling in schools.
- School leaders should have qualified and trained nurses in schools.
- School leaders should ensure that there are school-based events to support students' learning skills and to improve their knowledge about rights and responsibilities.
- School leaders should train those working with children on the importance of confidentiality.
- School leaders should ensure an equal balance of male and female teachers in schools.
- School leaders should ensure positive learning and discipline and avoid punishment that negatively affects children's education.

## Civil society organizations (local and national NGOs and CBOs)

- Civil society organizations (CSOs) should listen to us and involve us in decision-making processes.
- CSOs should include persons with disabilities in decision-making processes.
- CSOs should work with children and adolescents to advocate with the government for the prioritization of child protection and adolescent empowerment programs in annual budgets.
- CSOs should integrate the message on the provision of sanitary pads for girls at private or public places in different programs.
- CSOs should support child protection and adolescent empowerment programs.
- CSOs should disseminate relevant policies and regulations that are aimed at protecting children's rights and making children safe.
- CSOs should continue to carry out awareness efforts to change the mindsets of girls and boys through their programs.
- The actions of the CSOs should not be limited to only cities but also rural areas.



## Government

- The government should develop policy that mandates the inclusion of sexuality education in school curricula and train teachers to teach it effectively.
- The government should make sanitary pads affordable and, if possible, free and should educate girls on how to use them properly in schools.
- The government should have laws forbidding female genital cutting and implement them in Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- The government should put a stop to Bondo/Sande and Poro societies in Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- The government should make a strong law against ritualistic killings.
- The government should enforce the laws against rape and ensure that the institutions responsible for implementing the laws are doing their work.
- The government should adopt the death penalty for perpetrators of rape.
- The government should ensure equal justice for everyone despite their appearance, level of education, level of income, and diversity.
- The government should strengthen the justice system to fast-track child abuse cases.
- The government should ensure budgetary support for child protection and adolescent empowerment programs and projects.
- The government should ensure that boys and girls are treated equally in all settings.
- The government should pay teachers regularly.
- The government should harmonize existing laws that have contradicting provisions for children and adolescents.
- The government should develop or reinforce laws against the use of drugs to mitigate the risk of exposure for children and adolescents.
- Relevant government agencies should ensure that the laws on sexual and gender-based violence are enforced.
- The government should ensure a speedy trial for sexual and gender-based violence cases.
- The government should ensure that juveniles are also tried when they commit rape.
- The government should develop regulations and implement measures to put an end to children selling in the street and to stop rural-to-urban migration of children.

## UN/international community

- The international community should provide funding to civil society organizations in urban and rural areas to create awareness of issues affecting adolescent girls and boys.
- The international community should put pressure on the government to support girls.
- The international community should provide complementary support to national governments to build more functional safe homes to provide services for children and adolescents.
- The international community should strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations to engage in advocacy in support of children's rights.
- The international community should support the government in ensuring that sexuality education is taught in schools.
- The international community should support the government to provide sanitary pads at an affordable price.



- The government should ensure budgetary support for child protection and adolescent The international community should support the government to provide for less-fortunate children and adolescents.
- The international community should allocate financial resources to adolescents to support our advocacies.

## **ECOWAS/African Union**

- ECOWAS/African Union should raise the awareness of their member countries on the importance of educating boys and girls equally.
- ECOWAS/African Union should prevail on national governments to enforce laws that protect children.
- ECOWAS/African Union should require their member countries to criminalize female genital cutting/mutilation.
- ECOWAS/African Union should develop and sign cooperative agreements with governments to hold them accountable for the fulfillment of children's rights.
- ECOWAS/African Union should help adolescent girls to put pressure on the governments to adopt a policy that makes comprehensive sexuality education a compulsory subject in schools.

## **Private sector**

- The private sector should support through their corporate social responsibility initiatives less-fortunate children and adolescents in urban and rural areas by providing scholarships, transportation, feeding programs, school materials, etc.
- The private sector should support the donation of sanitary pads in private and public places.
- The private sector should provide vacation jobs and internship opportunities for girls and boys equally.

