Violence against girls restricts their access to the highest attainable standards of health, education and agency. It reduces their empowerment and restricts their ability to participate in meaningful development. It leads to poorer health and can result in death.

Early and forced marriage reduces girls’ and young women’s agency and empowerment. They may become vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, early pregnancy with high risk of maternal mortality and morbidity, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Teen pregnancy is the number one cause of mortality for girls between the ages of 15 and 19.13

Girls who have been subject to FGM/C may suffer complications including bleeding, severe pain, shock, infection and death, and trauma during pregnancy and birth. They may experience psychological harm, including depression, symptoms of impaired cognition and panic attacks.14 It may also result in absenteeism from school, poor concentration and low academic performance,15 which reinforces her inequality within the gender structures of the community and severely limits her empowerment and agency.
We ask member states to:

• Enact laws to address violence against women and youth, including legislation that addresses early marriage, violence within marriage, and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

• Take action to prevent sexual violence against youth in situations of conflict and post-conflict, including offering comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and information to young survivors.

• Provide human rights-based comprehensive sexuality education that promotes gender equality and equity and provides information on sexual violence as well as builds self-confidence, agency, and communication and negotiation skills.

• Develop and implement well-funded services for young survivors of physical and sexual violence, including physical and psycho social rehabilitation services, voluntary HIV/STI screening and treatment, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV, referrals to HIV support services as needed, pregnancy tests, emergency contraception, safe abortion and referrals to legal aid.

• Develop and implement well-funded school-based and community programmes to address the social gender stereotypes and norms that tolerate and accept violence against women and youth.

• Establish Special Commissions to Monitor Investigations of Femicide, as already done in Mexico.

• Ensure the girls and young women have access to abortion in cases of rape and incest.

REFERENCES

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