International Relations Students' Association at McGill (IRSAM)

Youth Policy Report for the 59th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development

Contents

Land Acknowledgement

McGill University, the International Relations Students' Association of McGill (IRSAM), and the IRSAM Youth Advisory Delegation (IYAD) exist on the unceded traditional territories of Indigenous peoples, namely the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, who are also known as the Guardians of the Eastern Door, and Anishinabeg Nations.

We acknowledge that policymaking at international bodies like the United Nations can often perpetuate neo-colonialism by facilitating an international agenda the denies the sovereignty of Global South states and the agency of marginalized groups. By considering this in our policy recommendations, we aim to present more equitable solutions to issues in North America and across the globe that consider the intersecting identities of affected youth.

Forward

Now more than ever, it is crucial that we understand global issues do not affect us all uniformly. Social protection issues, gender inequality, and global health are challenges that have distinct implications for various groups. Year after year, government and non-governmental stakeholders have taken the lead in setting a global agenda that fails to consult and meaningfully consider the distinct needs of young people, especially young people facing social, economic, and political marginalization. As young people, we will inherit the consequences of current decisions made by global leaders and exclusion in spaces of decision making have direct implications on our well being.

As an entirely youth-led organization, the International Relations Students' Association of McGill University (IRSAM) urges governments to adopt an intersectional framework in the review of the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth with an emphasis on the meaningful participation of youth in policymaking. This report presents key recommendations on social protection issues, gender equality, and global health, entirely developed by youth.

IRSAM's delegation to the 59th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development includes the following McGill students: Eyitayo Kunle-Oladosu – a History and International Development Studies student, Ahmad Aamir Malik – a History and Political Science student, Jacqueline Yao - a Microbiology, Immunology, and Economics student, Joy Kwak – an International Development Studies and Hispanic Studies student, Muskaan Bhaidani – an International Development Studies student, Nikhita Panwar - Economics and International Development Studies student, and Regina Gonzalez – an International Development Studies student.

We also thank representatives from the University of British Columbia School of Population and Public Health, Cooperation Canada, Simon Fraser University Faculty of Health Sciences, Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health, and Plan International Canada for meaningful conversations that informed our policy development process.

Social Protection

<u>Introduction:</u>

IRSAM's Youth Advisory Delegation (IYAD) to CSOCD59 has identified the following themes around social protection with limited progress for youth: gaps in access to technology, a socially-just COVID-19 response, the role of technology in democracies, the criminalization of COVID-19 guidelines, as well as youth homelessness, child welfare and child protection.

Gaps in Access to Technology
Despite technology and internet-use becoming a prerequisite for modern economic, social and political participation, gaps in technology access remain ubiquitous. The digital divide falls on socioeconomic fault lines with far-reaching consequences for low-income students. As remote learning becomes a common alternative in countries grappling with the spread of the pandemic, inadequate access to technology hinders learning outcomes and prevents youth from acquiring the technical skills that have become necessary in our modern economy. Given financial, health, and other essential services now often require online components, governments must ensure youth with limited access to the internet and low-income youth are not further excluded from our increasingly digitized world. COVID-19 has also severely affected the equality of education as youth in rural areas who do not have adequate and affordable access to the internet remain disadvantaged by the 'remote learning' phenomenon.

A Socially-Just COVID-19 Response
COVID-19 has revealed how inadequately prepared we are to serve vulnerable populations in crises. As resources are redistributed to address healthcare shortages, mental health services and social protection systems for youth further deteriorate. That stated, in our strategy to address this detrimental pandemic, we must not neglect the existing mental health and addictions crisis that continues to be exacerbated by COVID-19. According to a recent World Health Organization survey among 130 countries, 72 percent of countries face service disruptions for children and adolescents, and 45 percent of countries are experiencing a decrease in opioid agonist maintenance treatments.

As a result of the pandemic, youth also face distinct economic challenges and the impacts of historically deteriorating social protection systems. According to a report by the International Labour Organization, youth suffer severe disruptions to education and training, unemployment, and income loss, due to the lack of distinct labour and social protection for youth. This is especially troubling when one considers youth are a group that has been historically vulnerable to labour exploitation. Further, the lack of protections disproportionately affects workers in the informal economy, women, migrant workers, disabled workers, and Indigenous workers.

Technology and Democracy
According to the United Nations' 2016 World Youth Report, there is a substantial correlation between online and offline political participation. The ubiquitous presence of the internet in contemporary life makes its provision imperative for world governments. However, access to the internet and accompanying skills remain quite limited based on one's socioeconomic background. Furthermore, not all education systems entail comprehensive civics education, which further impedes youth's active political engagement - particularly youth facing exclusion based on socioeconomic status, gender, and race. As governments adopt new policies at unprecedented rates and pandemic-era elections require various infrastructural innovations, safe and effective participatory decision-making, substantially through internet use, is central to protecting civil liberties and ensuring accountability, particularly for marginalized groups.

Criminalization of COVID-19 Standards

According to the Oxford University COVID-19 government response stringency index, more than 150 countries have adopted sweeping public health responses to contain the virus by limiting movement, encouraging social distancing, and issuing stay at home orders since January. While public health guidelines are essential to curbing the spread of COVID-19, inconsistently applied and perfunctory standards have led to human rights abuses for marginalized social groups who often face disproportionate surveillance and incarceration levels. Amnesty International's report on Police Violence and the Global Pandemic documents 60 countries where law enforcement agencies committed human rights abuses in the name of tackling COVID-19.

Expanding state security forces' capacity to issue fines and other punitive measures for non-compliance does not address root issues. This criminalization of non-compliance fails to address how people facing underlying inequalities such as poverty, job insecurity, homelessness, domestic abuse, and mental health issues face barriers to compliance and are at a greater risk of not only being exposed to COVID-19 but facing fines and detention. As living costs rise, governments overlook the lack of adequate employer-paid sick leave benefits, poor working conditions, and the over-representation of youth in part-time, casual, contract informal and precarious work favouring penalties for public health non-compliance instead.

Youth Homelessness, Child Welfare and Child Protection

Issues of youth homelessness, child welfare, and child protection manifest themselves in context-specific ways, from informal settlements to urban homelessness and housing vulnerability. Across low-income countries, homelessness is primarily linked to rising rent prices and compounded by socioeconomic issues like poverty and unaffordable health care, which are social security concerns governments are called to address under Article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. Starkly high numbers of homeless youth represent the failure of eroding social protection systems that have disproportionately impacted the wellbeing of vulnerable groups. Increasing rates of urbanization worldwide are also accompanied by unemployment and housing vulnerability as youth struggle to find a place in the job market.

Those with irregular migration status, asylum seekers, and refugees are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. Inadequate housing is especially detrimental to migrant youths' ability to access schools, employment opportunities, and other social services. Despite the extent of this issue, migrant tenants continue to face fines and criminal sanctions, and governments often deny non-nationals access to public shelters.

Calls to Action:

Gaps in Access to Technology

To address exclusion in an increasingly digitized world, we urge governments to hold private partners accountable for providing accessible and affordable access to the internet, especially in remote areas and for low-income students. As modelled by Canada's Connecting Families initiative that subsidizes Canadian families, we call upon governments to expand internet access through market intervention policies that protect consumers and empower them to access this increasingly essential service. Following public safety guidelines, we emphasize the importance of community centres, libraries and co-working spaces as essential public spaces for low-income students and youth facing housing vulnerability to access essential technology and internet tools.

Socially Just COVID-19 Response

We call for governments to reallocate governmental budgets and implement communication channels to promote the democratization of health professionals' contact information to increase and support youth access to essential mental health, education and training, and child protection services.

We urge governments to address unsafe working conditions, personal protective equipment shortages, implement paid sick leave as an essential aspect of the pandemic response and consider policies such as targeted cash transfer programs, suspensions for student loan payments, and national tuition freezes. These COVID-19 support measures must specifically support youth and remain accessible to migrant workers, sex workers, disabled workers, and Indigenous workers.

Finally, to further address youth precarious financial and economic conditions, we call for intergovernmental collaboration to address the logistical and technological disruptions of global supply chains of food, water and sanitation to avoid price hikes and thrust youth groups into precarious conditions.

Technology and Democracy

To increase the transparency of local and national governments at a time of unprecedented policymaking, we call on governments to encourage and utilize participatory budgeting - a process that allows citizens to have a voice in the allocation of public budgets. As COVID-19 creates unprecedented logistical challenges for democracy, we also urge governments to prepare and innovate electoral infrastructure to secure the democratic process while ensuring voters' safety. To facilitate democratic engagement for youth, we call for governmental and institutional agencies focused on youth inclusion at all decision-making levels.

To facilitate accountability and ensure that community consultation platforms are widely accessible, we also urge governments to adopt communication platforms that include accessibility features such as closed-captioning, text-to-speech, and sign language interpreters to disseminate information on social media platforms in a manner that is accessible and engages young people.

Criminalization of COVID-19 Standards

Rather than criminalizing non-compliance with COVID-19 guidelines, we call on governments to expand individuals' capacity to comply by mitigating the impacts of restricted movement, economic slow-downs, social isolation, healthcare, inadequate housing and other socioeconomic issues. As such, we call for social and financial benefits, including relief from rising living costs, as an essential aspect of public health responses. For states that have declared a state of emergency and adopted emergency powers to deal with the pandemic, we also urge that limitations on rights in the name of public health must be necessary, proportionate, and demonstrably effective.

To address non-compliance with public health standards, we also call for the redistribution of economic and labour resources from law enforcement agencies to adopt [community-based models of enforcement](). These enforcement models involve the mobilization of community leaders and volunteers to establish and communicate public health guidelines that are responsive to cultural norms and knowledge framework, rely on local organizations to manage COVID-19, and evaluate the enforcement approach based on active channels of community feedback. By involving key populations and building trust among affected communities, especially in informal urban settlements and refugee and IDP camps, the efficacy of public health guidelines are increased.

Youth Homelessness, Child Welfare and Child Protection

As many unhoused youth lack formally-recognized addresses that can be used in data collection on child welfare and protection, we urge governments to undergo rigorous data collection to specify the number and needs of affected youths in their country. We call for multi-sectoral cooperation in facilitating

sustainable urban expansion in which governments provide education and vocational training to youth to address urban unemployment.

We also call for national and local governments to engage the private sector and incentivize low-cost, permanent, and independent housing alternatives for homeless youth while also providing security of tenure. Low-cost housing often decreases public expenditure in the long run and has been shown to reduce youth unemployment rates.

We also urge governments to address barriers to access by developing alternatives to housing discrimination tools such as criminal background checks and income verifications. Governments can replace these tools while potentially avoiding the discrimination associated with banning background checks, with references from friends, family, or employers altogether.

Gender Equality

Introduction:
While COVID-19 may be a new threat, its impacts fall on existing fault lines of inequality. Economic, social, and political exclusion are longstanding, existential threats for young women, girls, and non-binary people that have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. CSOCD59 is a crucial opportunity to measure progress on gender equality and develop new strategies that address the distinct needs of young women, girls, and non-binary people in this challenging time. As such, IRSAM's Youth Advisory Delegation (IYAD) to CSOCD59 has identified the following issues with limited progress for these underserved groups: gender-based violence, protection for migrant domestic workers, women's economic empowerment, and the climate crisis.

Gender-Based Violence

Amid lockdowns and quarantine measures to deal with COVID-19, data indicates that gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence, has intensified in what has been described as the "shadow pandemic." Internationally, public health measures have distorted power dynamics and made it increasingly difficult for support networks outside the private sphere to identify and address cases of gender-based violence.

The average age at first abuse among once married women is 22.1 years, indicating that young women face an elevated risk of violence by an intimate partner. Research also shows that, on average, the prevention of intimate partner violence must take place before 19 years-old to protect those at the highest risk. With the widespread use of remote learning and workings as an alternative to essential in-person interaction and increased social media use for young people, violence against women and girls facilitated online and by information and communications technology (ICT) has also increased.

As government expenditure is redistributed to support strained health services, essential services such as domestic violence shelters and helplines have reached capacity and continue to deteriorate. For young women, girls, and non-binary people, in particular, the lack of services to address gender-based violence that meets their distinct needs as youth is especially apparent during this pandemic.

Protection for Migrant Domestic Workers

According to the International Labour Organization, women represent over 73 percent of all migrant domestic workers. Due to their often-precarious citizenship status, the lack of social protection for

migrant domestic workers makes them especially vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour, debt bondage, wage theft, and poor working conditions. Compared to national workers in the same sector, they often lack reliable information on their rights as migrant workers, labour standards, and the freedom to switch employers without facing economic and physical consequences.

It is crucial to recognize that migrant domestic workers are essential workers in the COVID-19 response. While they are tasked with care for the children, sick, and dependent people, maintaining homes, and contributing to households and the economy, they lack adequate protection and compensation during this crisis, making them particularly vulnerable. As a result of the pandemic, domestic workers are charged with caring for "at-risk" populations and face increased workloads due to stay-at-home orders without hazard pay, compensated hours or adequate personal protective equipment. Precarious or limited citizenship status also leaves many migrant domestic workers without adequate access to healthcare. In other cases, families facing decreased economic activity and unemployment – especially in the Americas, has left many migrant domestic workers unemployed, in precarious living situations, and with irregular migratory status.

Women's Economic Empowerment

Gender inequality and the oppression of women are pressing concerns in various countries around the world. The economic exclusion and marginalization of young women leave them vulnerable to financial abuse and restrict their mobility in cases of physical and psychological abuse. The lack of women's representation in entrepreneurial spaces also creates limited growth opportunities compared to their male counterparts.

Young women are also overrepresented in the informal sector – an economic area where incomes have declined as much as 81 percent due to the current pandemic. Further, COVID-19 disproportionately affects micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises, where young women who lack the financial buffers to remain viable during this economic crisis are often forced to sell their productive assets for survival and jeopardize the livelihoods of their workers. This also leaves young women, girls, and non-binary people unable to access education, healthcare, and other essential services.

Technology and the Climate Crisis

Globally, women are disproportionately impacted by climate change. In the agricultural sector, women farmers account for 45 to 80 percent of all food production in low-income countries. With increased occurrences of natural disasters, women are significantly affected by the loss of agricultural productivity, property destruction, food insecurity, and increased cases of gender-based violence. Traditional roles for women as managers of natural resources and primary caregivers also mean their livelihoods directly intersect with climate change.

Financial institutions and agricultural technologies are inadequate, inaccessible, and ineffective in protecting or supporting young women's agricultural and entrepreneurial ventures amid unforeseeable economic or climatic events. Beyond acting as mitigators and adaptors of the climate crisis, young women and girls require financial innovations to protect their socioeconomic status in the face of climatic and economic events.

Calls to Action:

Gender-Based Violence

When nations issue lockdowns, school closures, quarantine measures, and curfews as part of their pandemic response, we urge governments to include specific plans and practical instructions for young women and children facing domestic violence and abuse, as well as unhoused youth. In urban areas, we urge governments to work with private partners in the hospitality, tourism and housing development industries to find comprehensive solutions for the unhoused. For example, research shows that transitional housing, which is more long-term and offers support to escape homelessness, is more effective than temporary shelters. We also emphasize the importance of community-led and culturally responsive interventions to form positive attitudes around gender equality and address gender-based violence.

Protection for Migrant Domestic Workers

We call on governments to recognize domestic labourers as workers that require adequate labour protections. The development of this regulatory framework must be led by domestic workers and include access to migration information, healthcare, justice systems, and improved labour standards that regulate wages, working conditions, and other terms of work in this industry. Considering women are overrepresented in this industry, we urge governments to adopt gender-based analysis in developing policy solutions.

We also emphasize the demands of migrant rights organizations and urge governments to issue regular visa status for migrant workers. Legal citizenship status safeguards their access to essential services, addresses how irregular migration status makes them particularly vulnerable to exploitation and recognizes the vital work migrant domestic workers contribute to the host country. This approach has been adopted in Canada, where the federal government has granted permanent resident status for long-term construction workers and their families in the Greater Toronto Area.

Women's Economic Empowerment

We urge governments to consider that expenditure cuts and redistribution to address the current crisis disproportionately affect women and youth - the primary recipients of social expenditure. To mitigate threats to progress made on gender equality, we also urge governments to consider the distinct needs of young women, girls and non-binary people – particularly those working in the informal sector, as an essential aspect of their COVID-19 economic recovery plan.

Further, we recommend that government ministries and agencies focused on the empowerment and advancement of women are integrated into an oversight role to monitor economic responses and provide recommendations on the use of gender-based analysis in all governmental programming. In considering new social protection mechanisms to rise to the pandemic's challenges, we urge governments to consider women's distinct economic role and ensure access to sexual and reproductive care, paid sick leave, and comprehensive health coverage that includes women with disabilities.

Technology and the Climate Crisis

To address the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on young women and girls, we urge governments to subsidize community-led and climate-resilient agricultural innovations. We also draw attention to women-led organizations making sustainable energy and technology accessible to their communities and encourage global and national funding institutions to address the lack of capital for women pioneering green innovation by closing the climate finance gap. We also urge governments and private

partners to collaborate in developing expanding young women's access to information and communication technologies that will help them stay connected to the market and financial institutions at a time where in-person interactions are limited.

Global Health

Introduction:

COVID-19 has exposed infrastructural weaknesses in healthcare systems around the world. Longstanding issues in healthcare delivery and access call for innovative and globally coordinated responses that must centre youth - particularly marginalized youth, disproportionately affected by healthcare vulnerabilities. CSOCD59 is a crucial opportunity to measure progress on global health and develop new strategies that address the distinct needs of youth. As such, IRSAM's Youth Advisory Delegation (IYAD) to CSOCD59 has identified the following issues with limited progress for these young people: the role of technology in healthcare delivery, challenges for young medical professionals, vaccine misinformation and access, and maternal and reproductive health.

The Role of Technology in Healthcare Delivery

By eliminating the risks posed by face-to-face contact and saving medical resources for the pandemic response, telehealth services have become central to the COVID-19 response. Telehealth is also an effective way of reaching those with limited healthcare access in the long term. However, despite this service's benefits, it must be recognized that there is disproportionate access to it. For example, according to the UN's International Telecommunication Union (ITU) *Measuring Digital Development: Facts and Figures*, 369 million youth worldwide are still offline. Furthermore, only 28 percent of rural populations in low-income countries can access the internet, and 17 percent have access to computers. While accessibility is better in rural regions of high and middle-income countries nations, internet access is still at 81 percent, while computer access is 66 percent.

Given that only 56 percent of rural populations have access to healthcare, it is all the more worrying that they also have less access to technology than their urban counterparts. Clearly, this poses obstacles for rural residents to utilize telehealth services and obtain public health information necessary to protect their community, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges for Young Medical Professionals

Globally, there is an estimated shortage of 4.3 million healthcare professionals. These shortfalls are felt most by low and middle-income countries, which face greater resource scarcity and contend with the emigration of healthcare professionals to affluent countries. This phenomenon— often referred to as the brain drain—has caused Africa to lose around 70 percent of trained healthcare workers to high-income countries. Furthermore, this migratory pattern allows migrant-recipient countries to benefit from high-skilled workers whose educations were subsidized by their country-of-origin.

High-income countries also face a health workforce shortage as Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development member states are projected to lack 400,000 doctors and 2.5 million nurses by 2030. Factors contributing to this shortage include an ageing population and an increase in chronic illnesses. Healthcare education programs have also been slow to increase their enrollment capacities to accommodate this growing need.

Vaccine Misinformation and Access

According to a study by the Harvard School of Public Health, social media is critical in the public's perception and acceptance of vaccination. Unverified information can enter mainstream media and impact public health efforts. Dubbed the "infodemic," misinformation is amplified by ineffective communication strategies and jargon. Misinformation on social media can influence how youth view the vaccine, as they represent the most active demographic online. It can also affect whether youth will vaccinate themselves or their children in the future.

As vaccines become available, physical access is a concern for immunocompromised people and people with disabilities. A lack of research and explicit guidelines for these groups impacts their ability to access the vaccine. Additionally, migrants, people with irregular migration status, and linguistic minorities may encounter barriers to accessing healthcare such as a lack of insurance, language barriers, and a lack of education around available services.

Globally, the history of medical racism and violence has impacted the willingness of many racialized and colonized groups to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In fact, according to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in the United States, Black Americans are 1.5 times more reluctant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine than any other ethnic group in the country.

While the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine in high-income countries is promising, key issues persist over the access and distribution of vaccines in middle and low-income countries pushed to the back of the queue. Experts at the African Center for Disease Control and Prevention warn that Africa, the continent with the second largest population in the world, is unlikely to see vaccine delivery before the middle of 2021. In centring health inequality issues in the COVID-19 response, governments and institutions must acknowledge how intellectual property laws and gaps in research and development investment maintain disparities in countries' ability to recover from infectious diseases.

Maternal and Reproductive Health

Globally, women face inequities in accessing effective healthcare and protecting sovereignty over their sexual and reproductive health. Before the COVID outbreak, nearly 810 women died every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, 94 percent of which occurred in low and lower-middle-income countries. Regarding maternal health care, the outbreak of COVID-19 has disrupted routine health care and food scarcity for pregnant women.

The 'Shadow Pandemic' of sexual violence against women amidst the COVID-19 crisis also poses extreme risks to women and girls' sexual and reproductive health, with restrictions imposed on reproductive health services, such as access to abortion or contraceptives, as they were not considered "essential." The UNFPA has also projected that unintended pregnancies could reach seven million globally through the pandemic, with restricted access to modern contraceptives. Simultaneously, the pandemic has limited access to essential services for the LGBTQIA2+ community, such as gender-affirming care and social support networks.

Calls to Action:

The Role of Technology in Healthcare Delivery

We urge governments to invest more in computer ownership programs for marginalized communities and rural regions where access to technology is severely restricted. This can be achieved by redistributing budgets to focus on the needs of low-income groups and collaborating with private partners within local and national jurisdictions to reallocate used technology where it is most needed.

Additionally, we call on governments to improve internet connection for those living in rural areas. This would involve reallocating budgets to build the necessary infrastructure for high-speed connectivity to become available in these regions, an initiative being undertaken in Canada through its High Speed for All: Canada's Connectivity Strategy. For example, the Canadian government aims to invest $1.7 billion to support: broadband projects nationwide, low Earth orbit satellite capacity, and new statistics surveys to measure broadband usage. Further, they intend to establish an expanded Centre of Expertise to better broadband coordination, all of which may enhance internet access in 380,000 homes across 900 communities, including 190 Indigenous communities.

Challenges for Young Medical Professionals

We urge high-income nations that directly benefit from the migration of the healthcare professions in low and middle-income countries to offer financial reimbursements, technology transfer, and enhanced learning opportunities to the migrants' countries of origin. Further, we call on governments to increase the budgets allocated to training future healthcare professionals. To distribute human resources according to need, we urge governments to consistently collect reliable data on patient health needs and outcomes.

Vaccine Misinformation and Access

We urge governments to use common, clear, and neutral language available in different languages, online and offline and suits diverse accessibility needs. Further, we urge public health authorities to collaborate with community organizations, schools, and the non-profit sector to dispel misinformation and create a vaccination-friendly culture, particularly among youth.

We encourage public health officials to employ a "multi-sectoral and multilevel" approach, where officials are taught effective social media techniques to clearly establish public health authorities as reliable sources of information. We also encourage additional research and specific guidelines for immunocompromised people, people with disabilities, youth, and people with irregular migrant status.

Given the history of medical racism, we call on public health agencies and governments to implement educational programs and feedback mechanisms to remedy socially-embedded health disparities and implicit biases in medicine. We also encourage governments to engage with the local communities by implementing targeted clinics for marginalized youth.

On a global scale, we call on collaboration between governments and the private sector to promote vaccine research and development in low and middle-income countries. We also urge agencies such as the World Health Organization and World Trade Organization to address the monopolization of COVID-19 treatment through restrictive intellectual property laws and the lack of generic COVID-19 treatment.

Maternal and Reproductive Health

We call on governments to combat medical misinformation with regards to COVID-19 and maternal health. We urge governments to follow WHO's interim guidance for maintaining essential services during an outbreak and prioritize access to services related to reproductive and sexual health.

We urge governments to ensure access to quality sexual and reproductive healthcare services for young women and girls, as it has a lasting impact on their futures. We encourage governments to support and prioritize clinics that provide such services, such that they can safely provide these services in person or through telehealth channels.

We encourage governments to prioritize the healthcare system's financial requirements to reduce inefficiencies, support the healthcare workforce, and provide healthcare services to women and girls.

We encourage governments to acknowledge the healthcare needs of the LGBTQIA2+community and, through consultation with the community, identify and prioritize the provision of and access to essential health services.

Conclusion

With less than ten years to meet 169 sustainable development targets and even less time to meaningfully address the impending climate crisis, the 59th Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSOCD59) is a crucial opportunity to address areas with limited progress for youth by addressing our distinct needs, compounded by new challenges around COVID-19. Through the policy recommendations on social protection, gender equality, and global health, we aim to address the distinct needs of youth and participatory policymaking and promote progress on the identified challenges for youth.