



UPR PRE-SESSION ETHIOPIA 2024

Statement Delivered on Behalf of the She Leads Programme in Ethiopia

Distinguished delegates, and dear colleagues, good morning,

It is a great honor to be part of this esteemed panel. Regrettably, my colleague from Ethiopia who was supposed to speak today could not come due to a visa denial.

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I work for TDH and I am delivering this statement on behalf of [She Leads](#), a joint programme of TDH, Plan, DCI – ECPAT and FEMNET. We work for and with GYW to enhance their influence on gender norms and decision-making processes.

I would like to talk about two issues:

- 1. Discrimination Against Girls and Young Women from meaningful participation in decision-making**
- 2. and Sexual Exploitation of Girls and Young Women.**

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On the first issue, on Discrimination from participation

Girls and young women in Ethiopia face limited opportunities to engage and voice their concerns. They often experience multiple layers of discrimination due to negative social norms that prioritize male and older voices, leading to stigmatization for those who challenge traditional roles. Consequently, they are often underrepresented in decision-making processes.

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I will not go through all the **previous recommendations** on this topic. But I would like to mention that they emphasized enhancing the participation of civil society in public decision-making. Only two of these recommendations expressly mentioned girls.

Since the previous review, we have observed some positive developments, such as the recent funding of certain youth associations, which is encouraging. However, these groups are not yet fully empowered to play an active role.

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In light of the above, to support the participation of girls in decision-making, we would like to offer the following **recommendations**:

1. Fully enforce the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to eliminate gender and age-based discrimination by establishing child participation councils with 50% of girls.
2. Challenge specific deeply entrenched discriminatory gender norms which confine the roles and responsibilities of GYW only to the domestic sphere by conducting annual training sessions for officials, and community leaders on international legal frameworks

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3. Launch community dialogue initiatives by partnering with traditional and religious leaders, as well as boys and men, to change discriminatory gender norms that limit girls' participation in socio-cultural, political, and civic spheres.

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On the second issue which is **Sexual exploitation of girls**

Violence against girls in Ethiopia manifest in various forms such as domestic violence, school-related violence, workplace harassment, and also risks associated with social media. Harmful traditional practices continue to persist.

Key challenges include:

- **Enforcement:**
- **Cultural Barriers:**
- **Lack of Resources:**

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Previous recommendations included strengthening legal frameworks, promoting gender equality. "Girls" have been mentioned many times but no reference to "online risks "

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As to the developments from the previous review, I can mention

Adoption of the National Legal Aid Strategy by the Ministry of Justice in November 2023,

Adoption of a National Road Map to End Child Marriage and FGM/C (female genital mutilation and cutting)

Development of a National five-year strategy on GBV prevention and response.

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We would like to offer the following **recommendations**:

1. Effectively implement the National Legal Aid Strategy in order to provide free legal aid services to girls survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse.
2. Effectively implement the National Road Map to End Child Marriage and FGM/C and the National five-year policy and strategy on GBV prevention and response in order to prevent and protect GYW from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, including harmful practices

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3. Increase the number of one-stop centers providing comprehensive support services to victims of domestic violence.
4. Promote online safety for girls through education, responsible use, and protective measures by, for instance, launching a nationwide campaign promoting responsible internet use, and establishing cyber protection units to monitor and respond to online threats.

[NEXT SLIDE - 12, PLEASE]

Thank you for your kind attention.