

YOUTH DECLARATION TOWARDS THE XV REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

On October 24 and November 6, diverse youth from Latin America and the Caribbean met in the "Youth Forums towards the XV Regional Conference on Women," in its virtual and face-to-face modality. The objective was to reflect on youth in the region, care work, and the importance of recognizing children, adolescents, and youth as caregivers and not only as recipients of care, making visible the implications this has for the exercise of our rights and the need to be included in the care systems. Despite the difficulties in budget and the lack of representation of young people in the formal spaces of preparation for the XV Regional Conference of Women, especially in the English-speaking Caribbean, we present the following declaration.

Care work sustains the political, economic, and social system; however, these tasks are not recognized in most Latin American and Caribbean countries. In our region, care work is intertwined with other intersectionalities, discriminations, and violence that place us in a situation of vulnerability and inequality. For example, sexual orientation and gender, age, disability, marital status, ethnic-racial origin, indigenous and afro-descendant people, health condition, and economic class, among others.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us, among other things, the crises concerning care work due to the lack of institutional care systems created and financed by the States based on collectivity and redistribution of care. At the same time, these problems exacerbate other problems already existing in the region, such as those generated by the environmental crisis, racial and gender discrimination, poverty, and migration conditions, among others. In addition, it deepens the violence experienced in the regimes of exception applied in some Central American countries and the installation of dictatorial and military governments, as in the case of Nicaragua and Haiti, respectively.

It has been proven that girls, adolescents, and young women in the region perform more care work than their male counterparts; this is even greater when they are married, unmarried, or mothers and when other intersectionalities intersect with them. This translates into difficulties in continuing their studies, accessing health services, decent employment, recreational time, and limited autonomy. All the above generates an environment that conditions development opportunities to build or carry out a life plan. In this sense, the youth of Latin America and the Caribbean demand from the States:

- To make it visible that children, adolescents, and young people perform care work and to eradicate any work that interferes with the full exercise of other rights.
- Promote coordinated and non-adult-centered care systems that recognize the redistribution and remuneration of care work and comprehensively include children, adolescents, and young people in creating public policies, programs, etc. Furthermore, these care systems must be based on self-care, collaborative care, and the co-responsibility of all people.

- Analyze care work from an anti-racist and intersectional perspective so that all countries in the region have basic parameters for analysis and accountability.
- Execute public policies, programs, mechanisms, etc., that promote the eradication of gender stereotypes that force women in their diversity to perform care work and encourage the co-responsibility of men. In addition, it is necessary to eradicate the feminization and racialization of poverty and care work.
- Allocate a progressive budget to policies, plans, and programs related to care work and social protection that guarantee access to education, quality and accessible public health, and decent jobs, among other rights.
- Create disaggregated data by age, gender in its diversity, ethnic-racial origin, indigenous and afro-descendant people, nationality, disability, and marital status that allow us to identify adolescents and youth who perform care work in addition to ensuring accessibility mechanisms to this information.
- Create analysis methodologies with youth, disability, gender, and intercultural perspectives to develop comprehensive policies, plans, and programs that consider the realities and needs of all.
- Create monitoring, evaluation, and accountability tools for States, especially for those experiencing political, environmental, economic, and social crises that violate human rights.
- Fund organizations, collectives, and networks formed and led by girls, adolescents, and young women to promote and participate in research, advocacy, and policy-making activities at local, national, and regional levels.
- Create and strengthen public policies focused on girls and young women who have postponed their education due to caregiving, marriages, unions, or early pregnancies; for example, create full-time daycare centers, scholarships, and sources of decent jobs.
- Guarantee that girls and adolescent mothers can continue their studies, making school schedules and programs more flexible. In addition, it is crucial to raise awareness in society so that they are not discriminated against and can continue their education.
- Guarantee access to land and safe, healthy, and sustainable food for adolescents, young caregivers, and their families.
- Flexible hours of health services for adolescents and youth, especially those living with HIV, who perform care work, have access to medical check-ups and achieve adherence to antiretroviral therapy.
- To make more flexible and guarantee access to comprehensive, sexual, and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people in their diversity, including access to legal, safe, and accessible abortion. In addition to ensuring comprehensive, sustainable, and culturally relevant sex education.
- Guarantee feminist and restorative justice and protection to eradicate violence, especially gender-based violence and violence against children.
- Establish protection mechanisms for human rights defenders, with particular attention to criminalized ones, and provide all guarantees for them and the organizations, collectives, and networks they are part of.

- To recognize the organizational processes of this articulation and the organizations of girls, adolescents, and youth to include them in all the processes carried out by the United Nations and other regional organizations, ensuring that funding is provided to strengthen our participation. In addition, to establish the reading of the Youth Declaration in the schedule of these spaces to ensure that the voices and demands of these populations of Latin America and the Caribbean are heard and considered.

Finally, we ask that the demands and proposals expressed here to be considered for the official resolution of the Conference and that the States, United Nations agencies, private institutions, Civil Society Organizations, and others attending the Conference listen and commit to including our proposals in their respective fields of action for a feminist, collective, diverse, sustainable, violence and discrimination-free care society.

Nothing about youth without youth!

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