

Women's Major Group

Women's Major Group's Intervention to

High Level Political Forum 2022
Session

Wednesday 6th July 2022, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT
by Saba Gebremedhin HAGOS

Excellencies, distinguished guest,

My name is Saba Gebremedhin from Network of Ethiopian Women Associations and a Malala Fund partner organization representing the Women's Major Group.

This year's High Level Political Forum is focusing on SDG4 and 5. We know that these goals are inherently linked, both in terms of drivers and challenges. These are not conceptual. For girls trying to access 12 years of free, safe quality education this is a daily, lived reality.

In any crisis, whether COVID, conflict, political or climate-related disasters, it is the most vulnerable who are hardest hit and we see this clearly in girls' education, where crises have a multiplier effect creating new and exacerbating pre-existing challenges for girls.

[CHALLENGES]

- Children in crisis situations have been out of school for many years, with girls most severely affected. This increases opportunities for early marriage and gender-based violence that further limit their access to education.
- Many families take girls out of school and marry them off as a means to overcome extreme poverty and shocks.
- We have also witnessed a rollback towards traditional stereotypes and gender roles.
- At the same time we have seen reductions in essential gender services for sexual and reproductive health and gaps in the provision of comprehensive sexuality education in formal and non-formal education settings.
- And in countries like mine, conflicts disrupt girls' access to education due to insecurity, destruction and occupation of schools.

Women's Major Group

[CALLS TO ACTION]

Girls' education and gender equality is not something that can be addressed in a vacuum, rather should be seen together within new norms and emerging situations. We call on governments to:

- Investment in mainstreaming gender-responsive education sector plans and budgets.
- Ensure a gender-responsive, intersectional approach to humanitarian work, compliant with international human rights law, that guarantees the fundamental rights of women and girls in all their diversity across their life course.
- In this regard, it is critical to have a systemic response to tackle gender based violence and harmful traditional practices during crisis, including providing girls in crisis with necessary psycho-social support.
- Finally, governments should recognize and work closely with civil society, grassroots and women-and-girl-led organizations, given their political capacity to overcome different crises. Governments must also guarantee their presence in decision-making spaces.

Finally, we urge all actors to speed up the progress on achieving the goals as we are left with limited time to achieve the SDGs. Ahead of this year's 'Transforming Education Summit' we must stand firm and hold governments and the international community to account for the commitment to leave no one behind and prioritize the most marginalized.