

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM CONFERENCE

**Women and children – the unsung
heroes in the HIV and AIDS frontline.**

By

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- **As we enter the third decade of HIV/AIDS, women and young girls and the poor, are the most affected.**
- **Because gender inequality fuels the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it is imperative that women and young girls speak out, set priorities for action and lead the global response to the crisis.**

- **That will ensure their tomorrow.**
- **Therefore, women and young girls from around the world unite and urge all governments, organizations, agencies, donors, communities and individuals to make girls' rights a reality.**

women and young girls have the
right to:

- **Live with dignity and equality.**
- **Bodily integrity.**
- **Health and healthcare, including treatment.**

- **Safety, security and freedom from fear of physical and sexual violence throughout their lives.**
- **Be free from stigma, discrimination, blame and denial.**
- **Their human rights regardless of sexual orientation.**

- **Sexual autonomy and sexual pleasure.**
- **Equity in their families.**
- **Education and information.**
- **Economic independence preparedness.**

These fundamental rights shall include, but not be limited to the right to:

- Support and care which meets their particular needs.
- Access acceptable, affordable and quality comprehensive healthcare including antiretroviral therapies.
- Sexual and reproductive health services, including access to safe abortion without coercion.

- **A broader array of preventive and therapeutic technologies that respond to the needs of all women and young girls regardless of age, HIV status or sexual orientation.**
- **Access user-friendly and affordable prevention technologies such as female condoms with skills building training on negotiation and use.**

- **Choose to disclose their status in circumstances of safety and security without the threat of violence, discrimination or stigma.**
- **Live their sexuality in safety and with pleasure irrespective of HIV status.**

- **Choose to be mothers and have children irrespective of their HIV status or sexual orientation (18-24).**
- **Safe and healthy motherhood for all, including the safety and health of their children.**
- **Choose marriage, form partnerships or divorce, irrespective of age, HIV status or sexual orientation.**

- **Gender equity in education and lifetime education for all.**
- **Formal and informal sexual education throughout their lives.**
- **Information, especially about HIV/AIDS, with an emphasis on young women's special vulnerability due to biological differences, gender roles and inequality.**

- **Employment, equal pay, recognition of all forms of work and compensation for care and support.**
- **Economic independence such as to own and inherit property, and to access financial resources.**

- **Food security, safe water and shelter.**
- **Freedom of movement and travel irrespective of HIV status.**
- **Express their religious, cultural and social identities.**

- **Associate freely and be leaders within religious, social and cultural institutions.**
- **Lead and participate in all aspects of politics, governance, decision-making, policy development and program implementation.**

- **Civil society organizations need to package all these in a responsive manner towards a better world for all, more specifically poverty reduction, minimization of HIV transmission and impact of AIDS.**