

OUTCOME STATEMENT TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

“Empowering Adolescent Girls: Ending the Cycle of Violence”

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is a manifestation of the stereotypes and gender inequalities prevalent in all societies. SRGBV can take the form of intimidation, corporal punishment, verbal or sexual harassment, physical violence, sexual assault, rape and transactional sex. Perpetrators can be students, teachers or community members acting in and on the way to school. Although both girls and boys can be targets of SRGBV, girls are the most vulnerable.

The consequences of violence are many, though often invisible: psychological suffering, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy, lower educational achievement and school dropout. In fact, **SRGBV is a major obstacle to achieving universal enrollment and the right to education for girls.**

On the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child, participants at the ‘Learn Without Fear’ policy roundtable held in Paris, co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France (MAEDI) and Plan International France, reaffirmed their commitment to ending SRGBV.

We reaffirm that schools and educational institutions should be safe places that provide quality education, and that promote empowerment and gender equality. Both girls and boys should be able to study in a safe, secure and supportive learning environment.

The following recommendations resulted from the ‘Learn Without Fear’ policy roundtable:

- Establish and strengthen legal frameworks, internal regulations and formal codes of conduct that ensure the application of appropriate and proportionate sanctions;
- Develop and adopt national action plans to address SRGBV based on a multisectoral, multi-stakeholder and inclusive process;
- Raise awareness and increase the participation of youth and communities, including men and boys, through education programs on gender equality and gender norms, with the purpose of changing harmful attitudes and social norms;
- Establish and strengthen mechanisms for data collection, reporting and monitoring of violence in and around school through cross-sectoral coordination;
- Offer initial and ongoing training on SRGBV and gender equality to the education community;
- Make this issue a priority in the cooperation and development policies of technical and financial partners;
- Make the right of girls to quality education in a safe environment a priority in the post-2015 development agenda.

In order to ensure quality education for all children, preventing and responding to SRGBV must become a priority for us all.

In the coming months, **France** will move forward with its commitment to ending SRGBV alongside the Global Partners Working Group on SRGBV, and with States willing to participate in this initiative, by proposing the adoption of a resolution by the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2015. The recommendations made by Plan and MAEDI will form the basis for this initiative which aims to unify the largest number of potential partners.

As part of its international campaign on the right to education for girls, **Plan International France** will strengthen its engagement through new advocacy efforts, including through the Global Partners Working Group on SRGBV. It will also continue to support governments and civil society actors in the context of its field programs. Technical and policy recommendations detailed in the Plan International France report, entitled "School Victims," will inform its upcoming work.

The Global Partners' Working Group on SRGBV, co-hosted by the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and UNESCO, will help galvanize the international community to take a strong stand against SRGBV, help establish standards for response and promote the collection of evidence to monitor trends and improve practices.

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