World leaders entering the next round of negotiations on the post-2015 agenda have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the lives of adolescent girls, and in turn, the world. On this year’s International Day of the Girl Child – a day established to promote the rights of girls and the unique challenges they face – we call on Member States to make a strong and deliberate investment in adolescent girls.

We are united in our belief that investment in adolescent girls’ rights and needs is necessary if we are to accelerate progress on the toughest global challenges, achieve equality, advance human rights and end global poverty.¹

This year’s International Day of the Girl Child focuses on empowering girls to end the cycle of violence in their own communities. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to violence, discrimination and other human rights violations. Yet, when girls grow up healthy, educated, safe and empowered, they can fulfill their potential to be leaders in their communities, countries and the world.

Looking ahead to further post-2015 discussions, including the UN Secretary General’s synthesis report, regional consultations and debate about indicators and means of implementation, we encourage Member States to speak in favor of issues that directly impact girls’ ability to reach their full potential. In doing so, we see an opportunity to increase the overall success, impact and sustainability of the post-2015 framework.

We strongly urge Member States to ensure adolescent girls are embedded in the design, content, financing, implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 agenda. Issues that can determine the course of their lives should not be negotiated away to make room for others that may be deemed more urgent or easier to achieve. The issues highlighted here can be the difference between life and death for an adolescent girl, and can have significant impact on the development of their communities and societies.

October 10, 2014
Based on the goals and principles of the Girl Declaration, we call on Member States to develop a post-2015 agenda that enables all adolescent girls to:

1. **Lead healthy lives.** This includes ensuring universal sexual and reproductive health and rights, and guaranteeing access by all adolescents and young people to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights information, education and services. This requires including all girls, in- and out-of school, regardless of marital, pregnancy, or other status.

2. **Be free from all harmful practices, especially child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.** This requires explicitly addressing these issues in the post-2015 framework, implementation and monitoring, including through adopting comprehensive indicators.

3. **Be safe from violence and discrimination and have access to justice.** This requires taking proactive measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and inequality, in law, policy and in practice, including removing legal barriers such as spousal or parental consent and minimum age requirements to obtain essential health and legal services.

4. **Complete free, equitable and quality secondary education in a safe and supportive learning environment.** This requires promoting human rights and gender equality in educational institutions and addressing barriers to accessing and completing a secondary education, including direct and indirect costs, school-related gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, harassment and discrimination, as well as school drop-out of girls who become pregnant or married.

5. **Be heard.** This requires using youth friendly and gender sensitive participatory development, monitoring and accountability approaches that meaningfully include adolescent girls, including those most vulnerable, at the local, national, regional and international levels, and ensuring that their voices are heard, respected and acted upon in an equal manner to those of others.

This generation of adolescents is the largest ever, and adolescent girls constitute approximately half of that generation.

Girls are key to every sustainable solution, and we will not achieve progress without them.

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1 Our organizations are united in our support of the Girl Declaration, a call to action urging global leaders to put adolescent girls at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. The Girl Declaration was developed through consultations with more than 500 adolescent girls living in poverty around the world and more than 25 leading international development organizations and issue experts. Since its launch in October 2013, the Girl Declaration has galvanized signatories and supporters across sectors and backgrounds, demonstrating strong support for adolescent girls and solutions to the issues that affect their lives and communities. Learn more at girleffect.org/2015.