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DATE: 30 August 2021

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beatriz Balbin".

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PAGES: 6 (Y COMPRIS CETTE PAGE/INCLUDING THIS PAGE)

COPIES:

OBJET/SUBJECT: **Letter from the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women and girls, Melissa Upreti**

Please find attached a letter from the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women and girls, Melissa Upreti



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Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women and girls

REFERENCE:

30 August 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 41/6.

In line with our mandate and our ongoing dialogue with Member States, we would like to solicit your Government's views in order to inform the Working Group's thematic report to be presented at the 50th session of the Human Rights Council in June 2022. We have started researching the topic of girls' and young women's activism, through their participation in political and public life, focusing on accomplishments, challenges and opportunities for change.

The Working Group has developed a questionnaire, enclosed to this letter, available in English, French and Spanish, in order to facilitate your inputs. We would greatly appreciate it if you could reply by **1 October 2021** to the following email address: wgdiscriminationwomen@ohchr.org. Responses to the questionnaire will be made publicly available at the time of the report publication.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Hannah Wu (hwu@ohchr.org, +41 (0)22 917 91 52) or Bernadette Arditì (barditi@ohchr.org, +41 (0)22 917 9159) at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Melissa Upreti". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Melissa Upreti

Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women and girls

UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls

Questionnaire on girls' and young women's activism

Introduction

The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, in preparation for its thematic report to be presented at the 50th session of the Human Rights Council in June 2022, has been researching the topic of girls and young women's activism focusing on accomplishments, challenges and opportunities for change. The scope of this questionnaire will cover the various aspects of girls and young women's participation and activism in the political and public life at different levels.

In this regard, the Working Group would like to seek inputs from States and other stakeholders to inform the preparation of the report in line with its mandate to maintain a constructive approach and dialogue with States and other stakeholders.

I. Nature, modalities and trends of girls' and young women's activism

1. What is the normative framework related to participation of girls and young women in civic space and their activism?
2. What are the main features of girls' and young women's activism/participation in political and public life in your national context? Please describe, in particular, in terms of:
 - i. Specific issues (thematic areas) on which girls and young women are mostly engaged
 - ii. Political actors and authorities they mostly engage with
 - iii. Levels of engagement (grassroots, local, national, international)
 - iv. Main spaces for engagement (e.g. schools, community, media, online platforms, etc.)
 - v. Cross-movements cooperation and solidarity
3. What are the forms and modalities for girls' and young women's activism/participation in your national context? Please provide information about any structures in place (formal and informal) and how they operate?
4. What are the main trends and drivers influencing their activism/participation in your country or region?
5. What are the positive and inspirational examples of girl's activism in terms of :
 - i. Social mobilization and change
 - ii. Influencing policies and legislation
 - iii. Personal development and empowerment (of girls and young women)

II. Enabling factors and good practices

1. What solidarity and support frameworks are available in your national context to enhance girls' and young women's activism? Please provide concrete examples on any positive role of:

- i. Legal/policy and institutional frameworks
 - ii. Social, cultural, religious institutions
 - iv. Collaborative initiatives, human rights and/or women's movements
 - v. Technological infrastructures/means
 - vi. Other frameworks
2. What are the ways the State promotes and supports girls' participation/activism? Please provide concrete examples and good practices with respect to measures taken by the State, in particular:
 - i. to address discriminatory social norms, gender stereotyping and stigma against girls' public participation and activist roles;
 - ii. to ensure gender and age-responsive protection from attacks against girl activists;
 - iii. to assess and support girls' evolving capacities to fully and freely participate in all spheres of public decision-making.
 3. What are the particular issues and platforms, if any, in which the State encourages girls and young women's engagement? How is the diversity of girls' activism and inclusion in all human rights activism initiatives ensured (e.g. gender equality, disability, environment, LGBTI issues, etc.)? Please share specific positive practices.
 4. How do other stakeholders promote girls' and young women's engagement and activism in your national context? Please describe which stakeholders are active in this area and what role they play.
 5. What are the achievements at the national level in the implementation of laws, policies, plans and/or programs and practices relevant to promoting girls' and young women's engagement/activism? Please provide examples of good practices and any innovative initiatives taken, and lessons learnt.

III. Challenges and structural barriers

1. What kind of gender and age specific barriers are affecting girls' and young women's participation/activism in your national context? Please indicate concrete examples of direct and indirect as well as formal and informal factors posing threats and risks for girls and young women engaging in the public space (examples of these can include stereotyping based on gender and age, restrictions on freedom of expression, speech, assembly, liberty, etc., legal restrictions to capacity to provide legal consent, legal age of marriage, etc.).
2. What are the groups of girls and young women who are most affected by these barriers and why?
3. Are there any specific laws, policies and practices that place obstacles to girls' and young women's participation, activism or collective action? If yes please specify
4. What are the threats girl and young women activists in your country or region experience in relation to their work as activists? In particular, in terms of:
 - i. being prosecuted and punished for their activism
 - ii. facing intimidations, harassments, and attacks (direct or indirect, online or offline, sexual or physical)

- iii. lacking access to justice and reparations for violations of their rights
- 5. What are the particular concerns that may arise with respect to girls' and young women's access to technology and other infrastructures? How does the digital divide impact girls' activism?
- 6. What are the challenges, in your national context, in the recognition and protection of girls as human rights defenders? What negative trends undermine their evolving capacities and interests at the family, community, and State levels?
- 7. What are the main challenges in ensuring the following?
 - i. Safe space for engagement
 - ii. Inclusion of diverse groups of girls and young women and those from marginalized communities
 - iii. Access to resources, infrastructures, networks and platforms
 - iv. Collaborative programs with different stakeholders

IV. Emerging issues

1. Are there new emerging issues related to girls' and young women's engagement at community, national and international levels? If yes please specify.
2. What are the impacts of digital advancements and major shifts in digital activism on girls' and young women's engagement/participation?
3. What are the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls' and young women's activism/participation?
4. Please provide information on other recent developments and concerns with respect to girls' and young women's movements.

IV. Recommendations/ the way forward

1. What concrete measures should States adopt and implement to ensure girls' and young women's meaningful participation, activism and collective action at all levels?
2. What concrete measures should States adopt to address systemic gender-based/age-based discrimination and challenges affecting girls' and young women's engagement in the political and public life?

3. What concrete measures should States introduce to improve solidarity, support, collaborations towards creating a safe and enabling environment for girls' and young women's participation/ activism?