



Statement to the 74th Session of the World Health Assembly, 24 May to 1 June 2021
on agenda item 16. Committing to implementation of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030)

We recognize WHO's important work on implementing the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health. However, much more could be done if WHO was strengthened and properly funded, and if social determinants of health were adequately recognized and addressed in the Strategy.

The progress presented in the report remains extremely unequal between and within countries. Health conditions are not disconnected from structural problems such as poverty, racism, colonialism, patriarchy and gender inequality. As emphasized by the strategy, the challenges have their root, to a very great extent, in human rights failures.

Neoliberal and patriarchal structures reproduce gendered status and material inequalities, lack of access to income, essential goods and services, and poverty in the global north and south. This negatively affects the health of women, children and adolescents. COVID-19 has deepened these pre-existing inequalities, with this population particularly impacted by high levels of hunger and domestic violence, and lack of access to reproductive health and child immunisation services.

Women's health cannot be reduced to reproductive health, and childcare cannot be reduced to women's work. Intersectoral actions are required to ensure women's non-reproductive health needs are fully met, to socialize care and reproductive work, and to ensure a universal basic income and appropriate payment for care work. Strong public health systems and social policies are key to this.

We also need to consider the most vulnerable within this population. We call on governments and WHO to produce more disaggregated data, considering ethnicity, skin color, castes and sexual orientation. These aspects must be considered to reduce gaps, inequities and oppressions.

Changes need to be done not just for, but with women, children and adolescents, strengthening and empowering them and their communities.