It is 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This landmark declaration, which sets out a blueprint for gender equality and women’s empowerment, was one of the first to recognise the impact that the HIV epidemic has on adolescent girls and young women.

Many women do not have the power to insist on safe sex, and have little access to health information and services. They are subjected to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriage and face sexual and gender-based violence, all of which increase their vulnerability to HIV.

In the last 25 years not one country has achieved gender equality and, despite perceptions to the contrary, AIDS is not over for women and girls.
It is unacceptable that women and girls the world over are unable to protect themselves and continue to experience intense discrimination because of a condition that is preventable and treatable. If we are serious about gender equality, we need to commit more strongly than ever to ending AIDS for women and girls, to stopping violence against them and to protecting the human rights of the most stigmatised and marginalised.

HIV and AIDS must be recognised as a critical issue throughout the Beijing+25 Review and beyond.

We call on governments and all stakeholders to:

1. End ALL forms of discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls.

   - Adopt evidence-based approaches to prevent gender-based violence and HIV among adolescent girls and young women. These must combine sexual health and gender equality education, social empowerment and economic strengthening programmes, with changes in gender norms.
   - Address the disproportionate impact of gender-based violence on women and girls living with HIV, as well as sex workers, transgender women, and women who use drugs, who face intersecting forms of discrimination.
   - Work with marginalised women and girls and their communities to prevent and respond to violence, to improve access to and uptake of HIV services, and challenge harmful and discriminatory social and gender norms.

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1 Women and HIV. A Spotlight on Adolescent Girls and Young Women. UNAIDS 2019.
2 When women lead change happens. Women advancing the end of AIDS. UNAIDS 2017.
3 UNAIDS Data 2019.
End AIDS for all women and girls – including those who are the most marginalised and stigmatised.

Stop gender inequality and violence that leaves women and girls vulnerable to HIV acquisition and unable to access sustained HIV treatment and care.

In line with the catalytic themes of the Generation Equality Action Coalitions, we ask them to join us in making the following commitments:

2. Guarantee bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights, ensuring that women in all their diversity, especially adolescent girls and young women, have the agency to decide if and when to have sex, marry, and have children.

- Ensure comprehensive sexuality education is integrated into school curriculums, including the opportunity for all young people to engage in discussion on sex, gender, rights, sexuality and sexual orientation.
- Increase access to youth-friendly services to meet adolescents’ needs for integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV services, including by removing age restrictions for adolescents to access these services.
- Provide tailored sexual and reproductive health and rights packages that include HIV prevention, treatment and care to reach marginalised women and girls living with – or at risk of acquiring – HIV as part of national universal health coverage plans.

3. Invest in a robust and accountable independent women’s civil society and build strong inclusive feminist movements.

- Build a new generation of young women leaders and activists, including young women living with HIV, who can demand greater accountability on sexual and reproductive health and rights from decision-makers.
- Commit to the meaningful participation of women living with and most affected by HIV, including trans women, in all decision-making that affects their lives.
- Guarantee core funding for organisations and networks led by and for young women, women living with HIV, sex workers, women who use drugs, and LGBT women.
- Champion cross-movement building and learning to maximise synergies between women’s HIV-related advocacy and areas such as climate change, technology, and peace and security.