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PANEL V

**Future Perspective on Promotion of Gender Equality- through the eyes of
young women and men**

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* The paper has been reproduced as submitted.

Introduction

The world today has taken action since Beijing 1995 to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women. Among these are the promotion of women's full participation in the economy, improvement in education, dissemination of knowledge, and

in all sectors and ensuring that educational institutions provide equal access for women and the protection of the girl child against harmful practices. However, there are difficulties with efforts being made to change attitudes and perceptions towards gender

We know that we as youth are not homogenous. From a gender perspective, young men and women may not have the same opportunities to participate or to take leadership around issues that affect them. So in our strategies, we are cognizant of that. We strongly believe in good mutual working partnerships between young women and men, because we believe in the importance of separate and collective initiatives and strategies targeting young people.

As future leaders, we have an opportunity to model leadership that is not gender-neutral or gender-blind, but rather we are promoting leadership that takes gender issues into consideration and seeks to transform existing models that perpetuate inequalities.

At the same time I have to acknowledge that ensuring that young women's rights are protected and guaranteed today presents a unique challenge that will require a tremendous amount of energy, resources, and dedication.

women and men are given what rightfully belongs to them, power, equality, equity, control and rights regardless of sex, race, culture or religion. If we as young Africans have to change our cultures, our education systems and family or society structures in order to attain an equal world for all then we have to start changing now.

At the same time we should realize that, equality and achievement should also trickle down even to the grass root and rural women, the poor and other excluded groups not only enabling them gain access to valued goods but also gain access on terms that respect and promote their ability to define their own priorities and make informed choices.

Women with disabilities for instance are the most affected as they are marginalized both as women and persons with disabilities. They are abused by both able bodied persons and persons with disabilities especially

plight of disabled women fully addressed and included in the success stories of gender initiatives.

As you people we would like to see gender equality being turned into reality

people have access to youth friendly sexual and reproductive health care services, and access to accurate information to make informed decisions about their reproductive and sexual health and rights. Particular effort should be made to ensure that all young people immediately have access to services and education to treatment including ARVs and treatment for opportunistic infections.

The social expectations, roles, status and economic power of men and women influence the spread and impact of the epidemic. In my society for example a man can have a number of women as he wishes as a sign of wealth and manhood or inherit a brothers

analysis of gender stereotypes, redefinition of male and female relationships and roles, promotion of cultural beliefs and values supporting mutually responsible behaviour, and exploration of ways to reduce inequalities between men and women. To tackle the challenge of HIV/AIDS, we must work to create a supportive environment that will enable both young women and men to make informed decisions about their sexual health and rights.

all forms of violence against women and urge all stakeholders and governments to take

young people have suffered irreversible damage to their reproductive systems and their rights being denied because they are poor or had no access to quality information on prevention methods. As young Africans we note that poverty is one of underlying issue

inequalities needs collective actions, efforts by men and women as well as individual assertiveness. Today women have been empowered to some degree to address gender issues and concerns on the status of women yet men are less aware that their also gendered species.

The greatest contribution in creating an equal world for young women and young men is to improve their capabilities, Knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences as the foundation of all forms of future gender initiatives and programs. As the saying goes Knowledge is the currency of equity, which leads to better living standards for both women and men, of which is a major indicator for future perspective of gender promotion.

As young women and men of today we would like to face the future together as