



Nordic Council
of Ministers

THE **COPENHAGEN** CALL TO **ACTION**

for Gender Equality and
Women's and Girls' Rights

**PUSHING
FOR
PROGRESS**

The Copenhagen Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights

We want a world where everyone enjoys the same rights and has equal opportunities. Gender equality is both a fundamental value in itself and the foundation for democratic, sustainable, and prosperous societies. An essential part of gender equality is the freedom for women and girls to make decisions about their own bodies and all aspects of their lives. This enables women and girls in all their diversity to participate and contribute fully and equally in all spheres of society, including in education, decision-making, and the labor market, as well as within their families. Gender equality not only benefits individuals but society as a whole.

However, global anti-rights movements threaten gender equality and women's and girls' rights, freedom, safety, and lives. We must stand together and stand firm. Achieving gender equality and ensuring that all women and girls can enjoy all their human rights, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights, requires collaboration, dialogue, and active engagement by all — including men and boys — in creating the future we want.

To achieve a gender-equal future, we will push for progress on four core principles:

1. FREEDOM FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR BODIES AND LIVES

We believe that all women and girls should have the power to decide freely about their bodies and lives, including whether, when, how many, and with whom to have children. No woman or girl should be forced to continue a pregnancy against her will. Women and girls must be free from violence, coercion, and abuse and should not be at risk of poverty and societal exclusion due to the lack of bodily autonomy.

WE WANT A WORLD WHERE:

- All women and girls have the freedom to decide over their lives and future
 - All women and girls can make decisions about their own bodies free from violence or coercion
 - All women and girls are safe and free from sexual and gender-based violence
 - Access to family planning and modern contraception is a reality for everyone
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2. COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION MUST BE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

We believe that knowledge is freedom. This includes knowledge about one's own body, health, relationships, boundaries, consent, and rights. It provides tools to make informed choices and to develop healthy and respectful relationships. It equips young persons and adolescents to take care of their own bodies and enables them to detect and combat violence, hate, and misinformation.

WE WANT A WORLD WHERE:

- Young persons and adolescents receive comprehensive sexuality education, including comprehensive information related to their bodies, bodily autonomy, biology, and sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on safe sex and family planning
 - Gender stereotypes do not dictate how relationships should be or how lives should be lived
 - All people are aware of their own and others' boundaries and that consent is the basis of sexual relationships
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3. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO HEALTH FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

We believe that healthy lives are fundamental for all and necessary for equal participation in all spheres of society, including education, decision-making, the labor market, and in family life. Access to health care and services should not be a privilege but available for all, as lack of access can cause severe health risks and can even be life-threatening.

WE WANT A WORLD WHERE:

- Everyone has access to affordable, high-quality physical and mental health services
 - Comprehensive health care and services before, during, and after pregnancy and childbirth are available for all
 - All women and girls have access to quality and affordable sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion
 - Research on and funding of women's and girls' health are prioritized
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4. SUPPORTING AND CARING FOR FAMILIES IN ALL THEIR DIVERSITY

We believe that gender equality makes families thrive. Families – in whatever shape or form – are at the core of most people’s lives and a cornerstone of society, and societies prosper when policies support families and communities. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe and supportive environment with the care of their parents or caregivers and the assurance that while families may look different, there is no such thing as a “wrong” family. Everyone must be able to choose their partner freely without the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, economic dependency, or isolation.

WE WANT A WORLD WHERE:

- Starting a family or leaving a relationship is a free choice for all, and all persons have equal opportunities to support and care for their families, regardless of their gender.
- Parents share the care for their children, and family policies support gender equal distribution of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities.
- All parents are able to combine family life with paid work and participation in all spheres of society, including through access to affordable and high-quality childcare as well, as maternity, paternity, or parental leave for all parents.
- Family policies and gender equality efforts are designed to be mutually supportive and ensure that the equal rights and responsibilities of all individual family members are respected.
- Society supports and acknowledges families in all their diversity, including, e.g., single households, multi-generational families, or rainbow families

TURNING OUR PRINCIPLES INTO ACTION

To make our principles a reality:

WE WILL STAND UNITED in international and multilateral arenas to defend hard-won achievements and push for further progress through collective statements, events, or other actions.

WE WILL BUILD ALLIANCES across borders – listening, learning, and exchanging experiences, knowledge, and best practices.

WE WILL ENGAGE ALL ACTORS, amplifying the voices of those most vulnerable or marginalized and engaging and including men and boys in our gender equality efforts.

WE WILL TAKE CONCRETE ACTION at every level – global, regional, national, and local – to turn principles into change and ensure that policies deliver real impact in people's lives.

WE WILL SUPPORT A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY – specifically women's rights organizations, youth organizations, women human rights defenders, and other actors for gender equality everywhere – because lasting change grows from dialogue, trust, and inclusion.

WE CALL ON ALL WHO ARE PUSHING FOR PROGRESS TO JOIN US.

Endorsements of the Copenhagen Call to Action

Governments

Denmark



Finland



Iceland



Norway



Sweden



Åland



Organizations

The
Danish
Family
Planning
Association



Join the movement!

Endorse the Copenhagen Call to Action!

Reach out to the Nordic Council of Ministers Secretariat, Senior Advisor Petter Dotterud Anthun petant@norden.org.