

# Men and Boys for Gender Justice

## DELHI DECLARATION AND CALL TO ACTION

We live in a world of profound inequalities and unbalanced power relations, where rigid norms and values about how people should behave fuel and exacerbate injustices. We have to change that. This is why more than 1200 activists/professionals coming from 94 countries and with a broad variety of organisational backgrounds, convened the second MenEngage Global Symposium in New Delhi, India, from November 10-13, 2014.

Gender equality is an essential component of human rights, as upheld by international standards articulated, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, International Covenant on Civil and Political Right, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We reiterate our commitment to implementing the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (1994), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), United Nations Commission on the Status of Women at its 48th Session in 2004, and all other relevant agreements. We reaffirm our commitment to implement the MenEngage Rio and Johannesburg Calls to Action (2009). We look forward to future agreements including the development agenda beyond 2015 and to continue to uphold boys' and men's engagement as key efforts to ensuring gender equality and gender justice for all.

This Symposium reflected the full complexity and diversity of gender justice issues. It challenged us to reflect, think strategically, reach out across socially constructed boundaries, and strengthen partnerships. There are gaps. As an outcome of this historic event, and as a shared commitment and **Call to Action**, we offer the following concerns and affirmations:

**1. Patriarchy and gender injustice remain defining characteristics of societies around the world, with devastating effects on everyone's daily life.** No matter who we are, and no matter where we are in the world, these forces make our relationships less fulfilling, less healthy and less safe. From an early age, they introduce suffering, violence, illness, hate and death within our families and communities. They strip us of our fundamental human rights and hinder our ability to live a life with love, dignity, intimacy and mutual respect. They hamper the development of our economies and keep our global society from flourishing. These are the root causes of many barriers to sustainable development around the world.

**We urgently need to overcome these immense threats to human wellbeing.**

**2. Patriarchy affects everyone, but in different ways.** Women and girls continue to face significant, disproportionately high levels of gender injustice and human rights violation. Men and boys are both privileged and damaged by patriarchy, but are rarely aware of that fact. Men and boys are also gendered beings. Gender equality brings benefits to women, men and other genders.

**We urgently need to acknowledge that gender inequalities are unacceptable no matter who is affected.**

**3. We build on a precious heritage.** We owe our awareness of gender injustices, our efforts to promote equality, and the existence of this Symposium itself to the pioneeringp courage and vision of feminist and women's rights movements. We align with the work of women's rights organisations and recognize all achievements in transforming social, cultural, legal, financial and political structures that sustain patriarchy.

**Keeping its historical context in view, we shall continue our work with men and boys towards gender equality informed by feminist and human rights principles, organisations and movements and in a spirit of solidarity.**

**4. We believe in an inclusive approach to realize gender justice.** We are men, women and transgender persons calling for *everyone* to participate in the gender justice movement. Though engaging men and boys is an essential part of such efforts, this hasoften been overlooked.

**We seek to make visible the most effective ways men and boys can contribute to gender equality, without being used as mere instruments.**

**5. Patriarchal power, expressed through dominant masculinities, is among the major forces driving structural injustices and exploitation.** We are particularly concerned about the many manifestations of militarism and neoliberal globalisation, for example: war; the proliferation of weapons; global and local economic inequality; violent manifestations of political and religious fundamentalisms; state violence; violence against civil society; human trafficking; and the destruction of natural resources.

**We urgently need to expose the link between patriarchy and the exploitation of people and environment, and to help boys and men change their behaviour from "power over" to "power with."**

**6. Gender inequalities are related to inequalities based on race, age, class, caste, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ability and other factors.** We value the diversity of our world, and cannot continue to address these intersecting injustices in isolation.

**We commit to promoting social and economic inclusion through meaningful participation, deepened partnerships, and joint actions among social justice movements.**

**7. It is essential that each of us live the values of gender justice.** This requires men and boys in particular to reflect critically on their own power and privilege, and to develop personal visions of how to be gender-just men. It requires all of us to base our work on deep personal and political convictions. Whenever and wherever any of us says one thing but behaves differently, it fundamentally undermines our cause. We must speak out both in private and in public when we see others acting unjustly; being a silent bystander to an unjust act means being complicit in that act.

**Our beliefs, behaviours, relationships, and organisational structures must reflect those we want to see in the world. To do so, we must hold ourselves, as well as our friends, relatives, colleagues and allies accountable.**

**8. Investment in engaging men and boys in gender justice work makes this work more comprehensive. It should not detract from investment in other effective strategies, especially those undertaken by women's rights organisations.** We reject attempts to weaken our alliances or to put complementary gender justice approaches incompetition with one another. We are

representatives of diverse organisations, pursuing multiple complementary approaches. We stand in solidarity with each other and commit to strengthening our shared vision of comprehensive gender justice work.

**We call on policy makers and donors to dramatically increase the resources available for all gender justice work and to include effective gender justice strategies in all development programmes.**

**9. Priorities for specific policy areas and actions for engaging men and boys in gender justice work include: gender-based violence;** violence against women; violence against girls, boys and trans-children; violence among men and boys; violence in armed conflict; violence against human rights defenders; caregiving and fatherhood; gender and the global political economy; sexual and reproductive health and rights; sexual and gender diversities and sexual rights (LGBTIQ); men's and boys' gender vulnerabilities and health needs; sexual exploitation; HIV and Aids; youth and adolescents; the education sector; work with religious and other leaders; environment and sustainability; and strengthening the evidence base.

**10. The Post-2015 Development Agenda must embrace a human rights approach and also transform unequal power relations.** We believe that achieving gender justice requires engaging men and boys for the benefit of women and girls, men and boys themselves, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. For a world that is just, safe and sustainable. **We advocate for all activists, civil society organisations, private sector partners, governments and UN agencies to actively promote these principles and ensure that the new international development agenda is just and inclusive.**

## **Delhi Call to Action**

### **EXAMPLES OF HOW TO ADDRESS GAPS**

**Take work with men and boys from the programme and project level into policies and institutions.**

*The personal is political, and vice-versa.* Accelerating change, moving from the personal to the structural, requires reaching larger numbers of men and boys. We have to put into place systems to ensure institutions and individuals are held accountable for gender equality. We must change systems and institutions, including government, schools, families, the health sector, and the workplace, because they play a critical role in creating and maintaining gender norms, and have the potential to reach large numbers of individuals.

We call for reexamining systems and institutions, including education and training, workplace behaviours and policies, legislations, management of public spaces, operation of faith-based institutions, and prevailing social norms.

Policies and legal reform can institutionalise more gender-equitable relations in homes and offices, factories and fields, in government and on the street. Therefore we must:

- Develop, implement and monitor policies to engage men and boys in gender equality and in building state capacity to implement those policies.

- Actively advance institutional and governmental policies that address the social and structural determinants of gender inequalities, including through advocacy work.
- Train staff to implement these policies.
- Create public awareness campaigns to transform men's and boys' perceptions of gender roles.

**Promote gender equitable socialisation**

We are deeply concerned about the gender socialisation of girls and boys that begins at a very early age and hinders their full potential and inhibits their realising their full rights. We strongly believe that all parents—especially fathers—must demonstrate sensitivity, equitable and just behaviour, especially to boys, starting at home and school.

Reaching out to boys during their critically important formative stage, will contribute to realising a new generation of men with more positive behaviours toward women, children, men and trans-people. It is vital to sensitize and involve boys and girls from early childhood and continue involving adolescents, preparing them to become gender sensitive, equitable and caring adults.

Examples of specific policy areas and actions for engaging boys and men in gender justice include:

- Empower children and young people to develop and foster gender transformative behavior to break the cycle of violence and mobilise them as agents of change.
- Develop comprehensive sexuality education and primary prevention of GBV as an integral part of school curricula, including human rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Create curricula that challenges gender stereotypes and encourages critical thinking.
- Train teachers and administrators to provide gender-sensitive learning environments.
- Utilise lifecycle and socio-ecological based strategies beginning in early childhood and continuing with adolescents and preparing them to be gender sensitive, equal and caring adults.

**Engage boys and men in the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV)**

Men and boys perpetuate the majority of GBV, even as they themselves are harmed by it. Rigid gender norms socialise boys and men to respond to conflicts with violence and to dominate their partners. Men and boys are simultaneously victims of violence and perpetrators. A relevant factor contributing to men's perpetration of GBV is experiencing or witnessing violence while growing up. It is essential to work with men and boys to transform social norms perpetuating GBV, to redress the effects of violence that boys experience and witness, including understanding and addressing root causes of gender inequality, such as unequal power relations, practices and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls, sexual minorities and non-gender conforming people, and promoting alternative role models for boys.

Examples of specific policy areas and actions for engaging men and boys in gender justice include:

- Engaging men and boys to be more equitable in their own individual lives and to reject all forms of violence including domestic violence, and harmful practices such as child marriage and forced marriages, gender biased sex selection, and female genital mutilation.
- Encouraging men and boys to question more pervasive and structural inequalities.
- Promoting policies that integrate primary prevention of GBV targeting men and boys.
- Develop policies to engage men and boys in making public spaces free of violence for women and girls.
- Design programmes for male perpetrators that are integrated with the judicial sector and victim advocacy; implement gun control; and provide legal, financial and psycho-social supports for survivors and witnesses of violence.

## **Engage men as fathers and caregivers and in taking equal responsibility for unpaid care work**

Evidence shows that when fathers are involved with their children at an early stage, including in the prenatal period, there is a higher likelihood that they will remain connected to their children throughout their lives. Given that women and girls carry out two to ten times more care work than men and boys, there is a need to achieve full equality for men's and boys' participation in care work and women's participation in the paid work force with equal pay. This can only be done by fully sharing care work.

Examples of specific policy areas and actions for engaging men in gender justice include:

- Provide public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and families.
- Reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, to allow women in particular more time for other pursuits such as self-care, education, political participation and paid work; and redistribute care-work from poorer households to the state by financing, regulating and providing care services.
- Promote the equal sharing of unpaid care work between men and women to reduce the disproportionate share of unpaid care work for women and girls and to change the attitudes that reinforce the gendered division of labour.
- Promote more progressive paternity leave policies.
- Implement public awareness campaigns and education to transform perceptions of caregiving roles among men.
- Publicly support fatherhood preparation courses and campaigns focusing on men's roles in the lives of children can address fathers' reported feelings of being unprepared for caregiving, and help men perceive benefits from greater participation.

## **Engage men as supportive partners, clients and positive agents of change in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)**

Throughout the world SRHR is largely considered the sole responsibility of women while many men continue to neglect the SRHR needs and responsibilities of themselves, their partners, and their families. Men's lower utilisation of SRH services, like HIV testing and treatment, is a result of both rigid gender norms as well as structural barriers such as clinics that are ill-prepared to address male-specific health issues. As a result, not only are women and girls left to bear much of the burden of their own and their families' SRHR, but men's lack of involvement also places expensive and unnecessary burdens on health systems. Interventions with men and boys on SRHR have been shown to effectively increase men's utilisation of services, as well as support and respect for their partner's SRHR, which in turn improves the health of women, children and men themselves.

Examples of specific policy areas and actions for engaging men in gender justice include:

- Promote accessible sexual and reproductive health services and rights for women.
- Engage men and boys in transforming the rigid norms that shape sexual and reproductive health outcomes and enable them to seek information and services for addressing their sexual and reproductive health needs.
- Provide comprehensive sexuality education that promotes a critical reflection about gender norms, healthy relations, power inequalities.
- Promote men's and boys' shared responsibilities in sexual and reproductive behaviour and rights.
- Expand the availability and use of male contraceptive methods and/or prevention of STIs.
- Create and utilise spaces for men to take responsibility in prenatal and child health services.