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Calling on African Governments to Innovate for Girls' Education

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (SOAWR) joins the global community in celebrating this year's International Day of the Girl Child under the theme "Innovating for Girls Education."

"Access to education for African girls is an essential factor with an impact on their ability to successfully negotiate better opportunities for themselves and for their communities" says Faiza Mohamed, Director of Equality Now's Nairobi Office. Yet, she notes, "in comparison to male children, girls on the African continent continue to access education opportunities at a lower rate."

Article 12 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa calls on governments to take positive actions to amongst other measures *'eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and ensure they have equal access to education and training.'*

This year's International Day of the Girl Child Day's theme indicates an appreciation of the fact that it is now critical to have 'fresh and creative perspectives to propel girls' education forward. In that regard, the SOAWR Coalition calls on African Union governments to ensure that:

- States that have not ratified the Protocol do so immediately, and without reservations on article 12 on the right to education and training.
- In addition to promoting enrolment and retention of girls in schools and training institutions as well as promoting literacy, education and training at all levels and in all disciplines, ratified and non-ratified states should adopt and fully implement innovative measures that ensure girls have equal access to education and training;
 - Elimination of stereotypes in textbooks, syllabuses and media that perpetuate discrimination against girls in learning institutions and in their communities.
 - Protection of girls from all forms of abuse including sexual violence and harassment in schools and training institutions and holding perpetrators of such acts accountable for their crimes.
 - Strengthened partnerships with non-governmental and the private sector organizations to ensure girls receive education and training that addresses both their academic and personal development;
 - Mentorship programs to assist girls hone their leadership skills that will facilitate their transition from school to work;
 - Improve infrastructure that will facilitate the use of advances in technology to reach girls, particularly those in rural areas.

About the SOAWR Coalition:

www.soawr.org

SOAWR is a coalition of 43 organizations working across 23 African states to ensure that the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa remains on the agenda of policy makers and to urge all African leaders to safeguard the rights of women through ratification and implementation of the Protocol.