



NORTH AFRICA YOUTH

BEIJING+30 DECLARATION

FEM - FOSTER. ENABLE. MOBILIZE

AFRICA
YOUNG WOMEN B+25
MANIFESTO



Preamble

We, over 100 youth from North Africa and its diaspora, in partnership with the GEF Action Coalition stand united in our commitment to realizing the goals of the Beijing+30 process within our unique context. For North African feminists, Beijing+30 represents a critical platform to push back against systemic exclusions, both within our societies and globally. Our region's young feminists demand urgent and targeted action that confronts the economic, social and cultural realities that continue to marginalize women and girls, especially within indigenous and rural communities like the Amazigh.¹

RECOGNIZING that the Beijing Platform, which is now marking 30 years since its inception, provides North African feminists with a vital framework for pressing governments to make meaningful strides in gender equality. Therefore, we convened, virtually, the *North Africa Youth Beijing+30 Baraza*, on 04 November 2024 as a call to action for our governments to fulfill their commitments not just in promises but through real, measurable progress that addresses the pressing issues faced by women and girls across North Africa.

CALLING FOR Member States to respect, uphold and implement international human rights frameworks without bias to promote accountability and transparency on the commitments made under the Beijing Platform for Action. In this regard we call for an immediate ceasefire to all hostilities in Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan and Congo and the protection of all women and girls- especially those in conflict settings.

UPHOLDING the power of North African youth and urging all stakeholders to dismantle the colonial divisions that label North Africa as MENA (Middle East and North Africa), SWANA (South West Asia and North Africa), or Arab States. Such designations fracture our identity and obscure our place within the African continent. We demand the full integration of North Africa into African continental processes, affirming our Africanity, connection with the continent and rejecting imposed divisions.

REAFFIRMING the demands made by 1,500 young women across Africa and the diaspora in 2020 through the *Africa Young Women Beijing +25 Manifesto (AYWB+25)*² where 8 out of its 10 demands were incorporated into the United Nations Action Coalitions and Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact.

ACKNOWLEDGING, in solidarity, the importance of amplifying the voices of North African youth, in shaping policies, driving advocacy, co-leading and holding governments accountable to their commitments on gender equality.

TAKING NOTE of the intersectionality of the 12 critical areas highlighted in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, we stand united in our vision for a just, equal and peaceful future for all women and girls in Africa.

We therefore make the following call of action to all Member states, United Nations bodies, African Union and other stakeholders.

¹ <https://minorityrights.org/new-report-sheds-light-on-anti-black-racism-as-well-as-language-and-land-rights-affecting-the-indigenous-amazigh-people-in-morocco/>

² https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39669-doc-africa_young_women_beijing25_manifesto_1.pdf

Economic Justice Rights and Inclusion of Marginalized Communities

The Beijing Platform for Action emphasizes under ‘Women and Poverty’ and ‘Women and the Economy’, the structural and cultural inequalities faced by women in all their diversity that perpetuate their conditions of poverty. In this regard, young women demand under the AYWB+25 Manifesto that *Economic Justice*, with emphasis on Justice, should be prioritized as the normative framework on poverty as well as women's economic rights and empowerment.

In North Africa, women's financial freedom remains a distant reality for many women and girls, particularly those in rural, refugee, internally displaced, living with disabilities and Amazigh communities who continue to be sidelined. The Amazigh people, indigenous to North Africa, often face compounded challenges due to their geographic isolation and exclusion from mainstream economic opportunities, meaningful employment and even basic rights to land and resources. This was a result of the historic colonial legal marginalization of indigenous people which outlawed their language and culture.

In addition to these issues, legal frameworks across the region often fail to protect women in critical areas like inheritance, divorce, and child custody. For instance, in Tunisia, women still face unequal inheritance rights under the country's personal status laws, with a woman's share of inheritance being half that of her male relatives. These gender-based legal disparities exacerbate women's economic vulnerability and perpetuate gender-based discrimination.

Call to Action

1. Implement and strengthen labor policies to recognize women as essential income earners, ensure protections against discrimination, violence, and harassment, creating pathways for economic mobility, especially for marginalized communities,

and recognize care work as paid labor to support women's dual roles as caregivers and breadwinners.

2. Legalize paid maternity leave and institutionalize support for women with children in the workplace.

3. Legalize equal inheritance and land ownership as women's roles have expanded beyond caregiving to core earners of their families.

4. Enforce gender pay equity in leadership roles within the private and public sector and across industries, while increasing women's representation in key economic and public leadership positions, including women ministers overseeing economic portfolios and women in leadership roles within local authorities.

5. Directly address the economic exclusion of indigenous women and in rural settings by providing targeted grants and access to markets for Amazigh artisans, ensuring these programs reach women where they live and work.

6. Expand and enhance STEM training and educational inclusion initiatives for women and girls, ensuring greater access, support, and opportunities for participation and advancement in these fields from women refugees, women in rural areas, and women living with disabilities.

7. Ensure women's digital autonomy and access to affordable, accessible, and reliable technology and digital platforms while ensuring full respect for their human rights online and offline.

8. Foster partnership between government and feminist organizations to co-lead a comprehensive M&E framework with diverse stakeholders, including young women, to track the effectiveness and impact of policies and programs aimed at advancing women's economic justice, rights, and empowerment.

Health and Bodily Autonomy: Addressing Regional Disparities and Harmful Practices

Despite the Beijing Platform's focus on women and health as a fundamental right, North African women and girls continue to face significant barriers in accessing adequate healthcare particularly in sexual and reproductive health, obstetric care and services. These inequities are exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic, the absence of protective laws, gender discrimination bias in diagnoses, and harmful practices such as virginity testing, female genital mutilation (FGM) and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM). While progress is being made to reduce FGM, its prevalence remains high, especially outside major cities like Cairo. This is a trend we see across the region between urban and rural areas.

Furthermore, the intersectionality of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and Mental Health is not adequately addressed. Medical bias often leads to women's health concerns being dismissed as psychological rather than physical, further perpetuating inequalities in healthcare. Additionally, there are few legal protections for women's right to bodily autonomy, with the exception of Tunisia's abortion laws.

Call to Action

- 8. Implement and strengthen legal protections for women and girls**, especially in areas related to unimpeded access to the full range of sexual reproductive health and rights, upholding FGM ban and prohibiting child, early and forced marriages, and enforce policies, especially in medical centers that still perform FGM.
- 9. Criminalize virginity testing**, which continues to be carried out, despite being recognized as harmful and unjustified, severely impacting women's mental and physical well-being.

- 10. Protect Women Rights Defenders (WRDs)** who are often targeted, arrested, and face substantial challenges both online and offline and foster their full participation in advocacy without the threat of reprisal, harassment, intimidation, criminalisation, or violence.
- 11. Improve access to quality education for women and girls, throughout their life course**, especially in rural, indigenous, and marginalized areas to enable women and girls with the knowledge and resources to protect their rights and health, while challenging harmful practices and ensuring safer, more equitable communities.
- 12. Implement campaigns that raise awareness and educate families** about parenting, sexual and reproductive health, legal frameworks for the girl child and cultural topics such as honor.
- 13. Substantially and sustainably fund and support health literacy programs** that equip women and girls with the knowledge to make informed choices, allowing them to exercise their rights and fundamental freedoms, about their bodies, pushing back against social norms that enable harmful practices.
- 14. Encourage monitoring of emerging diseases** that disproportionately affect women and girls, such as HIV/AIDS, maternal health complications, cervical cancer, and gender-based violence-related injury.

Gender Based Violence and Human Rights: Ensuring True Protection

Weak legal frameworks and inconsistent law enforcement, especially in rural and refugee communities exacerbate violence against women and girls in North Africa . In conflict settings like Libya and Sudan or in post natural disaster contexts like Morocco, women face heightened risks of sexual violence, including rape and exploitation.

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) is widespread in the region, fueled by patriarchal norms, misogyny, and a lack of protective legal mechanisms. WRDs continue to face harassment and legal persecution, with some even criminalized for their advocacy including in Libya. WRDs experience GBV in detention, with many subjected to sexual violence, forced marriages, and trafficking.³

Meanwhile, women migrants and refugees, fleeing conflict from other regions as well as internal to North Africa such as Sahrawi refugees, are subjected to severe exploitation and abuse within the region and as they attempt to reach Europe. Trapped in overcrowded detention centers or subjected to violence by authorities and traffickers, their safety and dignity are continuously violated. European governments, through border control agreements with countries like Libya Tunisia and Morocco, have outsourced migration management to regimes with poor human rights records. These arrangements have led to the creation of a “fortress Europe” that leaves women migrants especially black migrants in perilous conditions.⁴ In 2023, children and women made up a substantial portion of arrivals in Italy from Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia. This demonstrates the urgent need for policies that prioritize the safety and rights of migrants and calls upon European governments to provide safe, legal pathways for migration.

Call to Action

16. Uphold international law without bias to halt violence and ensure the safety of all women and girls in conflict settings and hold those perpetrators,

including state and non-state actors, benefiting from trafficking accountable, while respecting the rights of victims/survivors.

17. Implement and enforce anti-GBV laws, combat human trafficking, sexual slavery, and disaster response with clear accountability structures, and digital tools integration, providing women and girls, particularly those in remote areas or facing heightened risks due to ongoing conflict, with accessible shelters, legal resources, and protection services, ensuring the institutionalization of survivor-centered and rights-based approaches.

18. Enforce anti-racism and anti-discrimination laws, combating discrimination, afrophobia, and exclusion against blackness and minorities in North Africa.

19. Create monthly or quarterly open dialogues between governments and feminist civil society to address shrinking civic space as well as track GBV cases and peace-building efforts by ensuring young women co-lead formal peace-building, negotiation, reconciliation and rebuilding processes whose conflicts are interconnected.

20. Promote regular educational campaigns about the role of women and girls in society to men and boys in order to ensure they respect, promote and uphold the rights of all engaging them as allies and supporters of gender justice instead of perpetrators of gender inequalities.

21. Safeguard women journalists from harassment and violence, ensuring their ability to report freely, informed, and safely without reprisal.

22. Close the gap between policy and implementation by providing the right adequate and sustainable resourcing, without reliance on aid, neo-liberal structural adjustment while developing new partnerships and sustainable resourcing.

³ <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/SG-REPORT-2023SPREAD-1.pdf>

⁴ <https://data.unhcr.org/ar/documents/download/109256>

Women and the Environment

North Africa is emerging as a climate change hotspot, with warming rates that are 20 percent higher than the global average. The region is experiencing escalating environmental challenges, including rising sea levels that threaten coastal cities home to millions of people. Erratic rainfall patterns, reduced water availability, and heightened evaporation rates have exacerbated water scarcity, pushing the region to the brink of a water crisis. The Mediterranean's rising sea levels, if left unaddressed, will likely lead to widespread displacement, particularly in coastal areas where many communities are already vulnerable. Additionally, the region's deserts are expanding due to droughts, creating an increasingly arid landscape that threatens agriculture, food security, and livelihoods.

Although North Africa boasts some of the highest levels of solar radiation globally, the share of renewable energy in the region's power mix remains very low except in Morocco. Addressing the intertwined issues of climate, energy, and water presents both an existential threat and an opportunity for transformation.

One of the key challenges faced by organizations working to promote sustainable agricultural practices in North Africa is engaging women in these efforts. While there is growing recognition of the critical role women can play in advancing innovative agricultural solutions, structural barriers, such as low literacy rates and entrenched family dynamics often hinder their active participation, especially in countries like Mauritania.

Call to Action

- 23. Adopt and enforce progressive laws and regulations,** including mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence, that criminalizes environmental destruction and crimes against the environment, ensuring accountability and promoting sustainable practices.
- 24. Integrate language and land justice into environmental justice framing,** addressing the intersection of environmental, linguistic, and land rights to ensure marginalized communities like Amazigh are fully included in environmental decision-making.
- 25. Establish environmental education programs in primary schools** to foster responsibility from an early age with integration into school curriculums and national strategies, and tree planting campaigns as part of both education and community activities, promoting hands-on engagement and sustainability.
- 26. Provide funding and resourcing for small-scale projects** led by women in rural and climate-affected areas, empowering them to harness local resources, market eco-friendly products, and create sustainable income-generating livelihoods.
- 27. Establish a comprehensive monitoring framework in compliance with international obligations,** co-led by feminist organizations to assess the effectiveness of environmental interventions and improvements in local ecosystems.

Leadership, Representation, and Cultural Transformation

Despite the Beijing Platform for Action advocating for more women in political leadership, since 2021 there has been a decline of women in political participation in North Africa.⁵ North African women especially young women, continue to face deep-rooted cultural barriers that limit their roles in political and decision-making spaces due to entrenched systemic misogyny, classism, racism and tokenistic policies that fail to produce meaningful representation. In addition, any women lack a clear understanding of the Beijing Declaration and other gender equality instruments, highlighting the need for stronger representation and advocacy for women.

While quotas and policies exist in some countries, they fail to translate into meaningful access to power. Women's voices are rarely heard or valued by society, often underestimated and overlooked. In Egypt, while a quota for women exists, it fails to genuinely represent the realities faced by Egyptian women and girls. Activists often lack an accurate understanding of the societal landscape, which is influenced by limited awareness, inadequate leadership, cultural extremism on social media, and entrenched patriarchy. Furthermore, social media, while a tool for empowerment, also exposes women to increased violence and cyberharassment.

Call to Action

- 28. Adopt and enforce cybersecurity laws** that create safe digital platforms, with full respect for human rights online, where women and girls can engage and feel secure using social media, and criminalize the use of digital tools to harass women political leaders.
- 29. Enforce 50/50 quotas, affirmative action, parity, and policies** that go beyond special seats, ensuring women's true representation across all sectors, particularly within local and national governance.

- 30. Raise awareness of families about mis- and disinformation** and the media's role in exaggerating news and rumors about security in the region, with a particular focus on how this affects women and girls and their ability to participate in public and political life.
- 31. Coordinate platforms to promote intergenerational, multigenerational and cross-collaboration** between young feminists and women in politics to support the advancement of gender equality across all sectors of government and decision-making and policy-making spaces.
- 32. Invest in young women's leadership programs and support** that provide mentorship, skills-building, networking and financial support to prepare for political office with dedicated funding to initiatives that support young women to thrive and succeed in political leadership roles.
- 33. Strengthen leadership opportunities for indigenous women and women living with disabilities** to ensure all policies and programmes are gender-transformative, rights-based, and that benefit all of society.
- 34. Monitor and evaluate the success of equal representation interventions** and the effectiveness of special seats including their long-term political engagement, career progression, and wage equity.

⁵ <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/2024-07/womens-political-participation-africa-barometer-2024.pdf>

Intergenerational Co-Leadership, Youth-led Innovation & North Africa Integration

As North African youth and feminists, we are at the forefront of change and innovation leading youth movements for democracy since the 2010 uprisings and revolutions of dignity (we reject the Western narrative of the Arab Spring). We recognize 2010-2011 Tunisia's revolution that ended 23 year dictatorship, 2011 Egyptian revolution that ended three decades dictatorship, 2011-2012 Moroccan protests that led to constitutional reforms, 2018 Sudanese revolution that ended 30-year-long military dictatorship, and 2019-2021 Algerian Hirak that ended 20 years dictatorship. Regime change and social change has been led by youth movements and feminists calling for legitimate change, must be respected and protected.

As North African youth's leverage of digital platforms, social media, and grassroots networks for advocacy, mobilization, raising awareness, and challenging entrenched power structures is unparalleled. Yet the average age of political leaders in the region is above 50 years.

As North African feminists, we emphasize that youth should be central to all decisions affecting our present and our futures, especially in a region where our voices and digital presence serve as powerful forces for gender justice. As such we advocate for young people and particularly young women to be within all sectors of decision making from government ministries, parliament, local government and private sector.

Young feminists and organizations still also face challenges related to funding and government oversight particularly those working on women's rights and youth activism.

Call to Action

35. Increase funding and support for initiatives led by youth, especially young women and girls, and grassroots organizations, particularly those focused on leadership, entrepreneurship, and education

36. Develop secure online platforms where young feminists can engage in activism, share information, and mobilize for change without the fear of violence or harassment.

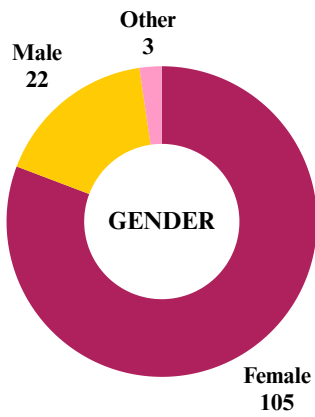
37. Strengthen the representation of young women in decision-making and policy-making bodies, particularly within political, economic, and healthcare sectors with financial backing to participate in political and civic life, pursue careers in leadership, and influence decision-making at all levels.

38. Foster greater cooperation among North Africa and the rest of Africa, as well as between North African feminists and the international community, especially in sharing resources, strategies, and best practices.

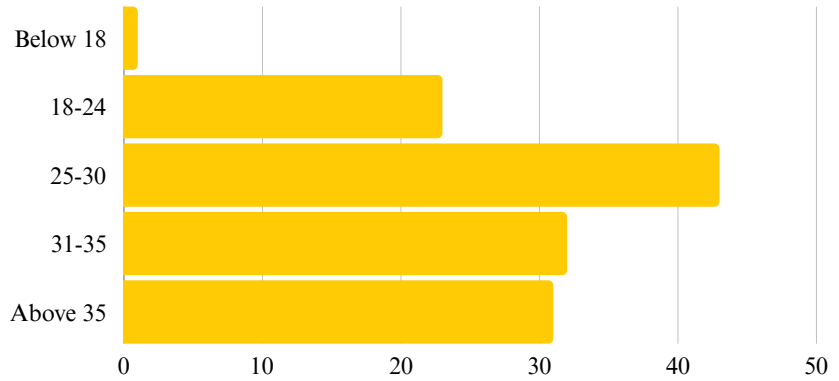
39. Dismantle the division of North Africa from the rest of the continent in multilateral institutions and international organizations' strategies, reporting, and research by ensuring cross-continental engagement, convening, programming, and funding, creating a more unified approach to addressing gender equality and other social issues in Africa.

40. Establish independent monitoring and accountability bodies co-led by young feminists to track progress on gender equality and the implementation of Beijing+30 commitments assessing the impact of policies, programs, and international commitments, providing transparent feedback and fostering accountability, which can support in strengthening the formal national, regional, and international reporting stages and intergovernmental processes when the Beijing Declaration is reviewed every five years.

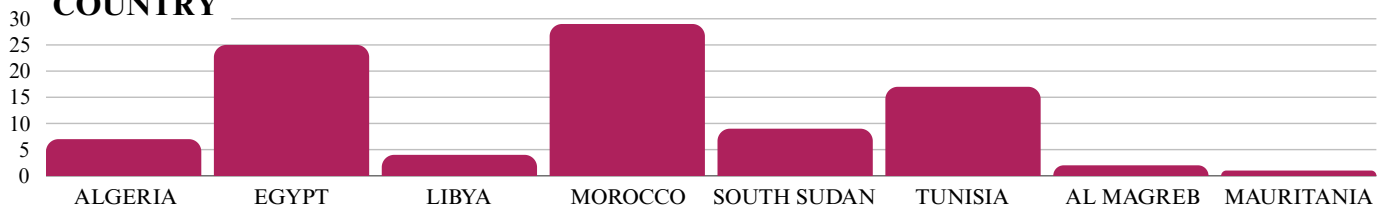
Annex I



DATA



COUNTRY



AREA OF RESIDENCE



AFFILIATION



MARGINALIZED GROUP



DISABILITY



FAMILIAR WITH BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLAN FOR ACTION



SOCIAL MEDIA

Total Reach 96,642 | Total link clicks 1,552



[Watch Video](#)

Nala Feminist Collective (Nalafem) in collaboration with Generation Equality Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, UN Women and North African feminists united youth across North Africa and its diaspora to ensure that the experiences and contributions of North African Youth are incorporated into the Beijing +30 consultative processes and final Political Declaration through this North Africa Beijing+30 Declaration.

Acknowledgments

We extend our deepest gratitude to all those who contributed their voices, time, insights and resources in shaping this declaration, especially the young women and feminists of North Africa. Your experiences, dedication, and resilience are the heart of this movement.

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Conveners

- Nala Feminist Collective
- Generation Equality GEF Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership (FML)

Partners

- African Women's Development Fund
- Climate Sirens
- Her Right to Education Initiative
- International Center for Diplomacy
- Jssor Youth Organization
- Malikah Safety Center
- Politics4Her
- Tunisian Raedat for Equality
- UN Women
- Young Arab Feminists



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