Good morning.

My name is Eileen Reilly and I represent the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

In addition, I am a member of the Working Group on Girls, a coalition of over 40 NGOs who work with and for girls to ensure that their unique needs are addressed.

We welcome the reference in Paragraph 13, under the Guiding Principle of Gender Sensitive,” that proposes “a particular focus on the empowerment of women and girls” . . to move away from victimhood. This is a good first step

However,

The zero draft mentions Girls four times,

But all four are in the context of boys and girls or women and girls. Girls never stand alone in the document.

Additionally, the words child and children are used 32 times, but the unique needs of girls are never highlighted.

Yes, girls do share many of the same issues as boys or women or children,

But girls also have unique needs.

To name a few:

In paragraph 19, section f, there is a call for “access to education.” If that access is to be realized, girls will need measures to ensure their safety to and from school and while in school and they will need adequate sanitary facilities.

We applaud the call to end the practice of child detention in section g of paragraph 27 and would like to see more specificity about the access to education and health care in the alternatives to detention.

Objective 16 about providing access to basic social services could also be strengthened, especially in section g regarding education. Girls need educational settings that are safe, that provide female role models, and that provide gender inclusive curricula.

Finally, in regard to Objective 10 about preventing and combating trafficking in persons I would like to quote Marta Santos Pais, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children, in her statement for International Migrant Day last December when she said: “But all too often, children on the move are not even treated as worthless people, but simply as worthless commodities. Commodities to be bought, sold, abused, exploited, humiliated and excluded. . . Girls particularly face serious risk of sexual abuse and exploitation, and at time may be sold into marriage by their desperate families.”

As the Secretary General said in his report, Making Migration Work for All, “It is crucial that policymakers dealing with migration at all levels consistently prioritize the need to work in a gender-responsive manner, and that they set aside sufficient resources to address gender issues.

Thank you.