International women's day speech

The theme for this year is calling for action that unlocked equal rights, power and opportunities for all and a feminist future where no one is left behind. Central to this vision is empowering the next generation youth particularly young women and adolescent girls as catalysts for lasting change 3-4 minute speech

Hello everyone my name is Stevie Rigby I'm so happy to have the opportunity in my last year of high school to speak at international women's day.

I like to start by thanking Adam, Lucie and the team for all their hard work, putting on such wonderful event which celebrates International Women's Day.

To begin, I wanted to talk about what feminism and a feminist future means to me. I have always been incredibly lucky to grow up with generations of incredibly strong women who taught me that I was whole, since the day I was born so feminism to me was an integral part of who I was and continue to be.

When I started school however and left my bubble of equality I was rudely awakened to the misogyny that was embedded into everyday life and culture. For the first time in my life I was told that I was less than because of my gender and from there it only grew. The pressures to be

perfect and be desirable consumed my early teenage years and still affects me now: your eyebrows are too light you, have to use mascara, you're too pale, you're too loud, you're not allowed to say that, these words echoed in my brain and infiltrated what i saw every time i looked in the mirror. Suddenly there was a divide

in the worth between my male counterparts and I. I realised that I was not equal as I thought and it rocked my world. I reflected on who I was and who I wanted to be and came to the conclusion that my self worth did not depend on what society wanted from me or what I had been told I should be. From then I decided that those words of ignorance and misogyny that had reverberated in my brain would not determine my femininity and what I was worth.

I knew what feminism was before the word had even been spoken to me and yet in my teenage years it became a derogatory term, something used to shame women for seeking equity, it became a word that I was afraid to identify with because of the meaning that had fallen upon it and I'm positive that I'm not the only girl who has felt this way but i can not stress enough to young girls how important it is to stick to what you believe in and stand firm in your beliefs.

I've been doing some research lately on some of the more recent issues surrounding female access and it would be silly not to mention the obvious abortion rights battle that is happening in America where women are once again battling against men for autonomy over their own bodies.

2.5 million women in the us have been denied contraceptive care and Some 68,000 women die of unsafe abortion annually, making it one of the leading causes of maternal mortality but this is not the only issue killing women, 69 women last year where reported dead with the cause being domestic violence and those are only deaths that where reported. And in 2024 Afghan women were banned from reading, singing and speaking in public by the taliban.

Women's rights are human rights, not something that should be defined by race, ethnicity or religion. All women should feel safe in the world that they live in and feel like the space they hold is warranted, not fear for the lives of themselves and women around them. Laws about women should be made by women for women but this battle is not yet won. We must continue the work of these incredible women who have been fighting for feminism since 1848. To do this we must all be unabashedly feminist and empower and encourage one another. This is the way that we have made change and the only way we can become catalysts for lasting change as women of the future