

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN  
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES**

Equal Rights – Equal Responsibilities  
Droits Egaux – Responsabilités Egales



**ACTION PROGRAMME 2018-2020**

Adopted at the XXXVII Congress, Nicosia, Cyprus, October 2017

**DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE**

Women's rights are human rights.

Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. The International Alliance of Women (IAW) affirms that full and equal enjoyment of human rights – as laid down in treaties, conventions and declarations – is due to all women and girls. The IAW maintains that a prerequisite to securing those rights is the universal ratification and implementation without reservation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). IAW and its members urge governments to ratify and implement the Optional Protocol to CEDAW.

The 2030 Development Agenda of the UN aims to transform the world. Gender equality and women's empowerment are recognised as a precondition to this transformation and as part of the SDG goals.

The IAW Congress calls on its members to monitor the fulfilment of all these commitments and to hold governments accountable for their realisations. The IAW faces dramatic new challenges to its goal of achieving equal rights and equal responsibilities for women due to a violent backlash against women's human rights in recent years.

We call on governments, the private sector, international financial institutions and our members to work for a macro-economic model that does not put profits over the interests and needs of people in particular of women, and promotes a culture of peace, justice and respect for human rights.

*The Action Programme for 2018 – 2010 has seven pillars: Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls, Human Rights, Climate Change, Health, Peace, Women and the Economy, and Democracy.*

## 1. ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

### Strategy:

Promote programs of action and other measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls in all its forms, at national, regional and international levels. Enact and/or reinforce legislation and monitor its implementation.

### Actions:

- Work for the implementation of CEDAW taking into consideration GR 19 and GR 35 adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
- Work to promote the ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating VAW and domestic violence. Submit shadow reports to Grevio.
- Work for the elimination of violence against women and girls in all its forms in public and private spaces including harassment in the workplace, sexual harassment, sexual and gender based violence, domestic violence, trafficking in persons and femicide as well as harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, recognizing that these are major obstacles to the realization of women's human rights.
- Lobby governments for the adoption and/or enforcement of legislation against VAW including against State agents who commit acts of violence against women and girls. Monitor the impact of this legislation on the elimination of VAW and channel information to shadow reports.
- Lobby governments for the establishment or strengthening of complaints mechanisms which allow women and girls to report and file charges against perpetrators of VAW in a confidential environment. Evaluate the results and channel information to shadow reports.
- Support victims of VAW to obtain justice and to have access to just and effective remedies.
- Lobby governments for shelters and relief support to women and girls subjected to VAW as well as for medical, psychological and other counseling services including free legal aid. Monitor the situation and channel this information to shadow reports.
- Lobby governments for the creation of training programs on VAW for judicial, legal, medical, social, educational and police personnel. Evaluate the impact of the training on progress achieved in the elimination of VAW and channel the results to shadow reports.
- Lobby governments to adopt special measures against VAW for women and girls in vulnerable situations (young, refugees, displaced, migrant, disabled, etc.). Monitor the impact of these measures and channel information to shadow reports.
- Raise awareness of the health and socio-economic impact of VAW, especially in the mass media.
- Participate in campaigns at the national, regional and international level that inform and educate the public concerning VAW.
- Work with the media for the promotion of non-stereotyped images of women and girls and for informing the public about the causes and effects of VAW. Evaluate the impact of these measures and channel this information to shadow reports.
- Advocate against the violation of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict, in particular murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy.
- Help men and boys to engage fully as agents and beneficiaries of change with the aim to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in both public and private spheres. Inform men and boys of the root causes of gender inequality such as unequal power relations, gender stereotypes and negative social norms.
- Cooperate with the UN special rapporteur on VAW and contribute to its work.

- Lobby governments to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. Advocate for governments to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to modern slavery and exploitation. Lobby governments to enhance international cooperation in order to eliminate the demand which fosters all forms of exploitation including sexual exploitation and forced labour.
- Advocate for the provision of programs to heal and rehabilitate into society victims of trafficking through job training, legal assistance and confidential healthcare.
- Ask governments to collect data on the prevalence of different forms of violence in particular harmful practices and new forms of violence like cyber stalking, online trolling, ISIS instigated violence against women and girls, femicide and channel this information to shadow reports. Lobby governments for the implementation of measures to eliminate them.
- Lobby governments to fund NGOs that work to eliminate VAW.

## 2. HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights are at the core of IAW, especially the human rights of women and girls. Mention of human rights can already be found in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, in the two covenants, ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both 1966), and in the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women 1979). Important also are the Treaties on the Rights of the Child, on the Rights of Migrants, the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Convention for the protection of the Rights of People with Disabilities.

In 1993, the Vienna Declaration stated that women's rights are human rights.

IAW and its members will work for the ratification of these treaties in their countries and the lifting of reservations, if any.

IAW and its members will help the work of the Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures by contributing to NGO shadow reports whenever their countries come up for review. Generally, that is once every four years. They will also, if necessary, contribute to the reports of the Universal Periodic Review cycle.

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) were adopted by the UN General Assembly.

Women all over the world have worked very hard to get a stand-alone goal for the empowerment and the equality of women. The Human Rights Treaties and the SDG's must mutually reinforce each other. Next to the women's equality and empowerment goal 5, most of the 17 SDG's are also about the human rights of women.

Substantive equality between women and men can only be achieved when 'gender' is taken into account. Inequality is a result of unequal power structures and specific expectations according to which women and men have their own role in the family and society, and that men are worth more than women.

The Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures do that implicitly.

The CEDAW plea to eliminate discrimination should be understood as a means to bring women up to the level of men, and-to-redress disadvantages.

Stigma, prejudice, stereotyping and violence should be addressed.

If we do not only want accommodation but also insist on transformation, existing structures must be reformed.

Finally, women should have a voice and the ability to act as agents of change. Locally, an initiative like ‘Cities for Cedaw’ can contribute to this.

### **3. CLIMATE CHANGE**

Climate change threatens the realization of women’s rights and human rights, threatens the achievement and sustainability of development outcomes, threatens natural environments and biodiversity, threatens the economy and livelihoods, threatens food security and food production, threatens water security and threatens peace. IAW cannot uphold its objectives and principles without paying attention to climate change. Climate change intersects and worsens the outcomes on all other action programme pillars: on justice, democracy, peace, economy, elimination of violence against women, and health.

IAW is committed to the following actions on climate change during triennium 2018-2020:

1. Enhance the connection between global policy on climate change and IAW member organizations that work on the ground
  - 1.1. Support IAW member organizations to contribute to climate change policy making on the global, national, and local level
  - 1.2. Facilitate the exchange of information on women and climate change between IAW and member organizations
    - 1.2.1. Facilitate the dissemination of information to the national and local level about outcomes, challenges, and opportunities in climate change policy, so that IAW member organizations can effectively engage with governments and participate in the negotiations and policy processes at all levels.
      - Facilitate direct communication from member organizations to IAW regarding climate change actions and policies on the national and local levels so th International Alliance of Women can represent the interests of its members internationally and support the exchange of information across the Alliance about successes and challenges on the ground
    - 1.3. Organize interactive meetings, workshops, and updating sessions on women’s rights and climate change each year to facilitate the exchange of information between IAW and member organizations
      - 1.3.1. Organize interactive meetings at the IAW Triennial Congress to facilitate the exchange of information on global, national, and local climate change policy processes and actions on the ground and to finalize the Action Programme
      - 1.3.2. Organize workshops at the Board Meeting with IAW Conveners of Commissions and International Representatives to improve the work on climate change and women’s rights

across all areas

- 1.3.3. Organize an updating session at the International Meeting to update the Presidents of member organizations on policy outcomes and opportunities for input, and to update the Presidents of member organizations and officers of IAW on success stories and challenges on women's rights and climate change from actions at the grass-root level.  
Recommend specific and real commitments on women's rights (economic rights, political rights, social rights, and reproductive and sexual rights) in all areas of climate change policy and implementation action plans, including indicators in these fields and adequate financing
- 2.1. Recognize the need to move forward on finding solutions to women's rights and climate change according to the realities of different countries. Only then will success be achieved in reaching out to the population at large
- 2.2. Recognize the urgency of integrating women's rights in climate change policies, which is indeed a challenge for achieving sustainable and equitable climate compatible development
- 2.3. Recognize interrelations between women's rights, climate change, and all areas of sustainable development in policy, implementation and financing
- 2.4. Recognize that empowerment of women and achieving equal socio-economic rights for women is mandatory in order to build climate resilience
- 2.5. Prioritise the needs of women in disaster risk reduction and recovery, including safety, access to information, access to decision-making, and access to sexual and reproductive health services
- 2.6. Prioritise the needs of women climate refugees, including migrant and displaced women, who are at risk of increased violence against women, trafficking and exploitation with consequences on their sexual health rights, and loss of access to health services due to migrant status including those related to family planning
- 2.7. Prioritise the needs of rural women and women food producers, especially considering ensuring women's land rights, access to information and decision-making on climate change adaptation, access to climate resilient crops, and access to climate insurance
- 2.8. Recognize the rights of indigenous women in climate change policy, and the knowledge of women about biodiversity protection
- 2.9. Recognize the rights of children and the rights of girls in the context of climate change
- 2.10. Recognize linkages between climate change and women's health
- 2.11. Recognize that women are primary caregivers and that negative health effects of climate change, including higher incidence of infectious, waterborne and vector-borne diseases, will increase their burden
- 2.12. Recognize the central role women play in limiting household air pollution from cookstoves, benefiting health and climate

- 2.13. Recognize sexual and reproductive health rights in the climate change agenda: at a personal level, supporting self-determination and productive/reproductive work balance within the microecology of the household, at a policy level, resulting in a more balanced population/carrying capacity ratio
- 2.14. Recognize fundamental standards on women's rights and human rights in all climate change measures that help contain population growth, ensuring rights of women to make decisions freely (whether to have children, how many, and when), and to have access to information, services, and contraceptives
3. Engage in the global climate change policy development under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
  - 3.1. Obtain United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) observer status [Decided by IAW Triennial Congress in London Adopted IAW Resolution; IAW Observer application process initiated ahead of COP 21 in Paris in 2014]
  - 3.2. Contribute to the UNFCCC negotiations process by providing ideas, knowledge, analysis, and actions that enhance the outcomes for women's rights and climate change
  - 3.3. Provide language recommendations and technical expertise to governments
  - 3.4. Provide written input on views and information on issues under negotiation
  - 3.5. Join efforts with and contribute to the work of women's and NGO groups and constituencies
4. Strive to obtain funding for and implement the International Alliance of Women Programme on Climate Change and Sustainable Development

#### **4. HEALTH**

IAW supports the UN Sustainable Goal 3, "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" on the whole, and as a guideline for the IAW Action Programme 2018-2020. We strongly request a regular follow-up system at several levels, with national and NGO indicator-based reporting and statistical information in percentage and absolute figures, as well as binding agreements for implementing this SDG goal!

Violence against women and girls comprising both structural and personal violence is addressed in Goal 5, "Achieve gender equality & empower all women and girls". Violence is an overarching issue with an immense impact on the victims' physical and mental health. We request a critical analysis of the socio-economic and societal structures with a view to changing them, and thus to improve women's status and wellbeing in all countries.

A. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) must be universally accessible.

#### **IAW requests**

**2.** Governments and societies that deny women these rights to immediately fulfil their obligation by implementing universal sexual and reproductive health policies, programmes and measures and to consider the immediate and long term benefits for families and for society as a whole.

3. Our membership to spread information about what is at stake and lobby and advocate for change.

**SRHR include:**

- No female genital mutilation/cutting and other traditional practices affecting the health of girls and women
- Obligatory and comprehensive sexual-education for girls and boys to reduce unwanted pregnancies and the personal and societal burden of HIV/AIDS-
- Universal access to family planning with particular attention to women's and adolescents' unmet needs for counselling and family planning services
- Access to safe and legal abortion combined with family planning counselling
- No forced marriage which deprives young girls and women of personal liberty, proper education, and restricts their opportunities for gainful employment
- No abuse of women especially young women as "reproductive machines"
- Reduction of maternal deaths in percentages and in absolute numbers
- Reducing physical and mental morbidity of women related to pregnancy and child-birth
- Combating all forms of sexual exploitation and violence including mass and gang sexual aggression-

Non-communicable diseases (NCD)

IAW selects two priority issues to be dealt with from 2018 to 2020.

We ask our membership to spread information about what is at stake, lobby and advocate for change.

**1. Smoking**, which entails a heavy toll of cancers and of Chronic Respiratory disease (CRD)-

Women's health is severely affected by

- Active smoking which is increasing fast among women and girls. Cessation tools should be made available everywhere to smokers who want to quit. Women also need to be protected from false advertising about how "safe" electronic cigarettes are.
- Passive smoking which is particularly risky for pregnant women and babies.
- Health risks such as CRD and blindness related to cooking in dwellings without outlet for the smoke. This violates women's right to a safe and clean environment.

**2. Cervical cancer** which, according to WHO, currently affects an estimated one million women the vast majority of whom are living in low resource countries-

IAW therefore

- 2 Requests universal and easily accessible health services for prevention, curative treatment or palliative care.
- 3 Asks for access to the Visual Inspection method with Acetic acid, VIA, in settings where sanitary infrastructure is poor.

## **5. THE HUMAN RIGHT TO PEACE / PEACE AND SECURITY**

Goal: To end war, civil conflict, to fight against the arms trade, to promote peace (the human right to peace) and to achieve a peaceful resolution of violent/armed conflicts.

Strategy: To promote conflict prevention and achieve peaceful conflict resolution with women as part of the decision-making<sup>1</sup>

### Action:

- popularize and promote the implementation of UN Security Council Res. 1325 and following resolutions;
- formulate National Action Plans, if possible in collaboration with like-minded NGO's, and with governments;
- monitor and evaluate the UN peacekeeping structures in conflict and post conflict operations for gender mainstreaming;
- promote women's training in negotiating skills and their participation in peace negotiations;
- work for the control and reduction of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and fight against their illicit trade;
- work for the abolishment of nuclear weapons and the shutdown of nuclear power plants;
- protest against the development and use of new, sophisticated weapons such as war drones;
- support the International Criminal Court in its work to hold governments and individuals accountable for their violent acts particularly against women in times of war and civil conflict;
- advocate for improved protection of women in violent conflict and post conflict situations and promote access to justice for victims of violence;
- help to prevent conflict over resources by protecting the environment and by supporting environmental education;
- promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;
- form coalitions with other peace and anti-war activists.

### Indicators to measure success:

- UN Indicators for monitoring implementation of UNSCR 1325
- EU indicators for the comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the UN SCRs 1325 and 1820
- UN Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security, 2011-2020.

## **6. WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY**

Strategic Objective:

Promote women's economic and social rights, equal access to and control over economic resources, equal access to employment and appropriate working conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> It has to be pointed out that it is up to the national situation, to the availability of resources and skills of IAW members to decide on their priorities. After the three years the IAW Peace Commission intends to monitor the achievements and to publish an overview of the strategies and actions chosen.

#### Actions:

- Advocate for the ratification and implementation of CEDAW and other relevant Conventions and Treaties, as well as ILO Standards and core Conventions related to the realization of women's right to work and rights at work. Lobby governments to review their reservations regularly, with a view to withdraw them
- Advocate for the elimination of structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including discriminatory laws and policies, gender stereotypes and negative social norms
- Advocate for the elimination of employment discrimination against women, including occupational segregation and its vertical and horizontal dimensions in all sectors
- Work to support women to diversify their educational and occupational choices
- Monitor the implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in the public and private sectors as a critical measure to eliminate the gender pay gap
- Work towards establishing or strengthening gender-responsible social protection systems, including social protection floors, to ensure full access to social protection for all and the closing of the gender pension gap
- Advocate for the reduction of women's disproportionate ~~a~~ representation in informal work and the elimination of the structural factors that contribute to the rise of informal employment
- Advocate for measures that promote the transition of informal workers to the formal economy by providing social protection, safe working conditions and equal pay for equal work
- Advocate for the need to recognize, reduce and redistribute the disproportional women's share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men and by prioritizing inter alia social protection policies and infrastructure development
- Advocate for taking measures for women with disabilities, indigenous women, women migrant workers and other categories of vulnerable women so they can have access to decent work on an equal basis with other women in the public and private sectors. Work to address the multiple and intersecting forms of barriers and discrimination they face
- Promote the entry, re-entry and advancement in labor markets of all women, in particular women returning from care breaks and older women
- Advocate for the promotion of rural women's access to and control over productive resources, land, credit, capital, property rights, and development programs
- Enact and/or enforce laws against sexual and other forms of harassment in the workplace
- Promote the election of women trade unions officials
- Work for redesigning and rethinking budgeting to ensure that all budget lines work for gender equality and the human rights for all citizens
- Provide business services training, access to markets information and technology in particular to low income women and strengthen their commercial networks
- Promote and support women's self-employment and the development of small enterprises and strengthen women's access to credit and capital on equal terms with men
- Promote women's participation in high level economic decision making including the formulation and implementation of financial, monetary, commercial and other economic policies
- Advocate for a gender impact assessment of all economic decisions and measures on the micro- and macro-economic levels to ensure that progress in gender equality is achieved
- Advocate for a gender sensitive analysis of the impact of the economic crises on women and responses thereof
- Work for the imposition of the Tobin Tax on all financial transactions across the world

## 7. DEMOCRACY

### **Strategic Objectives:**

Ensuring women's equal access to and full and effective participation in power structures and decision making in all fields of society, at all levels.

Ensuring implementation of agreed policies, treaties and commitments.

Increased awareness and recognition that Gender Equality is not only a fundamental Human Right, but also indispensable for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

An increase of the present worldwide numbers of 22 per-cent women in national parliaments, 18 per cent women ministers, 7 per-cent women presidents and prime ministers, 8 per-cent in Business Boards, less than 50 per-cent in the labour market; less than 30 percent in judiciary etc.

### **Actions:**

- Reminding authorities and raising awareness among people and the media, that the importance and value of women's contribution as equal partners have been acknowledged as indispensable in numerous International Conventions and Treaties leading to legal commitments.
- Advocating the implementation of those legal and other agreed commitments, including those of SDG5, by UN, Intergovernmental Organisations, governments and other responsible authorities and holding them accountable.
- Monitoring women's equal access to and full and effective participation in power structures and decision making at all levels in the political, judicial, economic, social, cultural and media fields.
- Working to ensure the equal participation of women and men in political parties at all levels in order to ensure inclusive and effective democratic governance – 'a women-friendly democracy'.
- Working for a change in electoral systems to promote gender parity / parity democracy in elected bodies p.e. replacing simple plurality with proportional representation and adopting effective quotas for women.
- Working for women's equal participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and state building and holding UN and governments accountable to do so in accordance with the binding UN SC Res.1325.