

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Egaux - Responsabilités Egales



ACTION PROGRAMME 2005-2007

adopted at the XXXIII IAW Congress, Freiburg, Germany, September 2004

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE

Women's rights are human rights.

Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

The IAW affirms that full and equal enjoyment of human rights is due to all women and girls.

The IAW maintains that a prerequisite to securing these rights is the universal ratification and implementation without reservation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It urges its members to pressure their governments to ratify the Optional Protocol to CEDAW.

The importance and value of women's contribution as equal partners has been acknowledged in the numerous United Nations world conferences held during at the end of the last century. Of particular relevance for women is the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, to which 189 member states have committed themselves.

The IAW calls on its members to monitor the fulfilment of these commitments.

After 100 years the Alliance faces dramatic new challenges to its goal of achieving equal rights and equal responsibilities for women. Today, as it was in the beginning of this Alliance, peace is important for women, both as sufferers of non-peace and as suppliers of skill in keeping peace.

HUMAN RIGHTS

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

The IAW, taking into consideration that the maximum participation of women in political life is a vital prerequisite of democracy for the realisation of gender equality in the political field and for the establishment of peace and social justice,

- a) urges governments to ratify and fully implement their commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to:
 - achieve, by any means necessary, women's equal participation (i.e. a 50/50 per cent women/men) in all decision making positions of political power at all levels;
 - consider women as an invaluable resource and take positive measures to enable women to participate in decision making, planning and in advisory bodies so as to ensure that women's perspectives are recognised;
 - review, develop or establish national and international machinery to effectively enforce and monitor measures towards achieving civil and political equality for all.
- b) urges its member organisations to exert pressure on their governments to ratify and fully implement their commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to:
 - inform women to be aware of their rights;
 - exert pressure on their governments to adopt and implement all provisions contained in international instruments pertaining to women's rights.
- c) urges the mass media to
 - recognise and discuss the importance of commitments made by governments and of monitoring the fulfilment of those commitments.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

IAW, taking into consideration that the ratification and full implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is vital for the life of women worldwide, therefore urges:

- a) governments to

ratify and implement in national legislation the relevant provisions of this important human rights instrument;

- b) member organisations to follow up the implementation and inform their members of all economic, social and cultural rights.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

When exercising their fundamental human rights, women today are constantly under attack. This backlash is due to economic factors, ignorance and in particular the continuation of those cultural and religious practices that deny women their rights.

Special attention must be given to the rights of girls and women to health because of the impact that neglect has on the enjoyment of other rights and freedoms.

One aim of the Action Programme for the period 2005 – 2007 is to encourage and direct IAW Affiliates and Associates to work for the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol. These actions would encompass

- informing girls and women of the Convention itself through educational programmes, media, workshops, national and regional conferences, campaigns etc.;
- publishing the Convention in the languages needed;
- working with other NGOs;
- reminding government departments and agencies of their responsibilities under the Convention and putting pressure upon them to develop programmes to assist women;
- working with and supporting the national machinery for women;
- monitoring their government's progress in implementing the Convention and producing alternative "shadow" reports to their government's reports.
- lobbying their governments to
- support the holding of the 5th World Conference on Women no later than 2010

- endorse and implement laws and actions regarding international criminal law in all its fields
- enact and implement laws and take actions against trafficking and all forms of exploitation of girls and women
- ensure that those governments which have ratified the convention, avoid resorting to reservations and that no reservation is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

As part of their commitment to the International Alliance of Women, members of the IAW are encouraged to share information with each other in order to facilitate their work and to build on each other's experiences. In addition, they should share their information with other women working in the field of women's rights.

The IAW will continue its commitment in line with the principles of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

EDUCATION FOR ALL – LEGAL LITERACY

The right to education is a fundamental human right. Education is the basis for the empowerment of women in order that they may become and remain free, independent and self-reliant. The main objective must be to eradicate illiteracy among women all over the world and to overcome all prejudice regarding girls' access to school. It must include vocational and professional training to enable women to make full use of their potential. Basic education is a prerequisite for legal literacy.

The IAW therefore

- a) urges governments to
 - establish universal, compulsory, primary education for all;
 - establish open universities for women of all ages;
 - allocate sufficient funds for the education and training of all women;
 - promote gender sensitisation of education;
 - promote human rights education;
 - mount and/or support legal education programmes of all international laws and regulations concerning women's rights.
 - involve women in educational decision making at all levels;
 - educate women and men in environmental issues and sustainable development.
- b) urges the mass media to
 - increase programmes/articles with educational and human rights themes.
- c) expects IAW member organisations to
 - inform members of the mass media and alternative media on a regular basis of their activities and views reflecting the reality of women's lives;
 - urge governments to fulfil their commitment to gender parity in school attendance by 2005 and gender equality in all areas of civil life by 2015, as established by the UN Millennium Development Goals;
 - monitor the implementation of free compulsory education for all.

HEALTH

The right to health is a fundamental human right. The IAW has identified healthy lifestyles for women throughout their lifespan as a major issue to be promoted in the current triennium. The girl child should be as valued as the boy child in matters of nutrition and nurturing. The self-determination of women in matters relating to reproductive health must be recognised (using the World Charter on Sexual and Reproductive Rights of the IPPF).

- a) The IAW therefore urges governments that
 - reproductive rights be implemented for all women, especially the right to refuse unprotected sex, unwanted pregnancies and unwanted abortions;
 - good quality pre-natal and post-natal care according to WHO standards be provided;
 - predetermination of sex of unborn children for non-medical reasons be declared illegal;
 - female genital mutilation be banned and abandoned everywhere

- b) In the field of nutrition, the IAW urges governments to
 - provide basic nutrition on the basis of FAO and WHO guidelines
 - provide basic amenities like clean drinking water and sanitation services;
 - protect the right to healthy nutrition for girls as well as for boys.
- c) In the field of substance abuse, women are victims in a double sense: health deterioration due to self-consumption and violent behaviour of drug-addicted family members.
- d) In the field of HIV and AIDS, the IAW urges governments to
 - promote prevention and to provide free anti-retroviral drugs for all.
- e) The IAW further urges governments to
 - combat the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, psychotropic drugs as well as over-medication;
 - prohibit the export of expired medical drugs to developing countries.

In all health matters, the IAW urges its member organisations to

- lobby for the implementation of health legislation;
- lobby for adequate education;
- pressure relevant authorities to provide gender-disaggregated data;
- communicate about and assist in the distribution of information
- promote women-specific counselling, research and therapies;
- encourage good quality medical care throughout the lifespan.

VIOLENCE

The IAW strongly urges the elaboration of an International Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Children on the basis of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (World Conference on Human Rights 1993).

The IAW identifies the major issues to be dealt with in the current triennium:

- a) **Trafficking in women and children** is a violation of their human rights. International sex tourism, must be effectively combatted.

The IAW therefore urges its member organisations to

 - use mass media to increase public awareness, in particular in the case of mail-order brides;
 - work for the enforcement of existing laws and the adoption of new legal instruments where necessary;
 - lobby for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children;
 - lobby for all child pornography to be banned;
 - take appropriate measures to protect the girl child and her rights;
 - work for the adoption of legal instruments whereby the perpetrators of international sex tourism can be punished in both the country of their residence and the country in which the crime is carried out;
 - increase research into all aspects of sex trafficking.
- b) **Domestic Violence** should not be seen as a private family matter but as a crime, which is not tolerated by society and government.

It encompasses physical, mental and/or sexual abuse, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women.

The IAW therefore asks its member organisations to urge governments to

 - observe the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (UN resolution A/48/104) and work with the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women;
 - adopt measures to condemn rape and other violence perpetrated against women, children, the elderly and disabled;
 - implement measures to ascertain the extent of violence within families;
 - support the establishment and funding of shelters, safe houses and crisis centres for women and girls.

The IAW urges its member organisations to work for

 - increased awareness of this hidden crime of violence by national/local authorities by informing, sensitising and

educating organisations like the police, legal system, media as well as the community at large;

- the protection and the genuine equality of the girl child;
- the establishment and funding of shelters, safe houses and crisis centres for women and girls.

c) Violence in General

The IAW urges its member organisations to:

- use the mass media to publicise all forms of violence including violence for reasons of sexual orientation (UN resolution A/48/1);
- work for the protection of refugees and migrant workers against rape and other violence;
- sensitise officials to the gender aspects of violence and to the extent of violence against women in society;
- work for the protection of women and children in times of war and conflict.

POVERTY

The faces of poverty are many. They are one in every five. The majority of them are the faces of women. The globalisation of trade and employment exacerbate this problem.

The IAW therefore

- a) requests governments to ensure and facilitate action to review, adopt and maintain economic policies, including social security measures and development strategies, that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty;
 - include women as participants at all levels of economic policy planning and decision making, as well as beneficiaries of such policies;
 - achieve equal access and pay for women in employment at all levels and in all areas;
 - provide equal access for women to financial and economic resources;
 - legislate minimum wages and minimum income for all;
 - enable all countries suffering from natural and man-made disasters and war have adequate disaster relief mechanisms in place, recognising that women and children suffer the most in all these situations.
- b) urges governments and communities to
 - recognise the economic value of women's domestic labour and unpaid work and to transform that recognition into social and other benefits for women, taking into consideration their multiple roles as breadwinners, mothers, nurturers, mediators;
 - adopt measures aimed at the sharing of unpaid work between women and men;
 - fully implement the International Labour Organisation Convention on Paid Maternity Leave.
- c) urges its member organisations to
 - ensure that private initiatives, such as Women's World Banking and other sources of low interest loans and grants, are widely publicised in order to enable women to acquire affordable finance in their own right;
 - monitor governments' and states' achievements in eradication of poverty.

GLOBALISATION

In order to make the best use of globalisation for the benefit of women it is necessary for them to understand the mechanisms of the process and to develop strategies both to combat the negative effects and to grasp the opportunities it provides. In order to achieve this, we must remind ourselves that economic development, social justice, and environment are interlinked.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Affiliates and Associates should play their important role in decision making by carefully studying and analysing any proposed national plan for economic development, so that women can benefit equally from these plans. They should also monitor these plans to make sure that they are effectively implemented.

To this end Affiliates and Associates should

- encourage the introduction of income generating schemes in order for women to achieve economic independence;

- take the necessary action at state and community level to prevent the migration of women's jobs as a result of decisions taken by multinational corporations;
- make their members aware of their legal rights, including the rights set out in the ILO Conventions, ensuring that consideration is given to local laws and regulations;
- safeguard women's rights and security while welcoming co-operation between multinational corporations and NGOs;
- take action against the increasing poverty amongst women working in the informal economy.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social Justice requires the full and equal participation of women.

To this end Affiliates and Associates should

- demand that basic social services remain the responsibility of governments;
- insist that energy, water, food and nutrition, health and education remain the paramount concern of their own and their government's programmes;
- make basic health and reproductive health care available to all women;
- carry out projects to improve the situation of elderly women and widows;
- ensure that women heads of households are recognised and provided with support where necessary.

Public resources and activities must be available to both girls and boys on a basis of equality in order to develop their personalities without the constraints of stereotyping.

In carrying out child related activities, IAW members are asked to promote official and public awareness of the fact that the girl child is in no way inferior to the boy child and that she should enjoy equal rights and dignity.

ENVIRONMENT AND HABITAT

An unhealthy environment cannot bring about sustainable economic development and therefore it is essential that Affiliates and Associates acquire sound environmental knowledge and culture.

To this end Affiliates and Associates should

- work in every community on the local Agenda 21 and local Habitat;
- monitor the pollution and the degradation of the environment and make national governments accountable;
- monitor the use of environmentally hazardous chemicals with emphasis on their disastrous impact on reproductive health;
- work towards the elimination of the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides to promote safe food production so that women regain access to and control over food production (organic farming) and food security at local and community levels;
- ensure that their income generating projects are environmentally and socially sustainable and initiate training programmes for women in eco-auditing and eco-certification;
- examine partnerships between multinational corporations and small regional manufacturers in their countries to ensure the use of environmentally safe practices

The IAW urges member organisations to monitor the implementation of treaty obligations that refer to the environment and implement the following UN instruments:

- Agenda 21 of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;
- the Beijing Platform for Action K regarding Women and Environment;
- Habitat Agenda of United Nations Commission on Human Settlements;
- environmental health programmes of World Health Organisation.

SHARING IN PARTNERSHIP

is essential to the work of IAW

Through networking amongst members, particularly by making full use of information technologies, we can make this Action Programme come true.

Website:

www.womenalliance.com