



Charter of Principles

for Women's Platform for Action International

As laid out in the Statutes, this Charter of Principles defines the values of the organisation. It serves as a foundational document directing the work and mission of Women's Platform for Action International.

Preamble

In recognition of the persistent and pervasive discrimination, inequalities, violence, and oppression faced by women and girls worldwide, Women's Platform for Action International (WoPAI) asserts its commitment to the realisation of women's rights as human rights. We dedicate ourselves to realising the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and further advancing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in line with the values and aims laid out in these Principles. We strive for a world where women and girls exercise fully their human rights and fundamental freedoms, a world where women and girls' inherent dignity is respected, a world where women and girls' equal and inalienable rights are recognised as part of the foundation of freedom, justice and peace, a world where women's lives are in no way limited by men's violence. Women's organisations from all countries that share the values and aims of WoPAI as laid out in these principles are welcome to be members.

1. Vision and Purpose

1.1 Vision

- Our vision is a world where women's human dignity is respected, and where women and girls fully exercise their rights and freedoms, as a foundation for a human agreement for our global future.

1.2 Purpose

- To take action for the acceleration of women and girls' rights globally by realising CEDAW and further advancing the BPfA in the context of other relevant international instruments.

- To advocate for advancing women’s rights and ending violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- To hold regional and international institutions and States accountable for upholding women’s rights standards.
- To ensure women and girls’ rights are integral to the international human rights framework.
- To strengthen the collective voice of the global women’s rights movement, based on the shared values laid out in this Charter.

2. Guiding principles

2.1 Women sex-based rights

- We affirm the importance of recognising, protecting and realising women and girls’ rights not to be discriminated against on the basis of sex, acknowledging that women are discriminated against because of their role in procreation, and other biological distinctions.
- We advocate for substantive equality for women and for general measures, differentiated measures related to biological differences and temporary special measures to correct historic and structural problems faced by women.
- We advocate for policies and laws that specifically address and protect sex-based rights to ensure women and girls can live free from violence, exploitation, and discrimination.
- We promote women and girls’ interests in the areas of economic, social and political rights, access to justice, fundamental rights and liberties, health and wellbeing, education and lifelong learning, innovation and technology, peace and security, asylum and international protection, migration and freedom of movement, freedom of thought and expression, environmental justice, media and journalism.
- We work to protect women’s human rights to assembly and association based on sex, as well essential for women’s dignity, safety and wellbeing single-sex services and spaces.
- We work to eliminate all forms of VAWG, including all forms of commodification of women and girls for sexual, reproductive or other purposes.

2.2 Universalism and Intersectionality

- Women’s rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent. Human rights cannot be infringed on the basis of sex. These are inalienable rights that cannot be called into question for cultural, customary or religious reasons.

- We apply intersectionality as a method for recognising and analysing the cumulative effects of oppression, as addressing the interweaving of different systems of domination is an essential prerequisite to achieve women and girls' rights, and substantive equality between women and men globally.
- We advocate for the rights of the most at risk groups of women and girls, and work towards the meaningful inclusion of organisations representing them in our advocacy and actions. This includes girl children, migrant, refugee, and asylum seeking women, undocumented women, pregnant women and mothers, poor women, illiterate women, women with disabilities or health conditions, ethnic minority women, lesbian and bisexual women, elderly women, young women, widows, women in the care and domestic sectors, women in prisons or detention centers, homeless women, as well as women in state custody.

2.3 Holistic Understanding of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

- We understand VAWG as a form of discrimination against women and girls, based on their sex.
- We promote a holistic understanding of VAWG as a continuum, encompassing psychological, economic, administrative violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, reproductive violence, traditional harmful practices and so-called honor crimes, conversion practices on lesbians, sexual and reproductive exploitation of women (including in prostitution, surrogacy, and pornography), sexual harassment and digitally facilitated forms of violence against women and girls, traffic in women and girls, torture of women and girls, femicide, as well as emerging forms of VAWG.
- We address the underlying mechanisms of VAWG such as structural inequalities between women and men - including in the areas of education, employment, decision-making, or access to resources - patriarchal norms, prejudice, stereotyped roles of women and men, and harmful socio cultural practices, including new and emerging, as well as traditional, customary and religious practices.
- We advocate for consistent application and enforcement of laws to address different forms of VAWG, ensuring that no type of violence is overlooked or minimised.

2.4 Solidarity and Partnership

- We build a global democratic partnership of women's organisations to strengthen the global women's movement.
- We foster solidarity among women's organisations across all continents.

- We affirm our will to strengthen existing member organisations and other actors that share our values and aims, through joining forces.

2.5 Political and Religious Independence

- We maintain political and religious independence to ensure unbiased advocacy for women's rights.

2.6 Transparency and Anti-Corruption

- We maintain democratic values and transparency in all operations, decision-making processes, and financial management.
- We establish mechanisms for accountability to ensure the organisation remains true to its missions and principles.

2.7 Sustainability

- We promote sustainable development practices that consider the unique impact on women, particularly those in vulnerable situations.
- We foster resilience within the women's movement to adapt to changing global contexts, backlashes and challenges.

3. Strategic Objectives

3.1 Advocacy and Accountability

- Stop the erasure of women in law and policy as well public debate, and promote a shift away from a legal culture that is blind to the sex-based realities of women and girls.
- Harmonise legal frameworks in a way that meaningfully encompass the specific situations of women and girls worldwide.
- Promote a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing discrimination and VAWG globally.
- Advocate for the implementation and advancement of CEDAW and BPfA globally, and for the full exercise by all women and girls of their human rights, targeting the UN and other international bodies.
- Hold governments and international institutions accountable for women's rights international law commitments.

3.2 Capacity Building

- Enhance the capacity of women's organisations through training, resource sharing, and collaborative initiatives.

- Support women's grassroots initiatives to amplify their voices on the global stage.
- Increase funding and resources for women's rights organisations worldwide.
- Build capacity of women's rights organisations across all continents to effectively take part in relevant reviewing processes of UN bodies (eg: submission of shadow reports to the CEDAW committee, joint reports for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the Human Rights Council, etc.)
- Conduct educational campaigns to raise awareness about women's rights and the importance of CEDAW, BPfA and other relevant international frameworks
- Collectively organise to meaningfully participate in the yearly CSW and other relevant UN processes.
- Collectively organise to monitor and influence institutions acting on global or regional levels with importance for the improvement of women's lives. Collectively organise to meaningfully participate in the yearly CSW and other relevant UN processes.

3.3 Backlash

- Build strategies and actions to respond to the threats to women's rights, wherever they come from.
- Counteract efforts to deprive women of sexual and reproductive rights, as well as political, and civic rights, and any other rights.
- Coordinate actions to end male violence against women and girls globally, and fight its root causes, including sexist stereotypes.
- Counteract narratives and initiatives that appropriate women's language, feminist principles and hard won international human rights law framework to confuse and dilute women's rights.
- Combat the intersection of the patriarchal system with all other domination systems, enforced by different ideologies such as colonialism, racism, neoliberalism, postmodernism, queerism, totalitarianism, authoritarianism, fundamentalism, natalism, etc. and extremist, anti-human's rights movements.
- Combat the use of information and communication technologies when it promotes rape culture, objectification of women and girls, masculinist ideologies, silencing of women, impunity of perpetrators, and when it facilitates VAWG.

3.4 Sex-Disaggregated Data:

- Advance the collection, harmonisation, diffusion, visibilisation, and access to sex-disaggregated data in all areas globally.

- Support, conduct and promote research to document and analyse the status of women's rights globally.
- Utilise data to inform advocacy strategies and policy recommendations.

3.5 Language and Communication

- Advocate for language and terminology in legal frameworks that reflects the realities of women and girls.
- Advocate for making sex-based rights visible, and women recognised as legal persons in legal frameworks.

Conclusion

Women's Platform for Action International stands as a unified voice for the global women's movement. We are committed to advocating for the full access, recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights for women and girls, and for the elimination of sex-based discrimination against them. We recognise the urgency of the current situation and the need for immediate, concrete action to build capacity, unite women's rights organisations, and advocate for comprehensive legal and policy reforms at global level. Together, we strive to create a just world for all in which substantive equality for women and girls is achieved.