



Socialist International Women

Council Meeting
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For a world 50-50 in 2030: The Great Challenges

RESOLUTION

Socialist International Women (SIW) remains firmly supportive of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by the UN in 2015 and their essential role in influencing member states to incorporate policies which promote gender equality, environmental and social responsibility and the development of sustainable growth. SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls is the essential foundation required to achieve 50-50 gender parity by 2030. This aspect affects all areas of social, economic and political life making it vital to the achievement of global equality. The normalisation of gender equality within global cultures, legislation and policies is essential to ensure the full realisation of the balanced and gender inclusive contributions necessary to create peaceful, collaborative and sustainable social democratic communities which benefit all citizens.

While women have more than proven their invaluable capacity to enrich the social and economic prosperity of global society one of the biggest challenges to equality is that millions of women remain a voiceless under-class with minimal if any gender supportive legal rights, protections and freedoms. Intolerable gender inequality persists in far too many regions and affects women's ability to be educated to their full potential, financially independent, healthy, safe and living fulfilling lives where they are in control of their own bodies and destinies. It is therefore immensely important that the determination of the socialist women's movement continues as the struggle for equality is far from over. Women are certainly much more vocal in today's world, but as women's power grows there have been backlash movements emerging which are attempting to diminish women's influence, confidence and resilience. These movements have produced deeply demeaning, xenophobic, misogynistic and aggressive language and graphic representations in the media as well as personal physical violence. In solidarity women are far more powerful and organised than they have ever been and have a potent capacity to fight back. It is vital that women use all available tools, including social media, networking and tenacious political pressure to ensure that attacks on women's human rights and the propagation of toxic ideologies are defeated.

Another set of challenges are the increasing level of global political instability and civil unrest and the threat of future displacement due to severe climate change. Some of these issues have already resulted in large migrant populations most of whom exist without citizenship status and are therefore denied basic human rights or protections. These include some of the most vulnerable groups in society including millions of women and children. Gender based violence and abuses of all kinds including rape and human trafficking increases amongst these groups resulting in immense suffering and lasting physical and emotional scars. It is vital that we work together to create and implement solutions which address the critical needs of these groups both now and in the future.

The on-going economic difficulties being experienced in numerous regions present a further challenge in the form of political attitudes to the allocation of resources. Financial cuts are invariably made to projects which support the most vulnerable members of society, including a disproportionately high number of women. Economic poverty often leads to corresponding social poverty where isolation and lack of emotional support compounds existing issues. Giving critical issues affecting women a lower priority is an inexcusable political choice which must be strongly

challenged and changed. Women must continue to fight for their right to equal treatment, regardless of economic restraints, so that women and men receive equal support in priority areas.

To speed up the rate of progress a significant leap forward is urgently required in the governance of regions and nations to provide platforms for women to express their views and influence the creation of gender sensitive laws, policies and particularly funding decisions for essential projects. In some regions gender progressive initiatives have been halted, such as support for women affected by gender based violence, which reverses all the positive results achieved. Without formally recognised legislation and policy frameworks the rights, freedoms and protections of women remain at the mercy of predominantly male political forces. Their support and sympathy can certainly be won, but senior political figures can and do change. As recent global political events have shown attitudes can shift negatively and legislation can be repealed to create severely oppressive environments alarmingly quickly. This has already produced negative populist movements which degrade women's rights, divide communities and increase conflict. It is critical to actively oppose the deeply disturbing spread of discord and marginalisation of vulnerable groups and its destructive effect on democracy and all politically weaker groups including women and migrant populations.

The SIW firmly believes that increased political participation by women is the way forward and will continue to support and encourage all activities which achieve this end. This work is urgent and vital as currently there are still very few women in influential political posts. The latest available figures from the Inter-Parliamentary Union as at April 2018 show only 23.8 per cent of elected members of parliaments worldwide are women. This means that the priorities and views of women remain largely un-represented in global national governance. For this reason the SIW places particular emphasis on SDG 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life as a vital foundation for the full emancipation of women and girls.

As we strive for women's rights within our own communities we also consider women and girls in all regions worldwide and support our most vulnerable sisters in their fight for empowerment. In alignment with the UN SDG 5 the SIW asserts that it is only by women and men working together as equal partners that sustainable solutions which genuinely respect and benefit all can be created.

The SIW calls on its members and affiliated groups to:

- *Prioritise* issues affecting women and girls in current and future political debate and party manifestos to encourage the political will to push through changes to existing legislation, policies and practices which discriminate against women and girls.
- *Urge* governments to commit to taking full responsibility for implementation of gender equality issues immediately by creating accountability measures within government reporting processes to the electorate and ensuring the protection of gender equality within legislative measures for women and girls as an inalienable human right.
- *Recommend* strongly that now is the time for governments to implement the use of inclusive dialogues promoting gender equality as automatic requirements through legislation and policy within educational environments and public and corporate bodies as well as the media. Advocate that these measures are urgent and vital to ensure that the principles and behaviours associated with genuine and meaningful gender equal outcomes are normalised and integral across all aspects of society.
- *Confront existing and on-going* demeaning and abusive legislation, language, practices and behaviours, including in print, online and visual media to ensure that governments, public and corporate bodies as well as individuals are censured for malicious intent. This must include the creation of robust laws which adequately define the full spectrum of abusive actions and provide

appropriate levels of meaningful sanctions such as significant financial penalties or revoking of broadcasting licences.

- *Challenge* governments to firmly commit to making 2030 the year when the world becomes 50-50 and gender equality is a daily reality for all women and girls and ensure regular public review of progress.
 - *Encourage* and support the widespread use of positive dialogue across all of society regarding women and girls both in public and private life to ensure that the contributions of women in all areas of social, environmental and economic prosperity are recognised and become a natural part of the global narrative regarding women and girls worldwide.
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