

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

STANDING COMMITTEES' PLANS OF ACTION 2015 - 2018

ACRONYMS:

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
e.g.	for example
ICW-CIF	International Council of Women – Conseil International des Femmes
i.e.	that is
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
NC	National Council
NC(s)W	National Council(s) of Women
NCDs	Non Communicable Diseases
SC	Security Council
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
STEM	Science Technology Education and Mathematics
UN	United Nations

ICW-CIF STANDING COMMITTEES' PLANS OF ACTION 2015-2018

Triennial Theme "Transforming Society through the Empowerment of Women"

STATUS OF WOMEN

Working on this Plan of Action National Councils are urged to be mindful of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) which replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) in 2015, Beijing Platform for Action and applicable UN Conventions and look to running workshops on topics/issues of importance to you.

i) HUMAN RIGHTS

National Councils to:-

- Monitor and report on the situation of violence against women and girls' in their respective country.
- Formulate and implement programmes to urge that governments and international organizations take stronger measures against violence, including stronger criminal penalties, anger management programmes and the protection of victims.
- Monitor and report on the discrimination in women and girls' equal access to all levels of education including rural and remote areas

ii) INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PEACE

National Councils to:-

- Promote peaceful co-existence and international understanding by peace education through school programs and establishing appropriate mechanisms and frameworks for effective peace building.
- Create dialogue among women from conflict zones by developing professional exchanges and organizing educational and cultural events and developing joint projects.
- Initiate training activities/workshops/seminars for women's involvement in decision-making at all levels.
- Monitor the implementation of SCR 1325, SCR 2122 and related SC Resolutions.

iii) LEGISLATION

National Councils to:-

- Formulate and implement programmes to realise the legislation of political and economic equality and the empowerment of women.
- Formulate and implement programmes to legislate for stronger measures against violence, early marriage, and trafficking of women and girls.

iv) IMPLEMENTATION OF CONVENTIONS

National Councils to:-

- Monitor and report on the implementation of gender equality under CEDAW.
- Develop programmes to implement the international conventions.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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i) ECONOMICS

National Councils to:-

- Continue to work for equal pay for work of equal value.
- Address the issue of domestic violence against women and children often caused by economic hardships.
- Encourage economic freedom of women through programmes in their countries e.g.: selling of goods.
- Distribute information and hold courses on micro-management loans.
- Encourage sustainable use of resources.
- Promote gender balanced investments.

ii) WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

National Councils to:-

- Promote equal pay for equal work.
- Prevent exploitation of part time and casual workers.
- Promote the balance of work and family life.
- Advocate for job security for those returning from maternity leave.
- Advocate for the retraining of women returning to the workforce e.g. after caring for family members

iii) CONSUMER AFFAIRS

National Councils to advocate:-

- For protection of purchasing goods via the internet.
- For the distribution of information to women of their rights as purchasers of goods and services.
- To encourage manufacturers and retailers of consumer goods to provide accurate simple information about products and to give adequate recourse for defective goods.
- To encourage networking between women on issues relating to consumer affairs
- To ensure disadvantaged women have access to financial assistance and support.

iv) RURAL AND URBAN WOMEN

National Councils to:-

- Encourage equal representation of women in the community and local Government.
- Promote equality in all spheres of life.
- Advocate for ready access to markets to sell produce.
- Make provision of readily and accessible services e.g. transport, health, education and legal.
- Formulate and implement programs to improve the economic empowerment of women including job creation and entrepreneurship.

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GENERAL WELL-BEING

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To link the General Well-being portfolio, it is suggested this framework of the Life Cycle is used being mindful, in particular, of the girl child, the elderly and women's social standing. Empowering women to be able to transform society requires that women's rights become implemented at all levels of society and in all cultures. Empowering women requires the removal of all barriers to gender equality, this means ending all violence against women, acknowledging and remunerating all care work, eliminating control over assets and property and ensuring equal participation in decision making in all sectors.

i) HEALTH:

In working to empower women and enhance their general status by improving both their mental and physical health and therefore well-being across the lifespan; being mindful to the health of every woman is crucial to the development of their nation.

Ensure culturally appropriate, accessible, affordable and quality health care for all women and their families and that the principles of Sustainable Development Goals no. 3 are adhered to.

Suggested areas of work by National Councils are to:-

- Improve maternal and infant health.
- Improve the health of the girl child.
- Improve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene with special attention to the needs of women and girls.
- Ensure the accessibility to appropriate health care pertaining to reproductive health in all stages of life.
- Improve access to preventative health, i.e. education and programmes through the entire lifespan.

ii) ENVIRONMENT:

To empower women to embrace the importance of environmental issues and to collaborate with and give support to those organisations and governments at local and national levels working toward a healthy total ecosystem.

Suggested areas of work by the National Councils are to:-

- Promote the acceptance of the rights of women and of their obligations to be equally represented in all decision making processes in relation to the environment and challenges of climate change.
- Promote effective mechanisms to mitigate and adapt to climate change related issues particularly focusing on women and girls.
- Promote environmental conservation and sustainability.
- Promote and educate the community, particularly women and girls, to be prepared in the event of a natural disaster e.g.: flood, earthquake, cyclones.

GENERAL WELL-BEING continued

iii) HABITAT:

- To empower women toward capacity building on awareness of housing rights, inheritance rights and land issues.
- To encourage and ensure the participation of women in decision making policies including environmentally friendly housing.
- To provide access to clean, safe drinking water and good water management.
- To make cities and human settlements **affordable**, inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Suggested areas of work by the National Councils are to:-

- Reduce poverty and homelessness for the girl child; and provide access to adequate safe housing and basic services.
- Promote good town planning including clean water, sanitation and waste management.
- Promote proactive policies in favour of strengthening effective women's rights to land and shelter.
- Urge governments to give women full and equal rights to own land and other property including inheritance rights.
- Work with respective governments at all levels to ensure good governance in all habitat matters and that the principles of Sustainable Development Goals nos. 9 and 11, are adhered to.

iv) NUTRITION

- To promote the importance of food security.
- To educate and promote the prevention of food wastage.
- To network with other NCsW and to share their successful experience.
- To promote a healthy lifestyle and prevent non communicable diseases (NCD) through better access to nutritious food and regular physical activity.
- To provide comprehensive evidence-based information and education about nutrition through the communication channels available.
- To create sound policy frameworks, at regional and national levels, to address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and older women based on the principles of Sustainable Development Goal no. 2.

Suggested areas of work National Councils are to:-

- Emphasize the importance of an adequate nutritious diet for the girl child
- Address the nutritious needs of pregnant and lactating women.
- Promote healthy lifestyle after menopause.
- Attain healthy lives for all: by strengthening work on prevention of alcohol and tobacco abuse.
- Promote food security; ensure access to nutritionally adequate safe culturally appropriate and affordable food.
- Ensure availability and sustainable use of water and sanitation for all: achieve safe and affordable drinking water
- Promote the understanding of food labelling.

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COMMUNICATION

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i) ARTS AND LETTERS:–

It is about communicating which is two way.

Artists need viewers, writers need readers, a good writer can change attitudes; a good painter can touch your soul.

NC's urged to communicate with their members and others by:-

- Encouraging interaction and action e.g. art exhibitions, poetry and essay competitions for all ages, as well as fundraising.
- Using posters and electronic media to educate, even without a common language, for affirmative action in politics, women's entrepreneurship, good health practices (such as hand washing and safe food handling) to encourage more sustainable lifestyles and choices for all women and their families.'
- Performing arts can lift the spirits of all, in particular the isolated, the elderly and the very young.
- Incorporating arts and letters in getting your message across in all that you do.
- Use of arts and letters as therapy.

ii) EDUCATION

National Councils to advocate for:-

- The importance of education from early childhood.
- The importance of support and appropriate education to cater for all forms of disabilities.
- Equal access to all forms of training and higher education e.g. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- The importance of good teaching and the updating of skills.
- Education of young women in everyday life skills.

iii) MASS MEDIA

National Councils to advocate for:-

- Appropriate use of Mass Media to promote gender equality e.g. in the prevention of violence, pornography and human trafficking.
- Responsible reporting of violence against all women and girls.
- Promoting good well-being including health issues, recreation and body image.
- The development of good relations with local, national and international media.

iv) MUSIC

National Councils to:-

- Promote equal access for women musicians to apply for the positions in the field of music including education.
- Raise awareness of empowerment through self-confidence.
- Recognize music as a form of communication e.g. to promote health and wellbeing.
- Promote women composers and performers.
- Insist on equal pay when negotiating salaries.
- Promote traditional folk music.

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SOCIAL ISSUES:

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i) CHILD AND FAMILY

National Councils to:-

- Improve the well-being of children and their families including health, housing and education.
- Protect the girl child from all forms of discrimination.
- Protect children from all forms of abuse.
- Foster positive parenting.

ii) YOUTH

National Councils to:-

- Recognise young people, including those with disabilities, as an asset to their societies.
- Encourage the development of education and training systems more in the line with the current and future needs of young people in their societies
- Advocate for the needs of indigenous youth including their cultural heritage.
- Advocate for infrastructure for training youth to become future leaders, in particular young women.
- Urge for the allocation of a proportion of all relevant departmental budgets to youth development.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle (sport, nutrition and body image).
- Recognise the mental and physical health needs, including reproductive and sexual health, of the young
- Support programmes for planning for their financial future.
- Identify and participate in sustainable environmental programmes.

iii) AGEING

Being aware that the percentage of the elderly population is increasing, National Councils should:-

- Develop and apply at the international, regional and national levels policies designed to enhance the lives of the aged.
- Promote national and international understanding of the humanitarian and developmental issues relate to ageing.
- Advocate for appropriate and affordable housing.
- Should advocate for the expenditure on ageing to be considered as a lasting investment.
- Recognise and acknowledge the valuable contributions of the aged to the community e.g. mentoring the young.

iv) MIGRATION

National Councils to:-

- Work towards supporting and caring of refugees including asylum seeking women and children.
- Encourage, monitor and advocate for good policies in their countries (including registration).
- Be mindful of the International Conventions to improve the protection of people against smuggling and trafficking
- Prevent exploitation of migrant women **and girl** workers.