

DEMANDS OF THE WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN, adopted in 1998 and revisited
in 2001

TO ELIMINATE POVERTY

P-1 That all States adopt a legal framework and strategies aimed at eliminating poverty.

A legal framework is an “umbrella” law with a broad scope that provides general guidelines, affirms principles and sets goals. This legal framework must be the basis for other laws that a government would want to put forth on the same subject, specifically the elimination of poverty. The term “legal framework” may vary according to the country. In some Latin American countries, for example, the term “national agenda” is used.

This legal framework must include measures to guarantee the economic and social autonomy of women through the exercise of their rights. It must include provisions for adopting laws, programs, action plans, and national projects specifically to ensure that women suffer no discrimination in their rights, and that they have access to the following:

BASIC RESOURCES

Safe water
Production and distribution of food to ensure food security for the population
Decent housing
Basic and reproductive health services
Social protection
Life-long income security

CULTURE

An end to the process of homogenization of cultures

CITIZENSHIP

Recognition of citizenship through access to relevant documents (identity card)
Equal participation in political decision-making bodies

NATURAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Ownership of family assets and the equitable distribution of inheritances
Credit

EDUCATION RESOURCES

Literacy
Vocational training
Scientific and technological knowledge

EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Pay equity and equality at the national and international levels

A minimum social wage
Statutory protection for work in the home and in the informal sectors of the economy
Unionization and freedom of association
Decision-making positions
The respect of labour standards (in all workplaces including free-trade zones) as adopted by the International Labour Office

EQUALITY IN TASK SHARING

States must develop incentives to promote the sharing of family responsibilities (education and care of children and domestic tasks) and must provide concrete support to families such as daycare adapted to parents' work schedules, community kitchens, programs to assist children with their schoolwork, and so on. States must therefore take all possible steps to end patriarchal values and sensitize the society towards democratization of the family structure.

Women also demand that there be an end to the process of homogenization of culture and the marketing and commercialization of women in the media to suit the needs of the market. They insist that States and international organizations take measures to counter and prevent corruption.

All acts, legislation, regulations and positions taken by governments will be assessed in the light of indicators such as:

- Human Poverty Index (HPI), put forth in the Human Development Report (1997)
- Human Development Index, put forth by the United Nations Development Programme;
- Gender-related development index (including an indicator on the representation of women in positions of power), proposed in the Human Development Report (1995)
- Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization concerning rights of Indigenous peoples

P-2 The urgent implementation of measures such as:

The Tobin Tax; revenue from the tax would be paid into a special fund:

- earmarked for social development;
- managed democratically by the international community as a whole;
- according to criteria respecting fundamental human rights and democracy;
- with equal representation of women and men;
- to which women (who represent 70% of the 1.3 billion people living in extreme poverty) would have preferred access.

The investment of 0.7% of the rich countries' gross national product (GNP) in aid for developing countries;

The adequate financing and democratization of United Nations programs that are essential to defend women's and children's fundamental rights, UNIFEM (UN Women's Programme), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNICEF (UN children's fund);

An end to structural adjustment programs;

An end to cutbacks in social budgets and public services;

The rejection of the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

P-3 Cancellation of the debt of all Third World countries, taking into account the principles of responsibility, transparency of information and accountability.

We demand the immediate cancellation of the debt of the 53 poorest countries on the planet, in support of the objectives of the Jubilee 2000 campaign.

In the longer term, we demand the cancellation of the debt of all Third World countries and the setting up of a mechanism to monitor the debt write-off, ensuring that this money is employed to eliminate poverty and to further the well-being of people most affected by structural adjustment programs, the majority of whom are women and girls.

P-4 The implementation of the 20/20 formula between donor countries and the recipients of international aid.

In this scheme, 20% of the sum contributed by the donor country must be allocated to social development and 20% of the receiving government's spending must be used for social programs.

P-5 A non-monolithic world political organization, with authority over the economy and egalitarian and democratic representation of all countries on earth (ensuring parity between poor countries and rich countries) and equal representation of women and men.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

The World March expects to contribute to setting up a world economic system that is fair, participatory and socially cohesive. It puts forth a more structural demand for a **Council for Economic and Financial Security** to take charge of:

- redefining the rules of a new world financial system geared toward a fair and equitable sharing of the planet's wealth, toward social justice and the improved well-being of the world population, specifically for women who make up more than half of this population;
- exercising political control over financial markets;
- “disarming” markets, preventing them from damaging societies and systematically creating instability, insecurity and inequality;
- ensuring diligent regulation and monitoring of economic, financial and commercial organizations;
- exercising democratic control over commercial trade or, in other terms, applying “zero tolerance” on the criminal tendencies of the economy.

The Council's membership is not yet defined and must be debated at the international level. We do, however, put forth a few general guidelines in the Council's makeup that are part of the strict minimum: the Council's membership must include representatives from civil society (NGOs, unions, etc.), ensure parity between men and women and reflect parity between countries from the North and South.

Among the conditions for achieving this goal, the World March's demands for the immediate future are:

- the **elimination of all tax havens** (there are about forty havens including Gibraltar, the Cayman Islands, Liechtenstein, etc.) whose very existence constitutes a form of legalized theft by allowing financiers, companies, political leaders, etc. to hide "their" money and to avoid paying taxes and obeying the laws and regulations of States;
- **the end of banking secrecy**, an anti-democratic practice that constitutes another form of legalized theft;
- **the redistribution of wealth** currently monopolized by the seven richest industrialized countries.

LEGAL ISSUES

The World March considers that the elimination of poverty is not merely a goal to reach but a right that must be implemented immediately. This is the source of our demand for a **protocol for the application of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**.

P-6 That the embargoes and blockades-principally affecting women and children-imposed by the major powers on many countries, be lifted.

We reaffirm our commitment to peace and to the protection of the democratic and autonomous operation of nation-states.

TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

V-1 That governments claiming to be defenders of human rights condemn any authority-political, religious, economic or cultural-that controls women and girls, and denounce any regime that violates their fundamental rights.

V-2 That States recognize, in their statutes and actions, that all forms of violence against women are violations of fundamental human rights and cannot be justified by any custom, religion, cultural practice or political power. Therefore, all states must recognize a woman's right to determine her own destiny, and to exercise control over her body and reproductive function (right to abortion and contraception, freedom from forced sterilization, and the right to have children).

V-3 That States implement action plans, effective policies and programs equipped with adequate financial and other means to end all forms of violence against women.

These action plans must include the following elements in particular: prevention, public education, legal action, "treatment" of attackers, research and statistics on violence against women, assistance to and protection of victims, campaigns against pornography, procuring, and sexual assault, including child rape, non-sexist education, easier access to the criminal justice system, training programs for judges and police.

V-4 That the United Nations bring extraordinary pressure to bear on member states to ratify without reservation and implement the conventions and covenants relating to the rights of women and children, in particular, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers.

That States harmonize their national laws with these different international instruments in addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the Cairo and Vienna Declarations, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

V-5 That, as soon as possible, protocols be adopted (and implementation mechanisms be established):

- to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

These protocols will permit individuals and groups to file complaints against a State. They constitute a means of exerting international pressure to force States to implement the rights mentioned in these pacts and conventions. Genuine sanctions against non-compliant States should be adopted.

V-6 That mechanisms be established to implement the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, taking into account recent relevant documents such as the two resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly (1996) concerning trafficking in women and girls and violence against migrant women. *There will be an addition calling on States to ratify the Convention of December 2000 on transnational organized crime, in particular the two additional Protocols on the trafficking in persons.*

V-7 That States recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and conform in particular to the provisions, especially those that define rape and sexual abuse as war crimes and crimes against.

V-8 That all States adopt and implement disarmament policies with respect to conventional, nuclear and biological weapons. That all countries ratify the Convention Against Land Mines.

That the United Nations end all forms of intervention, aggression and military occupation, assure the right of refugees to return to their homeland, and bring pressure to bear on governments to enforce the observance of human rights and to resolve conflicts.

V-9 That the right to asylum for women victims of sexist discrimination and persecution and sexual violence be adopted as soon possible.

The next two demands did not receive the agreement of all the women present at the 1998 meeting where we adopted our world platform for actions in 2000. Certain national coordinating bodies did not defend them. They are, however, included in the world platform. At our October 2001 meeting, we decided to ask all national coordinating bodies to discuss their position on these demands during the next year.

V-10¹ That, based on the principle of equality of all persons, the United Nations and States of the international community recognize formally that a person's sexual orientation shall not bar them from the full exercise of the rights set out in the following international instruments: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

V-11 That the right to asylum for victims of discrimination and persecution based on sexual orientation be adopted as soon as possible.

¹ Demands V-10 and V-11 were not unanimously adopted by the women attending the meeting in 1998 where we adopted our world platform for the 2000 actions. Some national coordinating bodies therefore did not incorporate these demands in their actions. They are nevertheless an integral part of the world platform.