



The Institute
for Women, Law
& Development

From Basic Needs to Basic Rights

A Women's Rights Agenda for the 90's and Beyond

**Outcome
of Strategy
Meeting held
October
24-28, 1994**

Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia

从基本需要到基本权利 —— 九十年代
及未来的妇女追求目标

من المقومات الأساسية إلى الحقوق الأساسية
أجندة حقوق المرأة في عقد التسعينات و ما بعده

**De las Necesidades Básicas
a los Derechos Fundamentales**

Una plataforma por los derechos de la
mujer para la década del 90 y después

**Des Besoins Fondamentaux
aux Droits Fondamentaux**

Un programme pour les droits de la femme
pour les années 90 et au delà

От основных потребностей
к основным правам
программа женских прав в
девяности годах и будущем

Suggestions for using this agenda to promote women's rights throughout the world:

- Widely disseminate the document in order to inform and challenge the public about women's needs and rights.
- Discuss the issues outlined in the agenda with women's rights, human rights and other activist organizations to motivate them to action.
- Mobilize organizations, coalitions, political parties, etc., to adopt one or more of the suggested strategies.
- Send the document to government officials and discuss with them how the recommendations can be incorporated into national and regional policy.
- Bring the agenda to the attention of educational institutions and encourage educators to include segments of the agenda in their curricula.
- Inform the media about the agenda and challenge them to give increased attention to women's rights.
- Use the document to engage religious and cultural leaders to reconsider and change practices that are detrimental to the exercise of women's rights.
- Challenge the international community to incorporate the agenda's recommendations into the Platform for Action to be adopted at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women.

***Be creative in finding ways
to promote and implement the agenda. . .***

From Basic Needs to Basic Rights

A Women's Rights Agenda for the 90's and Beyond

From October 24 to 28, 1994, more than 100 women human rights activists from 47 countries met together in an international strategy meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to assess recent gains and to plan future strategies in the continuing struggle for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women. The analysis and recommendations from the meeting form the core of a women's rights agenda presented here as a guide for future action that will make rights real in women's lives.

I. Preamble

1. The World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985 recommended state actions necessary to eliminate the wide range of discriminatory practices that maintain the pervasive subordination of women worldwide. In subsequent years, women successfully mobilized to intervene in all contemporary debates on major global issues, including development, human rights, democracy, population, peace and the environment at national, regional and international levels. Their efforts brought gender to the center of these deliberations and expanded the frontiers of the debate as a whole.
2. At the major UN World Conferences on Environment and Development (UNCED/"Earth Summit," Rio de Janeiro, 1992), Human Rights (WCHR, Vienna, 1993), and Population and Development (ICPD, Cairo, 1994), women made significant gains in addressing global issues from the point of view of women's lives and experiences, and in integrating a gender perspective into policy-making processes at the regional and international level.
3. Women's growing impact on global issues is especially evident in the area of human rights. The worldwide mobilization of women to claim their rights as human rights transformed the human rights agenda in a fundamental way.
4. Women's involvement in the human rights discourse has contributed to the expansion of the parameters of human rights as a concept, focusing on its dynamic character and transformative potential. This has resulted in a more integrated approach to human rights, which emphasizes the indivisibility and interdependence of rights as well as the universality of their applicability on the basis of the fundamental principle of non-discrimination.
5. As a result of the global mobilization of women, the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 recognized that "the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights" and urged "the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and that this be a priority for governments and for the United Nations". The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action also calls for the elimination of "violence against women in public and private life" as a human rights obligation.
6. The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) reaffirmed these developments and cited the applicability of universally recognized and indivisible human rights and ethical standards to the

field of reproductive and sexual health. The Programme of Action recognizes the physical integrity of the human being and equality in relations between men and women. It broadens the concept of women's empowerment to include the elimination of all forms of violence against women. Advancing gender equality and equity and ensuring women's ability to control their fertility are seen as the cornerstones of population and development programs.

7. On the basis of these achievements, women have won recognition as a specific and significant constituency and it has become imperative for all international, inter-governmental agencies to integrate a gender perspective in their work.
8. Despite, or perhaps because of these accomplishments, it is critical for women's human rights activists to understand the challenges that remain at this juncture. Women's rights advocates are waging the struggle for women's human rights at a time when adherence to human rights is emerging as an important norm in governing international relations in the post cold war era.
9. At the same time, the complex economic and political forces at play in the international arena are creating an environment that is adverse to the full and effective realization of women's human rights and poses a major challenge.
10. The globalization of the economy, the interventions of multilateral institutions and the processes of structural adjustment programs have meant the withdrawal of state responsibility from provision of basic services for their people and an erosion of state accountability to citizens. However, this global trend does not absolve the state from primary responsibility and accountability for the protection of fundamental human rights.
11. The pursuit of free market development models and strategies by states, international financial institutions and transnational corporations which emphasize consumption and indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources—and are thereby unsustainable—has eroded the material conditions necessary to improve the quality of life.
12. The impact of structural adjustments has been particularly adverse to women who are burdened with meeting the essential needs of family and community in the face of increasing economic hardship. At the same time, structural adjustment programs rely on the devaluation of labor in both the formal and informal sectors to lower production costs. Women workers are the most harshly affected by these programs.
13. The growth of religious fundamentalism, identity-based politics and chauvinistic nationalism based on ethnic and other differences is also exacerbating social polarization in many societies. In many parts of the world, issues of cultural, religious, ethnic and other forms of identity have become highly politicized. Movements based on identity are acquiring increasing importance. In many instances, the ideologies of these movements demand control over women's sexuality and reproduction and keep women confined to roles that reinforce and perpetuate their subordination and prevent them from full enjoyment of their human rights.
14. The high levels of militarization worldwide, as manifested in military and arms expenditure, the upsurge of armed conflicts, and the channeling of investments/expenditures into defense and "national security" systems, contributes to an imbalance of power not only between states, but also between the State and its citizens. These trends undermine democratic processes by reinforcing authoritarian and repressive forms of government

and draining scarce economic resources away from social development. Women are disproportionately affected by this situation.

15. The socio-economic and political climate within which the world's women struggle for the full realization of their rights is therefore profoundly insecure. Considering both the gains we have made, as well as the environment within which we operate today, the need for assessment and self-reflection and planning for future action is paramount.

II. Framing a Rights Agenda: Themes and Concerns

In response to the factors affecting women's rights today, the From Basic Needs to Basic Rights Conference brought together women's rights advocates, activists and scholars from all regions of the world to evaluate the progress of the women's rights movement over the past decade and to formulate a rights agenda that can serve as a guide to future action. Following are the conclusions of the Conference deliberations, with recommendations and action strategies to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing the women's rights movement today: a) achieving human rights accountability to women and the elimination of gender violence, b) integrating social and economic rights, c) overcoming the conflicts between women's enjoyment of their rights and their ethnic, religious and cultural identities, and d) advancing the reproductive and sexual human rights of women.

Civil, Political, Economic and Social Rights

1. The challenges facing the international women's rights movement, and the human rights movement in general, are threefold: a) to ensure the full realization of women's civil and political rights; b) to strengthen, promote and ensure the realization of economic, social and cultural rights; and c) to defend and advance the fundamental principles of the universality and indivisibility of all human rights.
2. Women continue to face routine denial of these rights throughout the world today. This denial takes many forms, from the outright violation of women's fundamental rights to the failure by governments and the international community to recognize and remedy such violations when they occur. The world community's persistent failure to respect and guarantee civil, political, economic and social rights for women not only prevents women from fully participating in the economic, social, political and civil life of their countries, but also compromises the principles of universality and indivisibility on which the entire human rights system is based.
3. The worldwide mobilization of women to claim their human rights has not only exposed the systematic and widespread denial of rights to women but also has pointed to the need to reinterpret and fully expand these rights to encompass the reality of women's lives. Women's groups have drawn attention to the relationship between gender discrimination and unequal power relations between men and women in both the private and public spheres.
4. The realization of women's civil and political rights is linked indivisibly to the fulfillment of their economic, social and cultural rights. The existing documentation of gender-based human rights violations repeatedly demonstrates that the prevalence of violence

against women throughout the world is intimately related to their lack of social and economic power. Discrimination based on gender as well as other socio-economic and demographic variables such as class, ethnicity, race, rurality/urbanity, age and region create particular obstacles for women to access and enjoy their human rights. Moreover, women's responsibilities at home limit the exercise of their rights in the public arena. Hence, ensuring state compliance with national and international norms related to social, economic, civil and political rights is an imperative.

Violence Against Women

1. The contemporary women's movement has made significant progress in highlighting the pervasiveness of violence against women and girls in all its forms globally. Their efforts have yielded, among other developments, the recognition by the United Nations that violence against women is a human rights violation and that the state has a responsibility to end gender-based abuses even where the violence is perpetrated by non-state actors (Vienna Declaration, 1993). Subsequently, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993).
2. The appointment by the UN Human Rights Commission of a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (1994) was a significant result of the pressure exerted by women on governments and the international system itself. The challenge for women's organizations now, however, is to support the work of the Special Rapporteur in such a way that this new commission significantly contributes to the underlying goal of ending violence against women in all its manifestations. The women's movement, a critical and natural constituency of the Special Rapporteur, is now called upon to play a significant role in making the mandate effective.

Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Identities

1. Although women are considered the custodians of culture in the majority of societies, most religious, cultural and traditional practices are defined on the basis of patriarchal norms that limit women's human rights. The growing power of religious fundamentalism, which emphasizes the role of culture, religion and the family, reinforces patriarchal notions about women's roles within and outside the family that deny women their rights.
2. Increasingly, women are coming forward to challenge the ways in which they have been, and are being, defined by religion, culture and tradition, and to claim their right to define and interpret religious, cultural and traditional norms and practices according to their individual and collective needs and experiences. It is imperative that women play an active role in the transformation of culture, by calling attention to oppressive practices and interpretations that violate their human rights.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

1. Bodily integrity and self-determination are at the core of women's fundamental rights. They include the right to express one's sexuality and to exercise one's reproductive rights. The protection of bodily integrity and self-determination are inseparable from

- enabling conditions of social, economic, civil, political and cultural rights.
2. Different historical, cultural, social and economic experiences inform the relationships of women to their bodies, and consequently to sexual and reproductive health.
 3. The construction of heterosexual norms within the framework of patriarchal gender relations—reinforced by state laws, policies, and cultural norms—limits sexual, reproductive, and life options for women and men, irrespective of sexual orientation. Patriarchal laws, institutions, and attitudes limit women's ability to express and enjoy their sexuality both within and outside marriage, to choose their partners, to shape their sexual identities, to make decisions whether and when to bear children, to protect themselves from disease (STD's, HIV/AIDS) and violence, and to participate equally in all aspects of economic and social life.
 4. In patriarchal religions and cultures, including modernized societies, women are frequently unaware that they can view experiences, especially those affecting their bodies, in ways other than the ones into which they have been socialized. This constructed ignorance has serious ramifications for the exercise of choice in sexual and reproductive matters.
 5. The attempt by Eastern and Western fundamentalist religious groups to dominate the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo illustrates the political use of controversial issues, such as abortion and homosexuality, to intimidate people and to obstruct women's empowerment and exercise of their fundamental rights.
 6. Violence against women in all its forms is a major obstacle to the attainment of sexual and reproductive rights. This has been reiterated and emphasized in various UN declarations including CEDAW's Recommendation No. 19, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and the ICPD Declaration and Programme of Action.
 7. The HIV/AIDS pandemic affects women's sexual and reproductive health in gender-specific and particularly devastating ways. Policies and programs should be formulated at national and international levels to protect women living with HIV/AIDS, from discrimination in housing, employment, international travel, and access to quality health services.

III. Recommendations

The full implementation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights must be supported by the following strategies and commitments at the international and national levels:

INTERNATIONAL

Civil, Political, Social and Economic Rights

1. All human rights organizations and UN human rights bodies (including treaty-based bodies, the specialized agencies and the Special Rapporteurs) responsible for monitoring and advocating state compliance with the international human rights standards should, within the context of the gains made in the Vienna Declaration, integrate into their work and mandates the analysis of human rights violations informed by gender. Methods of such integration should include the results of discussions with women at

all social and economic levels so that women themselves may articulate the consequences of these gender-sensitive policies on their lives;

1. Human rights organizations should take appropriate action at the international level to call into question:
 - a. State ratifications that are accompanied by reservations and declarations inimical to the spirit of the international conventions, and
 - b. States that ratify international human rights conventions without implementing substantive national laws and policies that give effect to the international instruments;
2. The CEDAW Committee should work together with all other treaty-based bodies and specialized agencies within the UN in monitoring the realization of women's rights under all international human rights instruments;
3. International financial institutions must be called upon to undertake gender specific impact studies in regard to the implementation of economic and social rights as an integral component of their prescribed programs prior to and during implementation at the national level. These studies must be made available and disseminated in order to ensure transparency;
4. Documents from the Beijing Women's Conference and the Copenhagen Social Summit should address the complex issue of the impact of different trade regimes on women's lives including their participation in the workforce;

Violence Against Women

1. The UN Conference on Women should be used as a special opportunity for initiating a process to evaluate the observance of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women;
2. The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women should be allotted sufficient resources to establish a network for receiving and exchanging information on violence against women in all member states of the UN;
3. UN agencies, national governments and NGOs should sponsor and undertake campaigns, regionally and internationally, to combat and terminate trafficking in women;

Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Identities

1. In a global context marked by the rapid expansion of religious fundamentalism and chauvinist nationalist movements, measures should be taken to support and strengthen democratization processes that provide women the space to assert their cultural, religious or ethnic identities without fear of reprisal;
2. International human rights organizations should, on a global basis, investigate violations of women's human rights as a result of fundamentalist and nationalist interventions;

Sexuality and Reproductive Rights

1. States should implement the commitments of the ICPD Programme of Action that focus on education and awareness as key elements that enable people to broaden their

understanding of sexuality and reproductive rights and possibilities for self-determination, in particular the commitments to provide

- a. access to quality education for women and girls with a priority to eliminate gender disparities in educational attainment;
 - b. comprehensive sex and gender education for people of all ages;
 - c. education and awareness programs on HIV/AIDS prevention and management particularly addressed to women, and to counter societal discrimination and neglect;
 - d. education and awareness regarding sexual abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence;
2. States should implement the commitments of the ICPD Programme of Action, in order to ensure
 - a. the provision of family planning and pregnancy-related care in the context of sexual and reproductive health care and, in turn, as an aspect of universal, quality primary health care;
 - b. the eradication of all forms of coercion, including incentives and disincentives to achieve population targets, in sexual and reproductive health programs;
 - c. that all women should have full access to the highest available standards of health care regardless of their class, caste, race or ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital, rural/urban or citizenship status, or geographical location;
 - d. that health care is provided respectful of the needs and self-determination of indigenous women, and of women's diverse cultures and healing traditions;
 - e. that safe, effective and available fertility regulation and disease prevention methods be available and developed, including methods for men;
 - f. that women's perspectives inform, and NGOs be involved in, the planning, implementation and evaluation of research and development of new reproductive methods, and of policies and programs for the provision of sexual and reproductive health care, and sex education;
 - g. that enabling conditions for sexual and reproductive health be ensured by national and international action; these include adequate nutrition, sanitation (including safe water supply) and a safe, toxin-free work and living environment, and women's education and empowerment, all of which are encompassed in an indivisible concept of human rights;
 3. All intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including the international and regional human rights bodies (especially those charged with enforcement of relevant treaties), and the specialized agencies must take immediate steps to implement and monitor implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and develop accountability mechanisms;
 4. The Secretariat of the World Conference on Women should call upon the states and intergovernmental organizations at every level to report on progress in and obstacles to the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the ICPD Programme of Action.
 5. The Economic and Social Summit and the World Conference on Women should explicitly reaffirm the ICPD Programme as well as recognize the issues that were side-stepped in Cairo;
 6. The status of all religious institutions to enjoy the observer state privileges in the processes of the United Nations, must be re-examined under international standards,

and new strategies must be developed to overcome their undue influence in matters of sexuality and reproductive rights and health;

7. New technologies should be developed in collaboration with women. Technologies should be responsive to women's needs and tested in strict accordance with informed consent and ethical standards. Ethical testing must include women (as well as men) as subjects and must not extrapolate generalizations from studies on women whose economic, social and health conditions are not comparable to those of the anticipated users. An orientation that is sensitive to the needs and choices of women must inform scientists involved in the development of reproductive technologies;

NATIONAL

Civil, Political, Social and Economic Rights

1. States should comply with their obligations according to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and adopt the legislation necessary for the promotion and protection of women's civil and political rights;
2. States should comply with the interpretation of the Economic Covenant to the effect that regressive economic and social policies are inconsistent with social and economic rights;
3. States should elaborate and adopt Optional Protocols to the Women's Convention and to the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights which would allow individual complaints of violations under these conventions to be given due process;
4. States must ensure that documents emerging from the Beijing Women's Conference and the Copenhagen Social Summit Conference address the complex issue of the impact of social and economic policies on women's lives. Women's participation in both the formal and the informal sectors should also be addressed;
5. States must ensure women's access to and enjoyment of social and economic rights. They must guarantee access to education and training according to women's needs, and educate them on state obligations with respect to women's rights;
6. When appropriate, states must take the required actions to ensure that social, economic, civil and political rights are built into constitutions and made enforceable;
7. Because legal reform can only be meaningful within the context of real independence of the judiciary, states should ensure such independence;

Violence Against Women

1. All States should be guided by the provisions of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and implement laws and policies aimed at guaranteeing women and girl children protection from and remedies for gender-based violence and discrimination;
2. The State and relevant international agencies should ensure the safety of particularly vulnerable sectors of women: women living in areas of armed conflict, under occupation and economic sanctions; refugee and displaced women; returnee women; migrant and immigrant women; indigenous women; lesbians; disabled women; and women prisoners;

Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Identities

1. National laws should specify and reflect strict separation between the State and religion and religious institutions;
2. States (and communities) should not compel women to choose between their cultural, religious and ethnic identities and the exercise of their fundamental rights. Nor should women be prohibited from choosing an alternate ethical paradigm or pursuing a secular existence;
3. States should assure that women be given opportunities to exercise their rights as citizens and to participate in decision-making processes at all levels;
4. In order to assure that women can exercise their rights as full citizens, states should not differentially apply democratic principles (such as the rights to vote) to women;
5. In states where there is constitutional protection of minorities, states should not compromise women's rights in the interests of fulfilling constitutional provisions for minority groups;

Sexuality and Reproductive Rights

1. State, multinational and national bodies should be accountable for provision of health services for women. An international code that protects individuals and national groups from activities that are harmful to health is required in order to adequately monitor state compliance;
2. All national governments, both recipients and donors, must immediately take steps to implement the ICPD Programme of Action and thereby ensure its commitments to all women without discrimination based on class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, marital, urban-rural or citizenship status, and with particular respect for indigenous women's self-determination and women's diverse cultures and healing traditions;
3. Women should be provided with a free choice of all contraceptive technologies and birthing options available by giving them full information and appropriate and safe health services;

IV. Women's Advocacy Strategies

Civil, Political, Social and Economic Rights

Ensuring Accountability

1. Women's organizations should participate in the development of a regional and international jurisprudence that promotes the indivisible understanding of human rights, the full realization of civil and political rights and the concretization of economic, social and cultural rights through state accountability ensured by legal means;
2. Women's rights networks should lobby for the formulation of Optional Protocols to the Women's Convention and to the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights;

3. Women's organizations should become familiar with the international instruments and in particular with the Vienna and Cairo Declarations in order to effectively pressure governments to implement policies contained in those declarations;
4. Women's NGO's and other human rights organizations should continue to monitor national compliance with international instruments;
5. Women's NGO's and human rights organizations should report to other national women's organizations on the evaluations, by relevant treaty-bodies, of state compliance with international instruments;
6. Women's organizations and human rights organizations must use the existing treaty review process to monitor government compliance with international norms and standards through national publicity and, if necessary, the development of alternative reports;
7. Women's organizations should act as pressure groups to ensure State conformity of national legislation with international human rights standards;
8. Women's organizations and human rights organizations should make sure that Governments report periodically to their national parliaments on human rights implementation, paying special attention to the implementation of women's rights;
9. Women should demand of governments annual reports in parliament on their compliance with social and economic rights as well as regular reporting to CEDAW and other international treaty-based bodies;

Integrating Social and Economic Rights

1. Women's organizations should continue to establish alliances locally and internationally to critically analyze the proposed mandate and structure of the new World Trade Organization and demand that research be pursued in order to identify the actual and expected consequences on women's economic and social rights of new trade regimes and dispute resolution mechanisms. Research also should be encouraged in order to determine the best mechanisms to guarantee respect for women's rights in the context of economic globalization;
2. Women's organizations should pursue efforts to guarantee the existence and operation of women's advocacy networks capable of influencing the most powerful economic institutions on behalf of the world's women, and particularly on behalf of those without any effective access to those centers of power;
3. International organizations must also be lobbied, either through national delegates where these exist or directly, in order to ensure that
 - a. economic policy reforms do not violate the provisions of the international human rights instruments;
 - b. programs of all international development organizations improve women's social and economic rights and position; and
 - c. programs of bi-lateral donors do the same;
4. National women's organizations should increase research on the gender impact of macro-economic policies and on the impact of these policies on various sectors of the population. Adequate funding must be made available for that purpose;
5. National women's organizations and human rights organizations should monitor the expenditure patterns of national budgets in order to understand what these patterns

mean for women. This understanding will, over time, allow for a more precise definition of workable policy agendas which reinforce social and economic rights. Adequate funding must be made available for that purpose;

6. Women's organizations must lobby their governments to ensure that the programs of international financial institutions implemented at the national level respect the norms and standards of international human rights instruments;
7. Women's organizations should give special attention and support to the organization of women workers, especially the most vulnerable groups of women workers, e.g. domestic workers; migrant workers; workers in export processing zones;
8. Because women's organizations continue to be central to the articulation of violations of women's rights, they need to strengthen their capacity to lobby, monitor, conduct research and formulate policy with respect to implementation and enforcement of social and economic rights. Women's organizations must also develop the capacity to critique the policies of the international financial institutions and to articulate alternative economic models;

Religious and Ethnic Identities and Rights

1. Women's groups should equip themselves in order to engage in theological debate and participate in the re-interpretation of religious doctrine and practice;
2. Women's groups should evolve strategies to work with parliamentary bodies and juridical institutions on issues concerning the re-interpretation of religious doctrine and practice. They also should formulate strategies that enable women to choose the ethical framework within which they want to live, whether secular or religious;
3. Women's groups should enlist the cooperation of the media in gaining public support and raising awareness on women's issues;
4. Women's groups should link with interfaith coalitions across the globe in order to contend with the consequences of religious fundamentalism;

Violence Against Women

1. Women's groups and NGOs should form a network to ensure the international observance of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women;
2. Women's NGOs should assist the work of the Special Rapporteur by
 - a. expanding the base of skilled documentors and monitors within women's NGOs;
 - b. identifying cases of violence and detecting emerging issues that are as yet unrecognized under the rubric of violence;
 - c. providing specific and accurate documentation and statistics on violations;
 - d. contributing to new ways of conceptualizing violence against girls and women;
 - e. providing pressure at local, national and regional levels to ensure that states comply with UN recommendations to eliminate violence;
 - f. publicizing information on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;
 - g. implementing rights education programs, so that women can better understand the violations of their rights and bring them to the attention of the Special Rapporteur;

- h. monitoring compliance at state levels and reporting findings to the Special Rapporteur or other appropriate offices;

Sexuality and Reproductive Rights

1. Women's organizations should generate appropriate discourse and discussion about health, sexuality and reproduction among women and in the larger society, using popularization and empowerment methodologies to build self-determination and solidarity;
2. Women's organizations and other human rights organizations should oppose the regulation of female sexuality conducted by methods such as electro-shock and "corrective" therapy, whether such physical and mental treatment is administered to girls and women by private individuals or by the State;
3. Women's organizations should use the media to promote discussion of sexuality and reproductive issues, and to publicize relevant provisions of international human rights instruments;
4. Women's organizations should critique the media's role in perpetuating gender violence and stereotypes as well as hold the media responsible for advancing open discussions of sexual and reproductive issues and producing programs that are free of gender and other biases;
5. In working to accomplish the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action, women's organizations must vigorously pursue the reconceptualization and reform of medicine, healing and health from the perspectives of women, taking into account women's health over the entire life cycle and not simply in the context of maternity, and injecting a gender perspective into medical education, training and service;
6. Women's organizations also should oppose the worldwide trend toward privatization of health services and cutbacks in the public sector, which often result in inequities of access, higher prices and, for all but the most privileged, declining quality of care;

V. Conclusion

The Fourth World Conference on Women represents a historic moment for the international community and women's movements worldwide. It will be the time to assess progress towards the achievement of the goals outlined in the Forward Looking Strategies of Nairobi, which focused on Equality, Development and Peace. It also will be the moment to formulate plans and programs of action for the advancement of women in the coming decade.

1. For UN member states:
 - a. The Beijing Conference will be an opportunity for member states to take stock of their record concerning the implementation of their international commitments to the protection and promotion of women's human rights and to transform the promise of international recognition of these rights into their full realization of these rights at local, national, regional and international levels.
 - b. States must act with absolute urgency to realize the commitments made in Agenda 21 of the Rio Conference, the Vienna Declaration and the International Conference

of Population and Development Cairo Programme of Action. The UN World Conference on Women must give efficacy to the international community's commitment to the protection and promotion of women's human rights by, among others, recommending the adoption of an optional protocol to CEDAW.

2. For women's human rights advocates:
 - a. Advocates should use the Beijing Conference as an opportunity to reaffirm and consolidate the gains made thus far in articulating and advancing women's human rights.
 - b. Women's movements, at the same time, need to articulate and adopt new strategies to secure women's full realization of their rights. Chief among these is the continued struggle to refine human rights theory and practice to reflect women's experiences and interests, and to address the global economic trends that constrain the realization of human rights. In particular, women's groups must emphasize the principle of indivisibility and interdependence of all categories of rights, while simultaneously strengthening mechanisms to ensure women's full enjoyment of their human rights.

In order to achieve these ends, it is imperative that we build on our existing and evolving networks and alliances to strengthen linkages between women across regions, classes, ethnicity and other differences in a way that acknowledges diversity. Only by continuing to mobilize and organize at local, national, regional and international levels will we overcome the systemic global oppression and subordination of women and ensure every woman's ability to fully and equally participate in all spheres of life.

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The Institute for Women, Law and Development

In carrying out its commitment to the defense and promotion of women's rights globally, the Institute for Women, Law and Development works actively with women's rights advocates, activists and monitors at the national, regional and international levels. The Institute's programmatic work includes:

- researching issues in order to clarify approaches, frameworks and strategies relevant to promoting women's rights,
- developing materials and training programs to support women's rights advocates in designing and carrying out strategies,
- catalyzing regional and international networking among women's rights and human rights advocates to consolidate joint efforts to monitor women's human rights, and
- advocating to influence UN and governmental policy formation and implementation conducive to advancing women's status.

In preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in 1995, the Institute for Women, Law and Development initiated a series of activities to evaluate the progress of the women's rights movement over the past decade; assess the needs of women to improve their status (with particular reference to development and fundamental human rights) at global, regional and national levels; determine strategies for advocacy and action that will continue to support the development and realization of women's rights agendas internationally; and influence inter-government proceedings on women's rights and human rights during and after the Beijing Conference.

The Kuala Lumpur strategy meeting that produced the "Women's Rights Agenda for the 90's and Beyond" was part of this series of activities, and will be followed by a book *From Basic Needs to Basic Rights*. The meeting was convened by IWLD in collaboration with International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific.



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