

Gender Equality Policy **Adopted by the GNWP Board on 16 April 2022**

Purpose

The Gender Equality Policy of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) provides internal guidance on how to integrate a gender and women's human rights perspective throughout policy formulation, program development, and activity implementation, including project monitoring and evaluation. This policy is informed by the United Nations' human rights-based approach and gender integration policy.

Rationale

The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders is committed to the realization of all human rights for all people. Accordingly, non-discrimination based on sex is a fundamental principle of human rights law, and as such, is core to GNWP's mission and work. This policy aims to create an environment and culture that promotes women's human rights and seeks to advance gender equality. The Gender Equality Policy considers current strategic thinking and provides clear guidance for ensuring the proactive and consistent integration of gender equality in all aspects of the GNWP's work.

Scope

The policy is primarily an internal document, outlining the organizational vision and is meant to guide strategic processes for integrated gender perspectives into GNWP's work and operations. This policy applies to all GNWP staff, consultants, and volunteers. The policy provides broad strategic orientations for implementing and advancing gender equality throughout all areas of the GNWP's mandate.

Policy Framework and Vision

GNWP's Gender Equality Policy is based on the international human rights framework, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Gender integration is understood as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's, as well as men's concerns and experiences, an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, thereby ensuring that inequality is not perpetuated. Gender integration goes hand in hand with the promotion and protection of women's human rights and the elimination of discrimination against women. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

GNWP's areas of expertise, such as the United Nations Security Council Women, Peace and Security Agenda, provide a critical entry point to promoting gender equality and women's rights. Human rights treaty bodies can make a valuable contribution towards integrating a gender perspective in the understanding of human rights norms through their assessment of compliance with treaty obligations by States Parties. Moreover, implementing the Gender Equality Policy will impact the work of GNWP overall, not only in carrying out applied research on critical human rights issues affecting women in particular but also on the ground. This groundwork will be

evidenced by integrating a gender perspective while mainstreaming human rights and helping strengthen national institutions and civil society organizations striving for gender equality.

Guiding Principles

Gender integration has been established as the global strategy of the United Nations for promoting gender equality, which refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reaffirmed that women's rights are human rights within the international human rights framework. In implementing human rights work, GNWP complies with human rights guiding principles, which also inform its gender integration agenda. Gender integration has been explicitly called for in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), as well as in several General Assembly, ECOSOC and Security Council resolutions.¹

1. Universality

All people everywhere, women and men, are entitled to all human rights because of the immutable character of rights. However, people in many countries continue to be victims of unequal access and treatment in all spheres of life. Women constitute one group whose very entitlement to human rights is often challenged. For example, in some States, a female victim of rape may be accused of adultery while the perpetrator is not brought before the courts. Another example is the application of the right to property which, in some instances, is denied to women.

Motivated to promote the universal respect for, observance and effective enjoyment of all human rights by all, GNWP focuses attention on those who are at risk and vulnerable and aims to ensure that in countries where it works and around the world, Governments and relevant stakeholders take all necessary steps to enable all people to enjoy their human rights. These steps include the removal of obstacles to the equal enjoyment of such rights, the development of gender-responsive domestic legislation, the adoption of measures of protection, as well as positive measures in all areas, so as to achieve the effective and equal empowerment of women. By applying the principle of universality in gender integration and in the promotion of women's rights, GNWP strives to ensure that cultures and their diversity, religious values, and traditional practices, do not negatively impact women.

2. Indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness

The spectrum of international human rights instruments covers civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. These human rights are intertwined and as such, cannot be subjected to selectivity. The deprivation of women or men of the right to food and nutrition, for example, will inevitably impact the enjoyment of the right to health and may threaten the right to life. The fulfillment of each human right contributes to the realization of human dignity.

¹ ECOSOC resolution 1997/2 on Gender Mainstreaming (1997) and General Assembly resolution A/RES/S-23/2 on mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programs in the United Nations system (1997), followed by ECOSOC resolution 2010/29 on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programs in the United Nations system (2010). Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1880, 1888, 1889 and 1960 related to women, peace and security.

In the promotion of women's human rights and gender equality, OHCHR seeks to address the indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights by ensuring that programs, policies and activities are mindful of this principle for men and women. Economic, social and cultural rights are now widely recognized on equal status with civil and political rights in attending to the rights of groups subjected to discrimination and disadvantages. However, some of the cultural, economic and social rights related to gender issues, such as the right to health and education, may take more time to realize

than some of the civil and political rights, as they are strongly ingrained in societies' structures.

3. Participation and inclusion

People of all genders have the right to access information and participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, well-being, and enjoyment of other human rights. Under international human rights law, States are obliged to ensure free and meaningful participation in political life and the economy of both women and men from all age groups, belonging and status. The political and socio-economic empowerment of women is a crucial area to be supported, including through the promotion of equality of participation in peace processes, fostering women's contribution to democracy and the economy.

4. Equality and non-discrimination

Equality between women and men refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men. Legislations should recognize such equality and should be applied equally to men and women. Moreover, the principle of non-discrimination is the corollary of the principle of equality, as inequality, within the human rights framework, is understood as the product of discrimination. Under the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, discrimination includes direct discrimination, which occurs when a difference in treatment relies directly and explicitly on distinctions based exclusively on sex and characteristics of men or of women (e.g., inheritance law based on patriarchal transmission). It also includes indirect discrimination, when a law, policy or program has the effect of creating or perpetuating inequality between men and women (e.g., a law on working hours).

In applying equality and non-discrimination in its work, GNWP will ensure that inequality is not perpetuated. GNWP will collaborate with and urge States and partners to take positive measures to ensure the realization of women's human rights based on equality. It will also support gender-responsive frameworks tackling social and cultural patterns in society, which inhibit the realization of women's human rights. Furthermore, GNWP will create awareness about intersecting forms of discrimination affecting individuals who are rendered more vulnerable by different discriminatory practices based on gender, ethnicity, race, beliefs or any other grounds.

Strategic Orientations

To be effectively implemented, the Gender Equality Policy requires that gender equality be institutionalized in GNWP's culture, structure and processes, as it is in its vision and mandate.

Gender as a cross-cutting issue for the GNWP's thematic work.

Thematic units provide the critical link between the analysis of human rights and gender issues and organizational priorities. They can contribute to raising awareness and understanding of

gender and women's human rights issues, to ensure that gender aspects have been properly identified and are not lost in the process of aggregating organizational priorities. In the fight against discrimination, for example, the elimination of entrenched, complex and multiple forms of discrimination is one of the key priorities of GNWP. Racism and related intolerance are most significantly experienced by the most vulnerable members of society, in particular minority women. Despite some encouraging advances in the legal field, such as the adoption of the General Comment on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights,² women throughout the world remain disproportionately affected by poverty and socio-economic inequalities. More work can be done to unpack and deconstruct the cultural, religious and social beliefs that have historically held women in inferior positions and to advocate for the interconnectedness and indivisibility of all women's rights. Other areas, such as the human rights of women migrants or domestic workers, often falling outside the scope of labor laws, are increasingly brought to the attention of the international legal bodies and deserve further attention.

Promoting gender equality at the local, national, regional and global level.

GNWP programs and activities at the *local, national, regional and global levels* cover several issues related to women's rights and gender equality. These include violence against women, sexual violence in armed conflict, laws and practices that discriminate against women, COVID-19 and other crises and their impact on women, access to humanitarian services and human rights mechanisms.

Monitoring and Compliance

Responsibility for gender integration, the promotion of women's human rights and the advancement of gender equality will be performed through GNWP's organizational structure. Internal GNWP monitoring mechanisms to assess compliance with the Gender Equality Policy are crucial for effective performance management. This process is the basis for holding staff members accountable and documenting good practices, including gender-responsive budgeting, programming, reporting, and staffing.

N.B. GNWP is holding internal discussions regarding the definition of gender in non-binary terms to include people who do not identify as male or female. Such discussions also include people who may have genitalia of one sex, but identify internally and live as a member of the opposite sex. The outcomes of our internal discussions will be reflected when the Board decides on an amendment of the current document.

² General comment No. 16 (2005) "The equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights" (art. 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/435/39/PDF/G0543539.pdf?OpenElement>