

FEMINIST AGREEMENTS AND DEMANDS

**The Nordic Women's Movements
Final Document
Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014
– *New Action on Women's Rights***



THE FOURTH UN WORLD CONFERENCE on Women was held in Beijing in 1995. At that time, member state governments adopted the Beijing Platform for Action. Work by the women's global movement and its strong desire to reach agreements were prerequisites for the adoption of the Platform for Action. The governments that signed the twelve articles of the Platform for Action undertook to implement CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, by conducting active and visible work.

There has not been a World Conference on Women's Rights since 1995. Voices have been raised for a new conference, but there are also concerns of a potential backlash if the Platform for Action were to be renegotiated. There is lack of international progress. An example of this is that in 2012 UN member states could not reach agreed conclusions at the Commission on the Status of Women, CSW. Other examples are the watered-down text on women's empowerment and gender equality in the final document from Rio +20 and that the Millennium Development Goals furthest from being achieved are those involving women and gender equality.

All over the world, women's rights are questioned and restricted with reference to traditions, religions and cultures. Principles of universal rights and democracy are called into question. Economic, environmental and political crises have repeatedly been shown to have the most negative impact on women, especially poor women, while women have been excluded from decision-making that led to the crises.

The Nordic countries are also facing major policy challenges to achieve gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action formulates clear demands, which the Nordic countries still do not live up to. There are major shortcomings in areas such as violence against women, labour market conditions and equal pay, women's economic independence, organization and sharing of care work and women's influence and empowerment.

Women's right to good development, full participation in democratic decision-making, nationally and internationally, in times of peace or conflict, improved personal income, working conditions, less unpaid work, the elimination of oppressive stereotypes, freedom from violence, the right to health and to decide over one's own body, childbirth and sexuality are all highly relevant issues that require specific actions. It is imperative that each government upholds previous commitments and shows how to tackle gender equality policy challenges. Women's rights and gender equality are prerequisites for global sustainable development goals.

The women's movement has its roots in women reacting against injustice and oppression. Individual women and groups of women have different living conditions, experience different forms of discrimination and have thus prioritized different goals on their feminist agenda. Despite these differences, we unite in a collective struggle for women's rights and gender equal societies.

Goals of Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014

Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014 – *New Action on Women's Rights* aims are:

- * Formulate demands and specific proposals addressed to the Nordic governments and politicians involved in gender policies of the future.
- * Build commitment and understanding for the gender equality policy challenges and opportunities within the region.
- * Promote and develop the Nordic debate on women's rights, locally, regionally and globally.
- * Build networks for the exchange of experiences between activists, researchers, organizations, government agencies, private sector and the public at large.
- * Provide information on CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Formulate recommendations on future strategies for gender sensitive sustainable development and the global agenda to replace the UN Millennium Development Goals through Sustainable Development Goals.

The 12 themes of the Final Document

The demands formulated in this Final Document are based on the twelve themes of Nordiskt Forum, which in turn build on the Beijing Platform for Action. The demands are directed first and foremost to the Nordic governments and politicians, but also towards authorities, institutions, employer organizations, trade unions, municipalities and private enterprises and to the Nordic feminist movement.

Demands directed to the Nordic Governments

We the participants at Nordiskt Forum invite all the Nordic Governments to implement the recommendations and demands formulated in the final document of Nordiskt Forum. We recall the commitments made at the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action. At that time, the governments guaranteed the full implementation of human rights for women and girls as an undeniable and indivisible part of human rights and undertook to incorporate a gender perspective in all policies and programs. We stress that women's groups and networks were singled out as particularly important for the effective implementation of the Platform for Action.

Definition of discrimination

Nordiskt Forum recalls the first article of the CEDAW. Discrimination against women is defined as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition or exercise by women ... of human rights and fundamental freedoms”. Nordiskt Forum also recalls that human rights are individual, universal, indivisible and non-hierarchical.

Feminist Economy – Economic and Social Development



THE STRATEGIC objectives on women and the economy in the Beijing Platform for Action are still the important basis for action in the Nordic region and globally.

We need profound knowledge and more research on how macroeconomic principles and structures sustain inequality and how these could be adjusted to include gender equality in order to create a fair and sustainable society.

Models that are based on feminist economics and research consider both women's and men's daily lives and different living conditions, leading to a society which prioritizes the reproduction and care functions in the welfare society. International institutions and economic networks emphasize gender equality as a determining factor for good economic and social development. Despite this, obsolete economic models are applied, which in many cases lead to policies that risk increasing gender inequality in society. It is a political challenge to expose and modify structures that lead to valuing differently women's and men's life experiences and contributions to the society.

Poverty has different meanings in different countries, but everywhere women are over-represented among the poor. Even in the Nordic countries, more women than men live in situations of economic vulnerability. Certain groups of women and girls are particularly vulnerable. During the last few years of economic crisis, large groups of women have suffered the consequences of cut-downs, when employment opportunities have disappeared and welfare services have been reduced.

The Beijing Platform for Action states that all economic policies must be gender-mainstreamed. This is an important tool to increase economic equality with a direct impact on social development. Time has come for the Nordic governments to live up to their commitments.

We demand that:

- * State budgets of the Nordic countries, as well as local and regional governments' budgets shall be gender-mainstreamed, so that the gender perspective is made visible in economic documentation and decisions in order to systematically monitor gender equality policy goals and become the basis for new actions, as well as be included in the post-2015 agenda.
- * The Nordic authorities promote women's economic independence and rights, including access to remunerated work and satisfactory working conditions, as well as monitor the specific needs of vulnerable groups.
- * The Nordic governments define actions and follow up on work to reduce income differences between women and men.
- * Unpaid care work is made visible, reflected in economic models and taken into account in socio-economic planning.
- * Global economic crises are analyzed from a gender perspective both in terms of causes and consequences and that welfare services are upheld to protect women's economic independence.

**Women's
and
Girls' Bodies
– Sexuality,
Health and
Reproductive
Rights**



THE SIGNIFICANCE of sex and gender on health, disease and treatment are well known. Yet the Nordic countries are far from gender equality in health service provision for women and men when it comes to the diagnosis, investigation, treatment and monitoring of disease.

There is a need to pay attention to the fact that women's health is more than diseases connected to the reproductive organs. Diseases such as rheumatism and joint injuries affect more women than men and receive comparatively limited resources, considering their prevalence in society and the suffering of the individual. Moreover, greater attention, good knowledge and a regulatory framework are called for to guarantee women's access to prevention and treatment of women's health disorders. Menstruation directly affects half of the population over a long period of life and has consequences for society, albeit made invisible, private and allocated insufficient research resources. The obligation of a thorough gender perspective in all health care interventions is not respected. Women are provided fewer, less expensive and belated interventions compared to men in terms of comparative health status.

Physical integrity is of utmost importance for women's health, though a controversial issue. Women's right to decide over their own bodies, sexuality, pregnancies and to have free access to contraception and abortion are the cornerstones of a gender equal society. Bans on abortions do not lead to fewer abortions, but rather to more risky ones. The objectification of women, the sexualization of

society and unreasonable performance expectations all impact on women's mental health, cause eating disorders and other forms of self-inflicted injury. There is also need for more gender-specific research and knowledge about health issues that take into account other variables such as age, class and sexual orientation as well as targeted interventions for vulnerable groups in order to achieve an equivalent health care for all.

Nordiskt Forum emphasises the link between violence against women, including buying sex, to violation of human rights and to women's sexual and reproductive health rights. Women's reproductive rights are called in question, even in the Nordic countries. The legal right to abortion is challenged in many places, and new restrictions on women's rights are being imposed, which lead to restricted access to treatment and medicines for reproductive health.

We demand that:

- * Funds are allocated to gender-specific research and knowledge on how diseases affect women, including menstruation and related illnesses, support to women with cancer diagnosis – especially breast cancer and cancer of female reproductive organs – which require validated treatment, including preventive care and treatment for women's diseases.
- * The Nordic governments and responsible authorities ensure gender equality in the diagnosis, investigation, treatment and monitoring of diseases with respect to the specific needs of different groups. There is a need to customize care for women with disabilities.
- * The healthcare and judicial systems recognize women's experiences of unwanted sexual acts, abuse and violence in a manner which guarantees respect for the individual's integrity and legal rights.
- * The Nordic governments and responsible authorities guarantee compulsory sex education of good quality, access to modern contraceptives, to legal and safe abortions, as well as safe pregnancies and delivery care with respect for every woman's desire and need.
- * The Nordic authorities promote their important commitment to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, SRHR, including issues dealing with LHBTQ and surrogate motherhood in the health-related Millennium Development Goals and in the post-2015 agenda.

Women at Work, Equal Pay, Education and Career



THE BEIJING PLATFORM for Action requires extensive efforts on the part of governments to promote women's economic independence. A basic requirement is to be able to support oneself. Women have fewer opportunities than men to achieve this. Some of the causes are differences in labour force participation, working conditions, wages and pension benefits. Fewer women than men are gainfully employed and a higher proportion of women work part-time, the degree of which varies in the Nordic countries.

Involuntary part-time work is a female phenomenon. Part-time is the norm in typically female shift-based occupations, such as nursing and care, hotel and retail and other service professions, contrary to male shift-based occupations. The proportion of women working part-time or in precarious employment, such as hourly employment, replacement or temporary contracts has increased in recent years. Another reason for the lower economic independence is that a large proportion of the female workforce is employed in low-wage occupations. The difficulty of reconciling paid work with having a family and caring for a family also affects women more than men. Women's anticipated high use of parental leave leads to so-called statistical wage discrimination against all women.

Wage differences between men and women have remained stable at about 15 percent for the past 20–30 years, based on converting part-time work to full-time work. We are a far stretch from achieving equal pay in

the Nordic countries. In an international comparison, women in Nordic countries participate to a larger extent in the work force. This is a result of public, solidary contributions to childcare, care for sick and the elderly. It is of utmost importance to strengthen and preserve these policies. The majority of pensioners considered poor in the Nordic countries are women. Moreover today's young women can expect low pensions due to continued low income, more absence from work and shorter participation in the labour market, in combination with the construction of the pension system.

Women pursue education to a higher degree than men and today form the majority of university graduates. Investigations show that women's wages are lower compared to men with equivalent education, which is due to so-called value discrimination. The CEDAW Committee has recurrently criticized the fact that women's higher education has not led to a level playing field for advancement, whether in academia or in the labour market in general.

We demand that:

- * Women's right to equal pay and career opportunities are strengthened and their ability to support themselves significantly improved, through tangible structural measures. The Nordic governments, employer organizations and trade unions act to establish working conditions which take account of family considerations and labour

market conditions to create decent working conditions. The right to full-time employment is guaranteed through law or agreement in countries where women's unwanted part-time work is a widespread problem. The possibility of voluntary part-time is granted. Insecure employment such as hourly and time-bound employment is regulated to avoid abuse

- * The Nordic governments prioritize structural interventions so that women's financial independence after retirement is assured.
- * The Nordic governments implement a parental leave system that leads to sharing responsibility for childcare between women and men, and guarantee high quality public childcare and elderly care.
- * Responsible authorities ensure that teaching materials are quality-assured from a gender perspective and that active measures are carried out to alter gender-stereotype choice of education and training options and to change the gender segregated labour market.
- * The Nordic governments give priority to women's access to research careers. Various excellence initiatives should not siphon off funding from female-dominated education and research areas. Women's educational choices, regardless of specialization, should be guaranteed equivalent resources.

Violence Against Women and Girls



SEXUAL HARASSMENT, psychological and physical violence, rape, incest, control, threats, genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-related violence, pornography, prostitution, trafficking in women and murder are words that describe the wide-ranging criminal acts committed against women and girls worldwide. Violence against women is a human rights issue, a democracy issue, a relational issue, a gender equality issue, a criminal and a public health issue. In other words, a major problem of society in the Nordic region.

Violence against women and girls is a consequence of the patriarchal structures of power, which reflect fundamental views of femininity and masculinity and sexuality over all. We are concerned over the fact that the Nordic countries have moved towards the use of terminologies and approaches that are gender neutral. Preventing violence before it occurs, has not received enough attention, neither in the Nordic region nor internationally.

The sex industry's aggressiveness and organized criminal trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation are threats to democracy and the freedom of expression as well as to women's legal rights. In the Nordic countries there are an increasing number of foreign born women in prostitution. The disparity between ambitious political goals and the structure for implementation is cause of concern. Many perpetrators escape without punishment while the society's help and protection for victims of violence are lacking.

Women in the care sectors are often subject to violence

while exercising their profession, due to among other things lacking security routines and staffing.

We demand that:

- * The Nordic governments ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the Istanbul Convention. Police and judiciary personnel are provided education in the area of violence against women, and resources are allocated to fight crime and prosecute crimes.
- * In every Nordic country, an independent national rapporteur is established on trafficking in human beings to work closely with civil society, particularly with women's organizations.
- * The Nordic governments strengthen women's organizations that work for women's right to freedom from violence and allocate adequate and predictable resources, in particular to women's refuges /shelters. Long-term comprehensive action plans, with clearly established targets and adequate resources are needed to prevent gender violence, diminish men's violence against women and to protect vulnerable women.
- * Nordic authorities focus on the root causes of violence and abuse. We propose national campaigns with focus on prevention, whereby the society demonstrates zero tolerance towards violence and the subordination of women, as well as prevent guilt and shame. Fundamental causes of violence and abuse and the reason why women end up in prostitution shall be integral parts of the campaign.

Information on human rights and support structures shall be guaranteed women exposed to violence. Rape shall be defined as the absence of consent.

- * The Nordic governments develop legislation on the prevention of violence against women and girls, including the criminalization of the purchase of sex, where such a law does not already exist, develop strong exit strategies to help persons abandon prostitution and reinforce capacity of the police and the judiciary to prosecute sex buyers, pimps and organized crime.
- * The Nordic governments recognize the special needs for protection of vulnerable women, exposed to violence and abuse. Abused women, with serious mental health and/or drug problems lack equal access to women's shelters, and shelters are not sufficiently adjusted to women with disabilities.

Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development



ENVIRONMENTAL and climate change are the greatest challenges facing the world. Men and women have an effect on and are affected by environmental and climate change in different ways. Reinforced action on the environment and climate change presupposes a gender perspective and women's active participation, according to the Beijing Platform for Action.

Environmental and climate change have consequences in a number of areas. Floods, droughts and other natural disasters affect people in poor countries hardest and reinforce already existing disparities. This means that women, who constitute the majority of the poor, will be the hardest hit. Today, 780 million people lack adequate water and 842 million people suffer from malnutrition. All together this cause migration, climate refugees and human trafficking.

Women must be involved in defining needs, discussing solutions and participate in decision-making. Research on the consequences for women of climate change must be prioritized. From issues of food production and access to food, water and energy to resource management, transport and technological innovations that reduce environmental impact, require the participation of women in order to find solutions. So far, women have been underrepresented in all areas and at all levels of political processes and decision-making towards a sustainable development. The responsibility to deal with poisoned food, nutrition during pregnancy, children's exposure to artificial, unhealthy chemicals rests with the individual

woman rather than with those who are responsible for the emissions. A safe environment must be secured.

Women should be included because they have other perspectives and experiences with which to contribute. Women are important in the quest for sustainable solutions to environmental and climatic challenges.

Nordiskt Forum's hypothesis is that sustainable development requires a holistic approach with an integrated gender perspective based on ecologic, economic and social conditions.

We demand that:

- * Nordic authorities contribute to giving women active roles as innovators, organizers, teachers, leaders and ambassadors for sustainable development. Climate and environmental development aid shall always include a gender perspective, as relevant.
- * Women are granted increased political participation and decision-making in environmental and climate work, and women make up 50 percent in negotiations on climate and environmental agreements.
- * Nordic authorities ensure the right of Sami people, especially Sami women, to be heard on environmental issues in their regions.
- * Nordic authorities implement stronger measures, including legislation, to speed up reduction of harmful emissions, which are often unnecessary and costly, and ensure that the energy consumed increasingly come from renewable and sustainable energy sources.
- * The Nordic governments and authorities, together with private industry assume responsibility for demonstrating the impact of environmental pollutants, chemicals and other emissions on the society and that the effects on women are considered in legislation and in the development of a green economy and green jobs.
- * Women's sexual and reproductive rights are protected during environmental and climate-related crisis and that violence and trafficking targeting women and children during natural disasters are monitored and prevented.

Care Work and Welfare Society



MANY WESTERN COUNTRIES have made major cuts to their welfare systems, which have affected the health and welfare of the most vulnerable in the society. Welfare cuts are particularly damaging to women. When institutions do not offer individuals the care they need, the responsibility to provide care falls on the immediate family. Frequently, women become responsible for the care of children, the sick and the elderly. Women perform the largest part of unpaid household and care work.

Women are the majority of employees in the care and welfare sectors. Cuts affect employees when demands for savings are met through unstable employment, shared work-shifts and tight work schedules. Administrative functions in the healthcare sector are also reduced, leaving highly educated and specialized professions to take over these functions. Political decisions are limited to formulating requirements for monitoring and quality control, based on various models such as New Public Management, without examining how realistic or effective these are.

The high level of sick leave among women employed in the welfare sector requires action. With a consistent gender perspective, the main challenges can be identified and solutions found to promote the health and well being of the employees. The Nordic countries need to exchange experiences on functional models to reduce sick leave and work-related injuries in the welfare sector.

Nordic countries are increasingly multicultural and the welfare system must be able to cope with the diverse needs of the population. Another challenge is the increas-

ing life expectancy and its effects on women and men and on our society. An important aspect is that women live longer, under worse living conditions than men. It is obvious that the care of patients with incurable age-related diseases will require major efforts on the part of the state and local authorities, but also on the part of families where it is often women who bear the burden.

We demand that:

- * The Nordic social welfare model is safeguarded especially during economic crises. What the goal is, what we can be proud of and what can be improved are crucial questions.
- * The Nordic governments prioritize good working conditions and the health of employees in the welfare sector. Unskilled and unlicensed employees are given the opportunity for further training.
- * The Nordic governments emphasize the importance of increasing the number of men employed in health care and social services sectors, both in unpaid work at home and in remunerated work in the health and welfare sectors.
- * Nordic governments prioritize education and research on the demographic shift towards a higher proportion of elderly people in the population, and invest in both technical and organizational innovations as well as require consistent gender mainstreaming.

- * Authorities and other institutions are given the task to create programs on how to use technology advances to improve public health. Particular considerations are given to the needs of vulnerable groups and, based on respect for the dignity of the individual, assistance is provided in order for the elderly to live independently as long as possible.

Peace and Security



THE BEIJING PLATFORM for Action calls for the participation of women in conflict resolution at the decision-making level. It calls for non-violence and the promotion of a culture of peace. During the past decade, the role of Nordic countries in international conflicts has changed from being a leader in peace-keeping operations and peace negotiations to increasingly focus on military action in international crisis management.

The Nordic governments see themselves as powerful promoters of women's participation in peace processes in the context of foreign policy, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security. But in reality, women remain excluded from formal peace negotiations and decision-making processes.

Based on Resolution 1325, the UN has focused its work on women as victims and appointed a Special Representative. Perpetrators of sexual violence and gender-based violence during war often escape punishment, even though such acts are recognized by the international community as a cynical tactic of war, as a war crime and, in some cases, as crime against humanity and genocide. Sexual violence is part of a war strategy and should also be dealt with as such. The medical and psycho-social needs of women and girls who have been sexually abused during war are rarely prioritized. Women and girls also suffer from rape, forced marriage, forced pregnancies, torture, trafficking, sexual slavery and intentional infection of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS,

both during and after armed conflicts. These significant challenges must be dealt with and regulated by the international community.

We need to explore and develop democratic means to promote peace and security and ways for women to decide over their own lives. Violence against women in war reflects a general culture of violence. We need to redefine sustainable peace as the presence of security, justice and equality rather than as the absence of war. Sustainable peace prevails when people have sufficient resources to live in dignity, free of hardship and fear. We must reclaim the importance of peace.

We demand that:

- * The Nordic governments ensure equal representation of women at the decision-making level in all peace processes, to prevent war, mediate in conflicts, monitor peace processes and participate in peace negotiations. The Nordic governments request that the UN appoint a Special Representative responsible for promoting the right of women to be actors and decision-makers in peace and security issues.
- * The Nordic governments revise, make explicit and strengthen their action plans for Resolution 1325, earmarking financial resources and promoting participation of civil society, especially women organizations cooperating in the Nordic region, to achieve the goals.
- * The Nordic governments allocate funds to protect and train women refugees and increase their efforts to

strengthen institutions and structures to prosecute and punish perpetrators of sexual violence during war and victims receive active support.

- * The Nordic governments take into account indigenous people and the environment in peace and security issues.
- * The Nordic governments promote peace initiatives, decrease military expenditure, and stop selling arms that largely affect women and children, appoint disarmament ambassadors and reinforce their active efforts to abolish nuclear weapons.

Political Participation and Community Development



WOMEN'S EMPOWERED and independent participation, as well as the improvement of women's social, economic and political status are essential for developing a democratic citizenship. It is crucial for sustainable development in all areas of life. Women in the Nordic countries are highly represented in the directly elected political institutions. However, surveys show that women's representation is drastically reduced in positions subject to internal selection.

The goals formulated in the Beijing Platform for Action on gender equality, development and peace can not be achieved solely with equal representation. This also requires the active participation of women in all decision-making and implementation, and that a gender perspective is incorporated at all levels. Only then the composition of the population is reflected.

Drop-out from political assignments is more common among women elected representatives than among men. Conditions for decision-making and political methods of work are important to ensure women's full participation, both young and older women. The Nordic women's movement calls for a holistic and proactive approach to make the commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action a reality.

Women in politics have testified to various types of mockery, disregard and harassment. This is democratically unacceptable. Even media coverage of women in politics has been criticized for being gender-stereotype. It is important that women are represented in all areas of society and those areas where women traditionally have

been involved, such as education and health care, are allocated adequate resources considering their critical role in society. This means that gender-budgeting is required at the national and local levels.

We demand that:

- * The Nordic governments set clear targets for women's real opportunities to exercise their citizenship, paying attention to the needs and contributions by vulnerable groups. Authorities give priority to actions against cyber hate and harassment of women politicians and other women in public life.
- * Political assemblies and state, regional and municipal committees, commissions, working groups and delegations ensure equal representation for women and men, for example by introducing quotas.
- * State authorities, local government, media and business-related bodies invite women as experts without being swayed by gender-stereotypical perceptions regarding the assignment's subject matter and that women from minority groups are heard as experts.
- * Women at local level are included in horizontal decision-making in all sectors, including finance and business.
- * Labour market organizations take responsibility for appointing more women in senior management positions, in trade unions and employers associations and their respective member organizations.

- * All recruitment procedures, nomination committees and other selection bodies use clear selection criteria that do not discriminate against women. Political mentoring programs are initiated to increase women's participation in politics and to reduce the number of dropouts.

Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Balanced Activities



GENDER MAINSTREAMING is a strategy to achieve a gender equal society and one that permeates the Beijing Platform for Action. The strategy ensures that needs and experiences of women and men form the basis for policy decisions, institutional structures and resource allocation in an equal manner.

Gender mainstreaming is a proactive strategy that aims not only to correct but also to prevent the emergence of inequality between women and men. The strategy counteracts the negative effects of gender-blindness, which is usually called gender neutrality, but which in practice often means that men's experiences form the basis for decision-making.

Gender mainstreaming requires that gender equality and gender perspectives are included as part of all policies, at all levels and at all stages of decision-making and implementation, in order for women and men to be given equal conditions and assistance. The strategy challenges structural discrimination and women's subordinate position in decision-making. The strategy aims at implementing identified national gender equality goals and international commitments regarding political and administrative processes.

Implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy has not been sufficiently systematic and has been too slow in the Nordic countries. The Nordic governments' gender mainstreaming efforts vary, often with weak to moderate results, but are occasionally significantly successful.

There are many good examples of gender mainstreaming at the national and local levels. However, these are not transmitted to other similar activities and conclusions are not sufficiently allowed to influence general decisions relating to different areas of society. Higher education and training has not integrated the experience and knowledge derived from gender mainstreaming.

We demand that:

- * The Nordic governments identify the responsibility for gender mainstreaming and define and spell out gender mainstreaming in national laws, regulations and processes, including complaints procedures, across all its policy areas and adopt and fund specific actions for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming.
- * Government agencies and other public institutions are mandated to include a gender equality perspective in all its activities and to properly implement gender mainstreaming, which entail training of all relevant personnel, gender budgeting and other steering mechanisms, gender equality analyses, as well as mechanisms and procedures for monitoring.
- * The Nordic governments formulate action plans with guidelines, criteria, indicators, measures, key performance indicators and gender-disaggregated data and statistics. Regular analysis are carried out, recorded and published.

- * The Nordic governments use gender mainstreaming in all international commitments, including in the post-2015 agenda and the sustainable development goals, SDG.
- * Private sector employers integrate the gender perspective into their operations.

Asylum and Migration



GLOBALIZATION MEANS that more and more people move between different countries for different reasons and under different conditions. The Nordic countries admit, for example, quota refugees, refugees and others in need of protection, unaccompanied minors, next of kin, students, migrant workers and undocumented persons.

One reason for women to seek asylum in the Nordic countries is that they have been persecuted due to their gender. These women are victims of violations of fundamental human rights and even death threats. They are women who have been sold, exploited and subjected to inhumane cruelty and torture, raped, forced to marry as a child, abused, or having argued in favour of girls' education, women seeking a divorce or who are gay. It should be clarified how women's asylum claims are acknowledged in the Nordic countries' asylum processes and to what extent women are granted international protection because they have been persecuted and demand their rights. It is a fact that women lack knowledge about their rights and which laws apply for marriage, the rights of children, and rights applicable in case of violence and abuse.

Each year, several thousand women come to the Nordic region with a residence permit on the basis of family ties. The residence permit is temporary and connected to a partner. Permanent residence requires that the woman has stayed lawfully in the country and lived with her partner for a certain amount of time – two to five years depending on the country. Some of these women are subjected to violence and would need to leave the

relationship before they can obtain permanent residency and then risk being extradited and, in some cases, losing custody of their children. It is important to investigate how common it is that men repeatedly exploit women in this manner and that women are deported for leaving a relationship.

People seeking work in different countries are employed in increasingly diverging conditions. Human trafficking is not only for sexual exploitation but also for work. Women often leave their own children in their home countries to increase their income in the short or the long term. Women's vulnerability as household workers has been acknowledged, but interventions to protect their labour rights are lacking. Those who live as undocumented migrants are particularly vulnerable, as they are not covered by social safety nets.

We demand that:

- * The Nordic countries recognize women's asylum claims and become frontrunners in protecting women through clear gender-sensitive guidelines on women's asylum grounds. All women who are in need of protection should be treated equally.
- * Women with family connection permits are accorded personal residence permit that is not tied to a man. The deportation of victims of abuse is stopped. Women subject to trafficking are given protection and assistance, whether or not they are able to or want to testify in court.

- * The Nordic governments and authorities implement a humane refugee policy with special consideration given to women refugees in accordance with the UN Refugee Convention.
- * Governments and authorities improve integration and training of foreign-born women who have inadequate education. Illiteracy is given priority in the educational system.
- * Migrant workers and labour immigrants are guaranteed equal pay and employment conditions with national employees.

New Technology and Media



WOMEN ARE LESS VISIBLE in media than men. Research shows that women make up 30 percent of the persons seen and heard in new media. This situation has changed very little over the past two decades despite the fact that the Beijing Platform for Action explicitly raised the issue. It is still men who tell the news and are the news. Men are predominant among experts, whereas women are allowed to express themselves as general public. The influence of women in the media must increase in order for women's voices from across the society to be heard.

Equal participation and representation of women in media is vital for democratic discourse.

The media is a cornerstone of the democratic society in the Nordic region and in the world. We must secure freedom of the press and of expression and at the same time, counteract stereotypical representations of women and women's issues and who writes about what.

The media landscape is becoming increasingly diverse, and new technology has changed the way we present and consume news. Women can now create their own media and write and blog about topics that interest them. Social media offers great opportunities for citizens to participate in public discourse. At the same time, there is a negative tendency that the rapid technological progress increases the differences between women's and men's participation. Moreover, discussions on the Internet are unregulated and can be malicious. During the past decade, women who write on the Internet and participate in social media discussions, on blogs and other online

forum meet increasing hostility and harassment. These organized sexist harassments threaten the empowerment of women and is a way to silence women's voices in the public sphere.

We have to discuss how we can balance freedom of expression with the right to privacy and the regulation of sexist hate speech. Cyber hate has both short- and long-term harmful effects on women's quality of life and mental health and weakens the potential for active participation in society. Women taking on a public role are more exposed to hateful speech and outright threats. Some women have been exposed to physical violence. This is a threat to democracy and freedom of speech and to women's legal rights.

We demand that:

- * The Nordic governments develop annual media barometers that give tangible proof of the participation of women in the media in terms of recruitment, management, content, perspective, etc.
- * State-controlled media be given the task to develop gender equality by implementing a model for participation and non-stereotypical representation that can also be used by private media actors.
- * Educational authorities and media training programs as well as teacher training programs implement initiatives so that young people in the Nordic countries become more socially-aware media consumers, as media literacy is essential for active citizenship.

- * Nordic legislation enforce prohibitions against sexist advertising and that the advertising industry be obligated to provide information on any photo-shopping of images, because advertisement images build on and reinforce gender-stereotyped roles that have a negative effect, particularly on young people.
- * The Nordic governments prepare more effective prosecutions of offences in social media and set up an independent complaints body to deal with discrimination against women and girls in media.

Future of Feminism in the Nordic Countries and the Organization of Women's Movement



THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT has always consisted of different groups of women who have raised specific issues of importance to them at different times. As far back as a hundred years ago, women fought for suffrage, health issues, better housing, union demands, the portrayal of women in media, the right to education, equal pay, peace, sexual rights. In fact women's movement of today is still working on most of the same issues. Many of them are now an established part of the society. Women's movement is a strong and important voice in society, which has achieved remarkable success over the years. It has changed structures and improved living conditions for women.

Different voices and efforts are still needed. Women's movement has always chosen different forms of organization and practices, from extra-parliamentary actions to political parties, but its strength has always been to unite and cooperate on specific demands. A continued and strengthened cooperation between generations of feminists and between women's groups working on specific social issues is crucial to achieving a gender equal society. For a progressive development of the organization of women's movement and the future of feminism in the Nordic countries, it is important to include various groups and interests and to formulate common demands. The feminist movement shall actively discuss our differences and stand up for each other in solidarity.

Nordisk Forum Malmö 2014 – New Action on Women's Rights is proof of the determination of Nordic women's

movement not to accept a decline in women's living conditions but to work for a better future. It is also proof of the solid support to women's and men's equal value and rights.

The political consensus on the importance of gender equality is not disarming women's movements, but it is an opportunity to stimulate grass root movements and initiate well-founded discussions on alternative social solutions. Gender equality policy focuses on women and men, girls and boys. It is guided by the national gender equality policy objectives and international commitments such as the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Other policy areas – everything from integration, disabilities, welfare policy to labour market, industrial policy, education, the environment, taxation – are still not sufficiently based on gender equality analysis. Enhanced gender mainstreaming, men's involvement and the cooperation between different sectors are therefore necessary.

The roads leading to a common goal are many and different models of work and organizations will continue to be encouraged, but we also emphasize that established women's organizations, guided by the human rights perspective, have been historically effective in fighting for women's rights. Together we are working to achieve a gender equal and feminist society!

Nordiskt Forum emphasizes that international agreements such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, Security Council Resolution on women, peace and

security, commitments of the Millennium Goals and the future Sustainable Development Goals only are successful in improving women's position in society through the cooperation of a strong and energetic women's movement and work on gender equality which permeate all sectors of society.

We demand that:

- * The Nordic governments ensure higher participation of women's organisations, as dialogue partners, as critical reviewers and as actors of change, in developing a transparent policy of gender equality, building on a holistic perspective. We wish for a long-term engagement in sustainable development both at the national and global levels.
- * The Nordic governments finance the organizations of the women's movement at least on a par with other organizations of the civil society, so that feminism has an impact and true gender equality is achieved in society.
- * In accordance with the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, women's organisations and civil society networks are given economic and social opportunities to participate in policy formulations at the local, national and international levels.
- * The Nordic governments commission the women's organizations to make the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action known to the public and show the consequences for policy-making.

Nordiskt Forum along with our cooperating organizations, networks and individuals are committed to creating conditions for solidarity so that the rights of all women are covered. It is a struggle to expose and change power structures that oppress women and to remove stereotypical roles of women, so that we are free to transform the society and our own lives.

Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014 was organised by 200 women's organisations coordinated by the Nordic umbrella organisations:

- * The Swedish Women's Lobby, Sweden,
www.sverigeskvinnolobby.se**
- * The Women's Council in Denmark,
<http://www.kvinderaadet.dk>**
- * FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development, Norway,
www.fokuskvinner.no**
- * The Women's Shelter, Norway,
<http://www.krisesenter.com>**
- * The Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations, Finland
<http://www.nytkis.org>**
- * Federation of Icelandic Women's Societies, Iceland,
<http://www.kvenfelag.is>**
- * The Icelandic Women's Rights Association, Iceland,
<http://kvenrettindafelag.wordpress.com>**

For more information, visit www.nf2014.org

