

BPW International Korea Declaration May 2014

The Post 2015 Development Agenda for Business Professional Women
Empowered Women Leading Business



We, more than 700 business and professional women from 49 federations and affiliates, participating in the 28th BPW International Congress: *Empowered Women Leading Business* on Jeju Island, the “Island of Women” in the Republic of Korea, held under the High Patronage of President Geun-hye Park, on 23-27 May 2014:

- belong to a well-respected global organization with permanent United Nations representation that has empowered women for over eighty years and advocates for the empowerment of women at all levels, at the top and in the communities in which we serve and live,
- express our thanks to the members of BPW Korea under the leadership of President Dr. Insil Lee and the BPW International Executive under the leadership of President Freda Miriklis for staging a successful International Congress,
- emphasize BPW International’s mission to empower women by inspiring business, enabling communities, supporting rural and vulnerable women and creating opportunities around the world; *Empowered Women* are the driving force behind sustainable changes in workplaces, marketplaces and communities,
- promote the benefit of networking and partnerships and recognize that we are more powerful working as a team. With our members being from all professions, of all ages and living in 100 countries there are tremendous opportunities to leverage our collective knowledge, experiences and networks for individual, professional and club development,
- highlight the work of members of BPW International who represent women in the economy and women at all levels of decision-making, in cooperation with governments and all non-state actors around the world by promoting statements and recommendations on important worldwide themes that support the empowerment of women.

KEY MESSAGES

The economic empowerment of women is vital to the success of business, community and government. Although, women’s entrepreneurship and professionalism is critical to sustainable development, barriers -including lack of access to natural resources, finance, property and markets- still exist. BPW International develops the professional, leadership and business potential of women on all levels through advocacy, mentoring, networking, skill building and our economic empowerment programs and projects around the world.

- We advocate that CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN Global Compact Initiative Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are accepted and implemented as the pillars to support and sustain our efforts,
- We advocate that governments, UN institutions and other relevant bodies implement and enforce policy and build structures in order to provide pay equity. We also continue to raise societal awareness about pay equity through our **Equal Pay Day Campaign** because there is no country in the world where women receive equal pay for work of equal value to date.

STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN

In addition to existing strategies, BPW International and all our affiliates adopted resolutions as the basis for our commitment and activities in this new triennium:

I. Leadership at the top:

I.1 Gender balance on boards

- Lobby governments and private and public corporations in order to implement at country or regional level appropriate and binding measures to increase the number of women on boards in decision-making positions by 2020.

I.2 Partnerships and cooperation

- Commit to continue cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC) including expanding its Women Vendor Exhibition and Forum (WVEF) as part of the Global Commit Platform for Action on Sourcing from Women Vendors,
- Realize the full potential of our partnership with Commonwealth Businesswomen (CBW), which facilitates connections for women vendors via the Commonwealth Business Forum.

II. Leadership in the Community

II.1 Prevention of Forced Marriage

- Lobby governments to accede to or approve the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages for
 - setting the legal age for marriage for girls and boys to 18 with the only exception being cases where the age of sexual consent is 16 years and a girl over 16 years who is pregnant or has given birth may marry with parental consent or the approval of a competent authority,
 - introducing legal measures to prohibit underage and forced marriages and
 - promoting measures to protect women harmed by polygamy and dowry-related violence,
- Include government actions on General Recommendation 21 in their reports to the CEDAW Monitoring Committee,
- Contribute to NGO Alternative or Shadow Reports to reflect the actual situation of underage girls being forced into marriage.

III. Leadership at all levels

III.1 Endorse the campaigns for decent working conditions in the garment industry

- Endorse the Clean Clothes Campaign and/ or similar initiatives in other regions and countries,
- Advocate for the implementation of the ILO Decent Work Agenda and initiatives derived from that, with gender equality as a cross-cutting objective and adoption of the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs/Equality Means Business) by the companies involved to create a safe garment industry with living wages and equal treatment.

III.2 BPW International statement to Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), OWG Post 2015 agenda and HLPF (High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development)

- Lobby to adopt a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for equality and non-discrimination,
- Lobby to adopt a dedicated SDG for water and sanitation including all areas of concern,
- Lobby companies and governments in their policies to adopt and implement the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

III.3 Accede to the Convention on rights of persons with disabilities

- Lobby all governments to ratify, accede to or approve the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol and to address General Recommendation 18 (1991) that requires information in CEDAW periodic reports on measures taken to ensure disabled women have equal access to education, employment, health services and social security so they can participate in all areas of social and cultural life,
- Contribute to Alternative or Shadow Reports to reflect the situation of women and girls with disabilities.

III.4 Gender empowerment to reduce damage by disasters

- Demand of governments to enhance gender equality in the decision-making process surrounding disasters,
- Call on governments to include gender-responsive procedures in their disaster preparedness and post-disaster management.

CONCLUSION

We, the participants in 28th BPW International Congress commit to:

- devote our energies and resources to implement what we committed to above and consider the Korea declaration as BPW International agenda for post 2015,
- support stand-alone goals on gender equality and empowerment of women and water & sanitation as dedicated goals for the post-2015 sustainable development framework and
- continue efforts collectively to raise awareness and ensure the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in light of the 20th anniversary of the Platform.