



World March of Women Constitution and By-laws¹

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¹ Approved during the 13th WMW International Meeting, held in Ankara, Turkey, from 9 to 12 October 2023



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1. Preamble

- a. The World March of Women (WMW) was born as a response to the Quebec Women's Federation appeal to organise a campaign against poverty and violence against women. The first International Meeting was held in October 1998. In 2000 this huge campaign mobilised women from all regions of the world from the 8th March to 17 th October. On the day after the end of the mobilisation, several groups decided to continue to work together. The founding assembly of the WMW as a permanent movement took place at the Third International Meeting in New Delhi, India, in March 2003. The movement's commitment to eradicate structural causes of poverty and violence against women was translated into four Action Areas: Women's work; Common good and public services; Violence against women and Peace and demilitarisation.
- b. The World March of Women is an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, international grassroots feminist movement struggling against all forms of inequality and discrimination that we suffer as women. Our values and actions are directed at making political, economic, social and cultural stereotypes change. They centre on the globalisation of solidarity; equality between women and men, among women themselves and between peoples; the respect and recognition of diversity among women; the multiplicity of our strategies; the appreciation of women's leadership; and the strength of alliances among women and with other progressive social movements.

2. The character of the WMW

- a. The World March of Women is an international, feminist action movement connecting grass-root groups and organisations working to eliminate the causes at the root of poverty and violence against women. The WMW is an autonomous, multicultural, multiethnic,



pluralist and independent movement. The WMW seeks to bring together women, particularly those from grass-roots organisations.

- b. The strength of national level activities and work with WMW allies is particularly evident during International Actions, such as those held in 2005 and 2010. These actions are moments for strengthening our identity as a movement. Being “on the march” expresses the idea of moving ahead freely, without constraints. It expresses the strength of collectively-organised women in associations, groups, and movements; women with diverse experiences, political cultures, and ethnicities but who have a common goal, which is to overcome the current unjust order that provokes violence and poverty. Part of our identity is also our international solidarity and the fact that we are attentive to what happens to our sisters in other parts of the world.

3. Goals

- a. Strengthen and maintain a vast solidarity movement of women and grass-roots groups so that the World March of Women constitutes an affirmation of women’s capacity for action and autonomy around the world.
- b. Achieve equality and justice between women and men, among women themselves and between all peoples.
- c. Contribute to the building and strengthening of a vast process of popular education so that all women can analyse for themselves the causes of their oppression and discrimination, and the possible alternatives.
- d. Highlight the common demands and alternatives emanating from women’s movements worldwide, on the local, national, regional and international levels, relating to the issues of poverty and violence against women.
- e. Challenge and denounce the policies and strategies of international financial, economic and military institutions (IMF – International Monetary Fund, NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, WTO – World Trade Organisation, WB – World Bank, transnational corporations, cooperation agencies that impose conditions on women’s struggles, etc.) that impoverish and marginalise women and intensify the violence committed against us, and formulate alternative institutional proposals.
- f. Exert political pressure on governments and denounce multilateral political institutions (e.g. the UN) so that they institute the changes necessary for radically transforming the status of women and women’s quality of life worldwide, including a disarmament and peaceful conflict resolution policy, and an end to all forms of impunity and corruption, the use of rape as a



weapon of war, occupations, foreign military presence and the imposition of political/economic blockades.

- g. Convince the general public, other sectors of society and social movements to support and institute the changes necessary for improving the status and conditions of women and women's quality of life around the world.
- h. Develop and implement feminist actions and proposals that denounce the economic and financial institutions that promote the exploitation and degradation of our resources, climate change and the loss of biodiversity.
- i. Struggle for the self-management of our environmental resources and for food sovereignty as part of a development model that respects the basic needs of present and future generations.
- j. Work in alliance with other social movements, feminist organisations, and with the networks and institutions that share the WMW values.

4. Values

- a. The leadership of the World March of Women is always in the hands of women.
- b. All regions of the world have a role to play in the organisation of World March of Women actions.
- c. Active Participating Groups act independently in the organisation of actions in their respective countries.
- d. We recognise, respect and value the diversity of women's movements (women's realities, different countries, political approaches that are respectful of women's rights and freedoms, and action strategies).
- e. The World March of Women organises mass mobilisation actions; popular education activities; resistance actions; and national, regional and worldwide mobilisations. We advocate non-violence while recognising the right to self-defence.



5. Composition

The WMW is composed of National Coordinating Bodies, active Participant Groups, and sympathisers.

5.1 National Coordinating Bodies

- a. National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs) – that bring together active Participating Groups in a specific country/territory – are the WMW organisational structure at national level. The WMW recognises nations struggling for self-determination, who are able to form NCBs in accordance with the request of local active Participating Groups. NCBs are autonomous with regard to their functioning, policies and actions, as long as they respect the following: to have consultation and decision-making mechanisms which include the active Participating Groups in the whole country, and to carry out collective activities as laid out in the work plans approved by the International and Regional Meetings.
- b. The International Committee (IC) and the International Secretariat (IS) can intervene and guide them if there is a major contravention of the principles, values and goals of the World March of Women. In the case of NCBs who do not function democratically and do not organise activities approved in the International and Regional Meetings, the IC and the IS may contribute to a better functioning at the request of Participating Groups in the country/territory concerned.
- c. In order to ensure that the WMW functions well, the National Coordinating Bodies have the responsibility to:
 - c.1. Coordinate active Participating Groups in their country or territory and promote their participation in the democratic process at the national level;
 - c.2. Carry out popular education, mobilisation activities and World March of Women actions at the national level, especially those adopted at International Meetings;
 - c.3. Adopt public positions on political questions;
 - c.4. Update the list of active Participating Groups in their country/territory (in coordination with the International Secretariat);
 - c.5. Participate in the WMW's democratic life (for example, participating in and preparing International Meetings, participating in working groups and collectives, etc.);
 - c.6. Communicate regularly with the International Secretariat in order to share information regarding their WMW actions and activities;
 - c.7. Fundraise for national actions and activities;



5.2 Active Participating Groups

To be an active Participating Group, the group must meet the following criteria:

- a. be an autonomous women's group, a women's committee within a mixed group (groups in which both men and women participate) or a mixed organisation that does not have a women's committee but within which a women's group is responsible for the WMW leadership;
- b. subscribe to the objectives and values of the World March of Women, to the Women's Charter for Humanity adopted in 2004 at the Fifth International Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda; to the Declaration of Values adopted in 2003 at the Fourth International Meeting in New Delhi, India, and to the Demands adopted in 1998 at the First International Meeting, which were revised at the Third International Meeting in Montreal, Quebec
- c. participate in the actions of the National Coordinating Bodies, to incorporate the movement's actions in its calendar of activities, or to promote the World March of Women.
- d. Governments and governmental institutions can not be members of the World March of Women.

5.3 Sympathisers

Women individually and groups who are interested in receiving World March of Women information but who are unable to commit to organising WMW actions can become sympathisers. To do so, they must register with the International Secretariat who will include them in a WMW distribution list of information, news and calls to action.

6. Membership

- a. Joining the WMW is carried out through the National Coordinating Bodies, in countries where one exists, and directly with the International Secretariat in countries and territories without an NCB.
- b. The access of the active Participating Groups to the international structure is possible through the National Coordinating Bodies. To be an active Participating Group, it is necessary to be part of the NCB in country/territory where the group is based, or to work towards the establishment of a new NCB where there is none.



7. World March of Women operational structure

7.1 International Meeting

- a. The International Meeting functions as a general assembly and the highest decision-making structure of the World March of Women. The meeting is attended by National Coordinating Body delegations. The general assembly has the following responsibilities, among others:
 - a.1. to adopt the WMW international political platform;
 - a.2. to decide on International Actions (with prior consultation of NCBs) and the working plan;
 - a.3. to adopt activities and financial reports prepared by the International Secretariat;
 - a.4. to evaluate and review the WMW operational structure, including the general functioning of the International Committee and the International Secretariat, and the mandates, launch and follow-up of thematic commissions and ad hoc working groups in relation to the working plan demands;
 - a.5. to elect the International Committee; a.6. to choose the location of the International Secretariat, when applicable.

b. Date and location of the Meeting

The International Meeting is held once every three (3) years maximum; the dates will be decided based on the WMW's calendar of actions. The Meeting location will rotate among the major world regions.

c. Delegates

- c.1. To ensure a balanced representation of participating countries/territories, a maximum of three (3) delegates will represent each National Coordinating Body. Countries or territories with more than one NCB are requested to respect the maximum of three representatives. At least one of the three delegates should be a young woman.
- c.2. The WMW International Committee members participate automatically in the International Meetings and it is the decision of the members of their NCB whether they participate as one of the three national delegates, or only as an IC member.



c.3. Participating Groups with no National Coordinating Body are invited to form one in order to participate in the International Meeting. If this is not possible, they can request participation as observers (see below).

d. Quorum

The quorum of the International Meeting is composed of delegates from a minimum of 20 countries/territories and three world regions.

e. Voting

Decisions will be made by consensus. In situations where consensus cannot be reached, each National Coordinating Body (or country/territory in the event there is more than one NCB) is entitled to one vote. To be adopted, a proposal must obtain the support of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the National Coordinating Bodies present. When there is an equal vote or a significant regional disparity in the vote, the committee responsible for ensuring the smooth functioning of the meeting will be asked to propose a solution or solutions.

f. Observers

f.1. The number of observers and their invitation are decided by the Meeting's organising committee (International committee and the host NCB).

f.2. WMW women activists of the host country and its sub-region can participate as observers, as well as women representing active Participating Groups from countries where there is no National Coordinating Body, and guests from feminist movements and networks and allied social movements, as well as technical and financial partners. f.3. Observers do not have the right to vote; they have the right to speak during group caucuses but not in plenary sessions.

7.2 International Committee

a. Role, responsibilities and functioning

a.1. The International Committee (IC) is responsible for the follow-up of decisions adopted by International Meetings, assuming a liaison role, ensuring information circulation and acting as a catalyst for the WMW in the different world regions, as well as following-up work done by the International Secretariat.



a.2. The IC is composed of elected representatives from different world regions, that meets twice a year and functions in a collective and horizontal manner. Committee members will share tasks. They are not only regional representatives but will politically accompany the WMW as a whole. IC members' responsibilities for WMW international and regional activities is prioritised over and above responsibilities related to national activities.

b. Composition

The International Committee is composed of 14 effective members and 7 substitutes. Committee members will be selected according to the following regional representation:

- a. b.1. Africa (4 effectives and 2 substitutes)
- b. b.2. Americas (2 effectives and 1 substitute)
- c. b.3. Asia-Oceania (3 effectives and 2 substitutes)
- d. b.4. Europe (2 effectives and 1 substitute)
- e. b.5. Middle East and North Africa (2 effective and 1 substitute)
- f. b.6. The World March of Women International Secretariat Coordinator

c. Elections

Candidates for election are initially proposed by their National Coordinating Body, and NCBs are invited to present their candidates to the respective Regional Coordinating Body (if there is one). Elections take place during the International Meeting, within the regional caucuses. When there is no regional consensus, the regional delegates decide by vote. The International Meeting assembly ratifies the regional decision. If the International Committee vacancies are not filled during the International Meeting, they will remain as vacancies until the next International Meeting.

d. Selection Criteria

d.1. Activists proposed as members of the International Committee (effectives and substitutes) must meet the following general criteria:

- d.1.1. have the support of her National Coordinating Body;
- d.1.2. defend the goals, values and feminist positions of the World March of Women;
- d.1.3. be willing to abide by decisions made by the group even if they do not coincide with their personal positions;
- d.1.4. be available to participate in the International Committee virtual and face-to-face meetings.



d.2. If an IC candidate is to be presented by the National Coordinating Body, it is recommended that she be sent to the International Meeting as one of the national delegates.

e. Vacancy and substitutes

e.1. When a member of the International Committee announces that she is not able to attend a meeting, the substitute is invited to take her place. e.2. Substitutes will become effective members of the IC when a member of the International Committee is absent for more than two consecutive meetings without a valid reason. Absences due to visa problems, changing the dates of the meetings at short notice, flight problems, health problems and maternity leave are exceptions. The IC and IS are responsible for creating mechanisms to guarantee that transfers take place without discontinuity.

f. Term

f.1. The term is an individual one but the NCBs of the region are responsible for following-up and supporting the work of their representatives. f.2. The terms last from one International Meeting to the next, and are renewable twice, up to a total of three (3) consecutive terms. Former IC members may present themselves as candidates again at the second International Meeting after the end of their term. f.3. Substitutes that take over a vacancy become effective members, and their term is counted accordingly to the International Meeting in which they were elected.

7.3 International Secretariat

a. Role, responsibilities and functioning

a.1. The International Secretariat is responsible for: putting into practice the decisions made during International Meetings and the work plan updated annually by the International Committee; guaranteeing communication between the different levels of participation and coordination of the WMW; and mobilising the human and financial resources necessary to carry out their mandates. The International Secretariat works in a collective and horizontal manner and is supported by International Committee members in carrying out its work.

a.2. The International Secretariat is accountable to the International Committee and International Meeting.



b. Location of the International Secretariat

The location of the International Secretariat rotates amongst countries. The International Meeting elects the host National Coordinating Body as well as the International Coordinator proposed by that NCB for a period of six (6) years that can be extended for another three (3) years maximum.

c. International Secretariat office selection process

c.1. The International Committee and the IS are responsible for the organisation of the process for the presentation of candidacies. Decisions related to the new location and the transition process are taken during the International Meeting.

c.2. Criteria for countries that want to present their candidacy for the International Secretariat:

c.2.1. to have a functioning National Coordinating Body that has participated in International Actions and is broadly recognised by the national women's movement in their country;

c.2.2. to have the capacity to fund-raise in order to maintain the work of the International Secretariat;

c.2.3. to work in partnership with an organisation that is willing to ensure the legal status of the International Secretariat;

c.2.4. to have the capacity to guarantee communication in at least the three working languages of the WMW (English, Spanish and French).

d. Coordinator

d.1. The coordinator holds a statutory role as spokeswoman and representative of the March, but she shares this responsibility with the Secretariat team and the International Committee.

d.2. In case of vacancy of the position of the coordinator, the IC will manage the situation together with the NCB hosting the IS.

7.4 Thematic commissions and working groups

a. The International Meeting proposes the creation and the mandate, and is responsible for the follow-up of the WMW thematic commissions. The thematic commissions' goal is to facilitate debate, popular education activities, and public activities that express the WMW analyses and



positions regarding the issues and themes related to WMW goals, values and Action Areas. The commissions are responsible for guaranteeing their working conditions and the communication between their members and the IC. Fundraising for the commissions has to be done in agreement with the IC and the IS, in order to maintain a balance between different commissions, the regional work and the priorities decided in International Meetings.

b. The International Meeting and/or the International Committee can create ad hoc working groups according to the work plan needs.

8. Resources

WMW resources are principally from: the members' annual contribution, public funds, technical and financial partners' contributions, subventions, donations and bequests.

a. Members' annual fee

The National Coordinating Bodies are invited to contribute annually to the international functioning of the WMW to the amount of US\$100-200, depending on its income and budget.

b. Participant groups contribution

A US\$50 contribution is suggested for active Participating Groups in countries where there is no National Coordinating Body.

9. Amendments to the Constitution and By-laws

Only the WMW International Meeting is entitled to make any amendments to the Constitution and By-laws if necessary.