

# Iran Women's Bill of Rights

## Feminist Collective's Proposal for "Woman, Life, Freedom"

### Preamble

Historically in Iran, as elsewhere in the world, multiple legal and cultural institutions have been at work to exclude women from corridors of power and decision-making. In Iran, this trend has largely used religion as justification, particularly since the establishment of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) that integrated religion into the political structure, but intensified under the Islamic Republic of Iran. While women had always tried to find ways to resist the limitations upon them at the individual and community levels, it was during the Constitutional Movement at the end of the nineteenth century that they joined the national movement towards establishing their citizenry rights and do away with social and legal institutions that reduced women to lesser humans. However, despite their sacrifices on the eve of the revolution's success in 1911, women's demands were ignored.

Decades later in 1978-79, hundreds of thousands of women joined another popular revolution in the hope that with the realization of plural democracy, women could freely decide about their lives and achieve their potential without cultural or legal obstacles. However, the revolutionary forces placed women's demands for equality and justice on a back-burner, while the soon established Islamic theocracy imposed catastrophic social and legal restrictions on women. Women organized in response. The first mass protest against the Islamic Republic and its extremist religious ideology was held by women on 8 March 1979, when many poured into the streets to express their opposition to compulsory hijab and the top-down Islamization policies. Despite threats to their lives and freedom, women relentlessly organized and pushed for their rights, often without the support of other forces who claimed they championed democracy.

Throughout the past forty-four years, women have remained a major force of democracy, social justice, and freedom in Iran. As major actors, women have often organized and mobilized demanding gender equality, resisting patriarchal structures and attitudes using multiple strategies. They organized a sit-in in June 2006 in front of the University of Tehran and demanded the removal of the discriminatory articles of the constitution and laws of the country. The Iranian women's movements also launched the One Million Signatures Campaign for egalitarian family laws, campaigned to stop-stoning and other forms of gendered violence, and organized for women's equal access to sports stadiums and other public spaces. On numerous occasions, women have also joined forces across the ideological spectrum to express their demands in a more unified voice to the state, such as by preparing a comprehensive women's charter in 2009, or collectively lobbying male political candidates on women's greater access to political decision-making posts. Women's political force was witnessed in numerous

national elections and grassroots forms of resistance, including their brave presence in the 2009 Green Movement protests in demand for free and fair elections and respect for basic individual rights. The Iranian authorities' securitization and harsh crackdown on women's efforts to challenge the status quo, forced many women's rights advocates to go into exile. Such globalization of the Iranian women's movement however helped inform the international community of the extent of state-sponsored violence against women and the breach of fundamental human rights. Inside the country, under severe state surveillance women worked diligently to make social media their platform and committed acts of civil disobedience on a daily basis, while others joined labour and environmental movements. All the while, the question of hijab remained among the most contentious subject between the state and citizens. Daughters of Revolution Street, by unveiling and peacefully waving their hijab, launched an open contestation to the state, despite the heavy price awaiting them. The vast majority of women, regardless of their level of religiosity, never accepted the Islamic gender ideology that denied their fundamental human rights.

At the dawn of the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement, we, a collective of feminists of Iran, having experienced historical discrimination and injustice feel strongly that the time has come to make our rights as equal citizens a reality. Thus, we have come together to develop a bill of rights for inclusive and substantive equality for women in all their diversities with the intention of enshrining them in the future Constitution of Iran. We insist that the Constitution, in spirit and text echo the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and its sister conventions that reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in their equal rights regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, language, sexuality, or any other status. Centering the "woman, life, freedom" framework, we demand women's equal share of the seats of the National Constitutional Assembly and other spheres of national and regional negotiations, taking an active part in charting and mapping the future. At this historical juncture, we emphasize the importance of including the experiences, contributions, and efforts of women and historically marginalized populations in any deliberations about Iran's political and legal trajectory. Through these efforts we aim to uphold commitments to gender equality and social and environmental justice in support of women's movement inside the country, which are fundamental for a pluralist secular democracy.

## **The Constitutional Assembly**

- 1) The Constitutional Assembly must be a popularly elected body based on gender parity and composed of diverse and pluralist identities to draft a national constitution in the revolutionary spirit and commitment to the Woman, Life, Freedom, movement.**

- 1.1) The Constitutional Assembly must include diverse stakeholders and be in dialogue with representatives of the breadth of citizens of Iran while drafting the Constitution. This Assembly must consult with advocates and representatives of civil society organisations and advocates representing women's rights, ethnic rights, sexual diversity rights, rights of religious minorities, and all other status. An inclusive deliberation process will ensure that the articles of the Constitution are formulated in a manner reflecting the pluralist and democratic spirit of the Constitution.
- 1.2) The draft of the Constitution must be made publicly available for input. Public consultations should be scheduled across the country, including in its remote areas, and sufficient time should be allocated for meaningful engagement and feedback.
- 1.3) The Constitution should only be ratified by the public after the required consultations have taken place and after the implementation of feedback has been received and considered from the public during these consultations.

## **State Secularism**

**2) A secular state based on social and economic justice is critical in developing a healthy, pluralist democracy and recognizing, safeguarding, and promoting the rights of all citizens and residents, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other status. Thus, the Constitution must be secular and mandate that the state maintain religious neutrality and function completely outside any religious sphere and institution.**

- 2.1) Official documents shall not record the religious affiliation of citizens and residents.
- 2.2) The State must consider religion a private matter for individuals and communities. The state must guarantee citizens the freedom of religious beliefs and practice so long as no harm is imposed on the public safety of others and the environment.
- 2.3) State must mandate the separation of powers between legislative, government and judiciary to observe the principle of the state to ensure development of a just society.

## **Safeguarding Human Rights**

**3) Human rights of all citizens and all those who live within the country's territory, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or any other identity, should be enshrined in the Constitution.**

- 3.1) Universal human rights are enshrined in nine core instruments (and their optional protocols), including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the 1979 Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1993

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAV). The Constitution should enshrine and guarantee a comprehensive set of fundamental rights, including equality and non-discrimination, in full conformity with these instruments, both in text and spirit.

- 3.2) In order to ensure comprehensive protection and guarantee of human rights, the state will commit to sign and ratify without reservations all nine core international human rights instruments and their optional protocols, including but not limited to, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAV), and the 1984 Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its protocols, which include the ban on the death penalty.
- 3.3) The State must also adopt United Nation Security Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security and its sister resolutions, without any reservations, given its emphasis on women's meaningful representation and participation in all conflict resolution processes. It should put in place a National Action Plan for the implementation of these resolutions for preventing and resolving potential national conflicts.
- 3.4) These International Human Rights instruments and their principles, spirit, and goals should be incorporated into the Constitution and its provisions and must be considered in the interpretation of the rights.
- 3.5) The totality of the principles outlined in the UN Agenda 2030 should inform the Constitution's moral compass and remain a guiding principle of all branches of the state.

## **National Application of International Human Rights Treaties**

### **4) All UN conventions that are or will be signed and ratified by the Iranian State should become legally binding and duly adopted and reflected in the national laws of Iran.**

- 4.1) The State must uphold the ratified international treaties' obligations and standards by incorporating its provisions into the country's legal framework, and making it binding on domestic courts and authorities.
- 4.2) The State commits to raising awareness about the treaties' provisions and the ensuing domestic legislation among relevant stakeholders such as government officials, judges, lawyers, civil society organizations, and the general public.
- 4.3) To ensure the effective implementation of the treaties, the State will establish monitoring mechanisms within the government or by an independent body or human rights commission. The monitoring body should prepare regular periodic reports on the country's compliance with the treaty and submit them to the relevant international bodies.
- 4.4) The State will ensure effective remedies for violations of the treaties' provisions. This includes access to justice, compensation, and other forms of redress.

- 4.5) Enforcement mechanisms should also be put in place, including investigations and prosecutions with input from civil society, to ensure that the treaties' provisions are enforced and that those who violate them are held accountable.

## **Equality and Non-Discrimination Before the Law**

**5) All persons in the territory of Iran, regardless of their citizenship, sex, gender, religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, or any other identity, are equal before and under the law and have the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination.**

- 5.1) The Constitution must provide and protect equal citizenry rights for all.
- 5.2) The State must amend all domestic legislations to bring them into conformity with this article.
- 5.3) In line with this requirement nationality laws must be amended to recognize the right of mothers to pass on their citizenship to their children without any limitation.
- 5.4) Mothers are entitled to obtain the child's birth certificate.
- 5.5) Mothers are entitled to register the birth of their children and to give their surname to their children regardless of their marital status. <sup>1</sup>
- 5.6) Women have the right to marry or form a union with a person of their choice regardless of their citizenship.
- 5.7) Women have the right to obtain work and residence permission for their spousal partners.

## **Civil and Political Rights of Women**

**6) The Constitution must guarantee women's right to freedom of assembly, association, and organization, including forming or joining political parties, regardless of their class, religion, ethnicity, or sexual identity.**

- 6.1) The state must/pledges to review and reform discriminatory laws that perpetuate gender inequality in the civil and political arenas. The state ensures that existing laws comply with international human rights instruments, ensuring gender equality.

## **Freedom of Movement**

**7) The Constitution must guarantee women's right to freedom of movement, regardless of their class, religion, ethnicity, or gender and sexual identity. This right includes the right to physical safety while travelling or in a public space**

**and in an environment free of any form of sexual or gender-based violence. The State shall take all measures required to enforce and protect this right.**

- 7.1) The State must review and reform discriminatory laws that perpetuate gender inequality in the public sphere and hinder women's mobility rights. The state must ensure that existing laws comply with international human rights instruments and that new laws that protect women's freedom of movement are enacted.
- 7.2) Sexual harassment of children, women and gender and sexual minorities, regardless of their citizenship, must be criminalized.
- 7.3) Gender-based violence, including acid-throwing on women and sexual minorities, must be criminalized, and perpetrators must be held to account by the law.
- 7.4) All citizens and residents in the country should be free to move, reside and participate in the labour market.
- 7.5) All citizens, including adult women, should be entitled to obtain identity cards and passports in their own right, and should not be required to obtain permission from their parents, spouses, partners or any other individuals in order to travel and enjoy their citizenship rights.

### **Access to Health Care**

**8) Women's access to quality universal national health care systems, including reproductive health, maternal and infant health, free and safe contraception and safe abortion, must be guaranteed by the Constitution.**

- 8.1) To ensure women's bodily autonomy and agency, any law or policy requiring spouses, guardians, partners, or other individuals' permission and signature for an adult woman's decision on her health must be repealed.
- 8.2) Inequality in the delivery of National Health Services to women across various regions and sectors, including reproductive health and family planning, must be effectively redressed.
- 8.3) Access to reproductive health and rights and various forms of contraception must be guaranteed.
- 8.4) Access to general health and sexual and reproductive health must be guaranteed in the constitution for everyone regardless of sexual or gender identity.
- 8.5) The State must outlaw female genital mutilation. National Health policies must put an end to this violent practice by running a national and regional health awareness campaign.
- 8.6) Women who suffer from physical or psychological conditions or are physically challenged and cannot engage in the labour market must be granted a special health package and be entitled to a State pension.

## **Access to Rest and Leisure**

### **9) Women's right to rest, leisure, and sports should be recognized and supported.**

- 9.1) To promote mental and physical health, the State should provide facilities for rest and leisure, such as parks, picnic areas, and entertainment, including public concerts, festivals, and national exhibitions.
- 9.2) The State pledges to provide and ensure equal access to sports facilities and an equal share of the government investment in physical education for girls and women.
- 9.3) The State must guarantee that these public spaces and sports facilities are free from any form of harassment.
- 9.4) Women's right to participate in cultural, artistic, and scientific development must be affirmed, recognized, and promoted across all regions of the country.

## **Women and the Environment**

### **10) Destruction and degradation of the environment has had significant gendered disastrous implications, particularly in rural and agricultural areas. The Constitution must mandate that an ecofeminist expert committee be part of any national and local environmental policy planning and institutions.**

- 10.1) The Ministry of Environment must collaborate with ecofeminist experts, particularly with attention to the gendered impact of pollution and environmental degradation on economic and one's mental and physical health and well-being.

## **Access to Quality and Secular Education**

### **11) Quality Secular, inclusive and equitable education is a public good and basic human right and must be made accessible free of charge and equally to all residents in all fields of study and especially to women and members of historically marginalized and disadvantaged groups.**

- 11.1) The State must guarantee women's equal access and without any limitation to education at all levels.

- 11.2) In some contexts, this may require the State to take special measures to ensure equal access across all regions of the country, with special attention to historical disparities of access in certain regions to girls and women.
- 11.3) The State must guarantee women and girls' right to freedom of education in all fields, disciplines, and levels, without discrimination, and in a safe learning environment.
- 11.4) The State must guarantee early education in mother languages as well as national language(s).
- 11.5) The State must adopt policies that address the social and regional inequalities and cultural barriers that individuals regardless of gender, ethnicity, or class have historically faced.
- 11.6) The State must include sex education, including safe contraception, family planning, reproductive rights and responsibilities, into the national educational curriculum.
- 11.7) Access to education should be available for all individuals regardless of their gender, religion, age, ethnicity, and other identities, and should not be legally bound to permission of parents.

### **Access To Cyber Spaces**

#### **12) The State must guarantee women's equal right to digital connectivity and safe cyberspace, free from gender-based violence.**

- 12.1) The State must take all possible action to make the internet and digital connectivity accessible across the country and in particular in rural areas.
- 12.2) The State must ensure that all educational institutions including schools across the country have free and easy access to digital technology as it is a major tool for education.
- 12.3) Digital access is an important platform for economic activity and exchange, including for women, and as such should be made available without hindrance country-wide.
- 12.4) Access to the internet is a fundamental right, and government bodies cannot arbitrarily deny this right to the residents through imposing restrictions on connectivity, censorship, activating filters, or other means of limiting access to digital means of communication.
- 12.5) Given the often-gendered nature of cyber bullying, intimidation, and, violence, including sexual harassment, the State must take appropriate measures to ensure that women and sexual minorities participating in cyberspace are free from such forms of harassment.
- 12.6) Cyberspace is an important platform for freedom of expression. The government cannot limit this right arbitrarily, or without an authoritative court order.
- 12.7) The State must not subject anyone to surveillance or track and use individuals' digital data including geolocation and bio information such as for face and voice recognition.



## **Women's Economic Rights, Employment and the labour market**

- 13) The State must guarantee women's equal access to either private or public labour markets, equal opportunity in employment, free choice of occupation, equal wages for equal work, periodic holidays with pay, and retirement pension benefits, regardless of gender.**
- 13.1) Women's freedom to form or join labour unions must be guaranteed.
  - 13.2) Women's paid parental leave while maintaining their seniority at work must be guaranteed.
  - 13.3) The State must outlaw any discrimination based on women's reproductive roles, and further must recognize that the raising of children is a shared responsibility across genders, and indeed society as a whole.
  - 13.4) The State must provide childcare facilities for all employees with children.
  - 13.5) The State must recognize domestic labour, care work and women's labour in the informal sector and include these in the national income and the development data/indices of the country.
  - 13.6) The State must recognize women's right to old age or inability to work due to injury or illness, regardless of whether they were homemakers or were part of the informal economy, by providing a pension that ensures a secure and dignified life and provides a reasonable standard of living.
  - 13.7) The State must facilitate employment for women who have physical or other limitations but are able to hold jobs if supported.
  - 13.8) All government ministries should have a dedicated office of women and gender experts who oversee the employment and other institutional policies ensuring that constitutional equality requirements are observed.

## **Legal Equality in Love, Family, and Household Union**

- 14) The State must guarantee egalitarian and democratic family law, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or other identity to all its citizens and residents in line with the principles and spirit of the UDHR, CEDAW, and other relevant international documents.**
- 14.1) All laws that criminalize gender and sexual diversities must be annulled.
  - 14.2) Regardless of gender, family is a union between two adult individuals, who freely join to form a collective unit, with equal rights to initiate and terminate the union.
  - 14.3) Women should be guaranteed equality before non-discriminatory and gender-just family laws.
  - 14.4) All hitherto gender bias and discriminatory laws should be annulled in accordance with the equality clauses of the Constitution.

- 14.5) Within the household union, terms and conditions of distribution of wealth accumulated during the life of the union are to be set clear. In the absence of such agreement the accumulated wealth would be divided equally.
- 14.6) The State must outlaw all harmful and inhumane traditions that especially disadvantage girls and women such as exchange of women to end blood feud, honor killing, and child marriages, and launch extensive campaigns to inform the public of their negative impact.

## **Women's Political Participation**

### **15) The Constitution must guarantee gender parity in all elected political representation posts at all levels of the state.**

- 15.1) The State is to guarantee universal suffrage for all of its citizens above the age of 18, free from harassment, intimidation and violence. All citizens, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other status, vote for all candidates.
- 15.2) The State is responsible for holding regular and free elections in which all citizens, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other status are free to participate as candidates and/or as electorates.
- 15.3) Women, as half of the population, are entitled to equal political representation from all electoral districts in the national Parliament and all other legislative elected bodies, including at the local, regional, and national levels.
- 15.4) It is the state's responsibility to remove any barriers to women's equal access and presence in political representation and decision-making, such as by incentivizing women's candidacy through providing financial or other campaigning support and training.
- 15.5) The state must criminalize any forms of violence against women in politics and elections (VAWP/E).

## **Women's Representation in Executive Decision-Making:**

### **16) The State must guarantee and take appropriate measures to ensure women's substantive representation and meaningful participation in executive decision-making positions across all levels.**

- 16.1) Women, with consideration of their ethnicity, religious identity, and sexual and gender diversity, should represent at least 30% of all executive decision-making posts within the government, at both the national and the provincial levels, with the aim that this

- percentage reaches 50% within a specified time frame (the UN recommends two to three election rounds).
- 16.2) The State has to take steps to support and train women towards their increased roles and influence in executive decision-making.
  - 16.3) All government ministries must have a dedicated department led by women to ensure that the policies of the Ministry conform to and comply with the equality clauses of the Constitution; and further to ensure that they work in collaboration with the National Commission of Women (NCW mentioned in section 15 below).

## **Women's Participation in and Access to Justice**

### **17) The Judiciary must ensure equal and fair treatment of women under the law, regardless of their class, ethnicity, religion and sexual identity. Additionally, the state must guarantee the appointment of female judges at all levels of the Judiciary.**

- 17.1) Judges across the Judiciary should reflect the nationwide composition of individuals.
- 17.2) No single gender shall compose less than 40% of judges and other influential posts within the judiciary.
- 17.3) Women as a group, while considering their intersectional identities, should constitute at least 50% of judges in the Family Court.
- 17.4) Women should not be disadvantaged or discriminated against in Personal status law, including family law.
- 17.5) Any law that contradicts the Constitution's equality clauses must be rendered invalid. Civil codes that are gender discriminatory (such as discriminatory against women to serve as witnesses, blood money, inheritance, etc.) must be annulled immediately since they contradict constitutional equality clauses.
- 17.6) Laws that criminalize consensual sexual acts by sexual minorities must be immediately annulled.
- 17.7) Laws that discriminate against religious minorities must be repealed.

## **Eradication of Violence Against Women**

### **18) The Constitution must establish a National Inquiry to examine gender-based violence and violence against women perpetrated as a result of the state's breach of its negative obligations (not to commit violence against women) and its positive obligations (to protect and promote the safety of women). Such an inquiry should be carried out through the framework of the UN Declaration of Eradication of Violence Against**

## **Women (DEVAW) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).**

- 18.1) The National Inquiry and its subcommittees must be mandated to collaborate with the Office of Women's Machinery (Article 19 of this document) and National Commission of Women's in fulfilling their goals (Article 20 of this document).
- 18.2) The National Inquiry's panel of experts must be composed of gender experts, and inclusive of diverse identities across ethnicity, religion, gender, and more.
- 18.3) The National Inquiry should be mandated to identify, investigate, and recommend cancellation of existing state laws, policies, and practices that discriminate against women and normalize structural violence against women, including the intersecting harms that impact ethnic, religious, gender, sexual minorities, and other identities.
- 18.4) The expert committee must launch an in-depth study of various forms of gender-based violence, such as acid throwing, honor killing, or attacks and harassment of sexual minorities; and publicize their findings and recommend appropriate preventative policies.
- 18.5) The National Inquiry experts must research all forms of cyberbullying and gender-based violence in cyberspace that specifically target women and sexual minorities; and prepare appropriate recommendations for its legal and social prevention.
- 18.6) The National Inquiry in collaboration with the Women's Machinery and National Commission of Women should develop policy recommendations and outline the necessary legal changes that are required in order to eradicate all aspects of gender-based violence.
- 18.7) The National Inquiry should develop comprehensive policies and recommendations to the State to develop appropriate laws to prevent violence and harassment against women in all its manifestations at home, or in public spaces, schools, educational institutions, and at workplaces.
- 18.8) In conjunction with its investigative authority, the National Inquiry should report on the State, particularly the Islamic Republic's performance on the eradication of violence against women, and make necessary recommendations for remedy. The government must be bound by these findings and recommendations and must be given a period of time to implement them.
- 18.9) The National Inquiry with collaboration with Women's Machinery and National Commission of Women must ensure that existing and new laws comply with international human rights instruments, particularly CEDAW and DEVAW.
- 18.10) The new laws that are enacted to prohibit gender-based violence must include strong preventive provisions to address domestic violence, sexual harassment, honour killings, and female genital mutilation.
- 18.11) The National Inquiry, together with the Office of Women's Affairs and the National Commission of Women, must develop communication strategies and engage in awareness raising of these provisions among the general public.
- 18.12) The State must require all members of the police, public security forces, and the judiciary to undergo gender-sensitive training.

## **Women's Machinery: Enforcement and Oversight Mechanisms**

**19 There is a need for an effective structure to bring about gender equality as highlighted in the Constitution for addressing social and economic inequalities. The Constitution must establish the most appropriate framework for a *national women's machinery* to oversee national policies, plans, and their implementation. Since the form and structure that the women's machinery should take is not immediately clear and requires further elaboration through constitutional drafting, this document temporarily adopts the phrase "Office of Women's Affairs" to designate the function of this political entity.**

- 19.1) The Constitution must allocate sufficient budget and other resources for this institution to fulfil its mandate effectively.
- 19.2) Various ministries and government institutions should be required to collaborate with the Office of Women's Affairs.
- 19.3) The Office of Women's Affairs must carry out gender-specific research to identify the economic, political, and social needs of women while considering their intersectional identities and geographical settings, and make policy recommendations to the executive and advise the government on developing appropriate gender sensitive policies.
- 19.4) The Office of Women's Affairs must conduct a survey and suggest remedies of any laws that contradict the equality clauses of the Constitution and international treaties that have been ratified by the government.
- 19.5) The Office of Women's Affairs should guide and collaborate with the National Inquiry that is concerned with the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence.
- 19.6) The Office of Women's Affairs, in consultation with experts, feminists, and gender equality organizations, should develop appropriate policies for the establishment of shelters/safe houses for victims of domestic violence.

## **National Commission of Women (NCW)**

**20 The Constitution must establish an independent National Commission of Women (NCW), with branches in all provinces, to oversee and monitor the enforcement of the Constitution's equality and diversity clauses in all government policies. The Constitution must also mandate that a sufficient budget be allocated to this body in order to make it functional in practice.**

- 20.1) The board/the central decision-making body of the NCW should consist of 50% elected representatives from women's civil society organizations, and 50% appointed by the government from its pool of experts in appropriate fields.

- 20.2) To ensure the independence of the NCW, its Chairperson should be nominated by women's organizations, vetted by NCW's board, and appointed by the government.
- 20.3) The Chairperson's tenure should be a limited term of 3 to 4 years, only renewable for one additional term. The Chairperson cannot serve for more than two terms consecutively.
- 20.4) The NCW should consist of a technical secretariat and thematic specialized committees focusing on education, youth, political participation, legislative affairs, rural women, disabilities, media, environment and others.
- 20.5) The NCW's mandate should include:
  - 20.5.1) investigating laws, policies, and cultural practices that discriminate against women, particularly sexual, ethnic, and religious minorities.
  - 20.5.2) promoting awareness among State institutions, including the police and judiciary, and with the public about how these legal and cultural norms have normalized discrimination against the mentioned groups.
  - 20.5.3) developing appropriate training materials for the promotion of gender-sensitive awareness for judges, government officials, police, and public security forces.
- 20.6) The NCW must be mandated to work closely with the *National Inquiry on violence against women* and set up an Expert Committee made up of gender experts and in consultation with ethnic and sexually diverse representatives of women's and civil society organizations.
- 20.7) Due to policies that have previously favoured urban and metropolitan centers, the inequality among women in rural and smaller towns and in particular those of ethnic and religious minorities has been exacerbated. Thus, specific policies, with input from the relevant stakeholders, must be devised to remedy these situations.
- 20.8) The NCW should have a complaints office that receives complaints on issues of gender inequality and sexual harassment and take appropriate action to address the concerns as well as launch public discourse to stop the abuse.
- 20.9) The NCW should provide input to the national Parliament on the impact and implications of proposed and existing legislation on gender equality.
- 20.10) The NCW should work in collaboration with the Office of Women's Affairs to promote policies for gender equality and respond to the needs of women, particularly in regions that historically have received few economic and social benefits from the central government.
- 20.11) The NCW should have a women's economic, cultural and political development center that awards grants to the women's organizations, organize training, and provides a forum for women's organizations to meet and hold intergroup meetings.
- 20.12) The NCW should develop educational materials to promote public awareness of the constitutional provisions on human rights, diversity, and equality and make respect for these provisions an integral part of the social and cultural fabric of the nation.