

# ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (APPF)

## 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

### RESOLUTION APPF24/RES.01

## WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR REGIONAL GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

*(Sponsored by Canada)*

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum;

**Considering** that gender equality is fundamental to sustainable development;

**Convinced** that, for it to result in growth that is truly inclusive, economic activity must involve the entire population;

**Noting** that women contribute to the Asia-Pacific regional economy by participating in the labour force, business, markets and global value chains;

**Aware** that when women are barred from full and equal participation in the economy, it hinders economic growth, productivity and competitiveness;

**Reaffirming** the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, both of which uphold equality rights with respect to education, property, employment, and economic and social benefits;

**Recalling** the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which insists on equality between men and women in the economic realm;

**Emphasizing** the International Labour Organization's (ILO) four gender equality Conventions: the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156), and the Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183);

**Reiterating** the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a specific goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls;

**Welcoming** the Women's Empowerment Principles developed by UN Women and the UN Global Compact;

**Recognizing** the initiatives of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy;

**Noting** the APEC Women and the Economy Fora, the 2015 outcome of which encouraged members to take concrete steps to address gender disparities in labour force participation;

**Cognizant** that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has recognized gender equality and women's empowerment as integral principles in the ASEAN community-building process;

**Reaffirming** resolutions by previous Annual Meetings of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) on women's economic empowerment and participation in political and economic life;

**Stressing** the need to overcome inequality, social exclusion, marginalization and exploitation;

**Emphasizing** the need to promote the economic empowerment of women living in rural areas;

**Concerned** that women are still disproportionately represented in informal and precarious jobs, which often leave them beyond the reach of labour laws and social protection systems;

**Aware** of the need to overhaul laws that bar women from certain jobs, restrict their access to capital, and prevent them from inheriting or owning property;

**Drawing attention** to the gender pay gap that persists in many countries, despite the principle that women and men should have the right to equal remuneration for work of equal value;

**Bearing in mind** that women are underrepresented in management and decision-making positions in the labour force of Asia-Pacific countries;

**Concerned** that discriminatory practices and low levels of financial literacy can prevent women from accessing bank accounts, credit, and insurance, financial services that are all necessary for entrepreneurship;

**Underlining** the importance of social infrastructure that can support work-life balance and programs that address caregiving responsibilities as a priority for families, employers, governments and society;

**Recognizing** the need for women's participation in and ownership of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises;

**Reaffirming** that women's economic empowerment is based on equal access to primary and secondary education, vocational training, and higher education, including in the areas of science, including mathematics, technology and engineering;

**Determined** to ensure that women have both the right and the opportunities to contribute to economic life;

**Committed** to advancing women's full participation in all aspects of the regional economy;

## **RESOLVES TO:**

1. **Recognize** gender equality and women's economic empowerment as essential catalysts for economic development, growth and prosperity;
2. **Call on** APPF Member States that have not yet done so to ratify the ILO's four gender equality conventions;
3. **Support** the full and consistent implementation of laws and regulations that prohibit labour and workplace discrimination, including with respect to recruitment, training, leave and benefit entitlements, and promotions, as well as those designed to prevent all forms of harassment;
4. **Encourage** APPF Member States and APPF Parliaments to enact legislation that ensures equal access to and control over economic and financial resources;
5. **Insist** that girls and women have equal opportunities to access secondary and tertiary education, vocational training, and financial education;

6. **Expand** women's access to business training and associations and to professional development opportunities related to entrepreneurship;
7. **Encourage** targeted policy, regulatory and budgetary support for women entrepreneurs that can enable them to establish and grow micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and that facilitate the integration of women-owned enterprises in global value chains;
8. **Urge** APPF Member States and APPF Parliaments to address the underrepresentation of women in managerial and executive positions in the labour force, including in the context of corporate governance;
9. **Call** on APPF Member States to invest in programs that reduce the burden of unpaid care work on women, such as childcare, health care, housing, social transfers and pensions;
10. **Appeal** to APPF Member States and APPF Parliaments to ensure that labour rights and social protection systems extend to individuals in situations of informal and precarious employment;
11. **Support** the implementation of a fair wage for all workers – women and men – with the goal of making employment more stable, secure and sustaining;
12. **Recommend** that APPF Member States and APPF Parliaments adopt gender-responsive budgeting practices, supported by the collection of economic data at the national level that is gender-disaggregated;
13. **Promote** the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in trade policy and in the negotiation and implementation of free trade agreements;
14. **Urge** APPF Member States and APPF Parliaments to prioritize international development assistance programs that target women's economic empowerment.