



# RESOLUTIONS

“The Economic Empowerment  
of Women and Children  
in an Evolving World”

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**36<sup>th</sup>** Triennial International Convention  
of the International Federation of  
Women Lawyers (FIDA)

Freeport, Bahamas  
November 13 to 17, 2017



# RESOLUTIONS

The 36th Triennial International Convention of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) held at the Convention Centre, The Grand Lucayan Resort, Freeport, Bahamas, from November 13 to 17, 2017 under the theme “***The Economic Empowerment of Women and Children in an Evolving World***”.

Following presentations and panel discussions on various topics, members and participants deliberated and resolved as follows:

## ***Economic Empowerment of Women – From the Village to the Boardroom***

*Acknowledged* that women have made tremendous strides in member countries and were recognized as leaders in the corporate and governmental environment. A personal perspective was given by the Presenter from The Bahamas;

*Recognised* that women are sufficiently equipped to play leadership roles in society which the governments, through enactment and implementation of policies and legislation, can encourage;

*Recognised* that there are challenges facing women in the workplace; personal versus professional life balance, gender discrimination, racial profiling, health concerns;

*Noted* that international standards regarding right to work and right to safety and health in working conditions (CEDAW and ICESR) were critical and should be reflected in the legislation of member countries;

*Noted* that the interests of women need to be protected at the work place especially given the critical motherhood and family responsibilities that they bear;

*Observed* that there existed lacunae in the law relating to women in the workplace in some countries, for example, with respect to rights to maternity leave for factory workers and other line staff. Further, that protection of rights for migrant workers were needed.

## ***Resolved to:***

Urge states to pass legislation and adopt policies or implement existing ones, which encourage equality and protect the economic and property rights of women, consistent with constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination and advocating equality.

Engage in programs prioritizing education and the economic empowerment of women, in acknowledgement of the fact that investing in women and girls is smart economics.

Advocate for laws that support equality of women and girls in education, health, and employment opportunities.

Encourage women leaders in the workplace to seek to mentor and empower other women in their careers and business.

## ***From Birth to Adulthood – A Woman’s Health and Well-Being: An Holistic Approach in a Global Society***

*Acknowledged* that a woman’s right to health encompassed mental, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing and that child marriage, physical and sexual violence undermine that wellbeing;

*Recognised* that women have a right to make decisions regarding their own bodies.

*Acknowledged* the duty of the state to recognize and protect that right through appropriate policies and legislation, as well as education;

*Recognised* that Heroic Self Love is required before one can serve and love others; that our Inner Hero represents our “Soul Self” and is our greatest, wisest and loving support for what we need in life;

*Noted* the breach of rights and violations that occur when a girl is married before eighteen, including her lack of access to an education, her likelihood of dying in childbirth, and the perpetuation of cycles of poverty;

*Noted* that women and girls all over the world are subject to various forms of violence including child, early and forced marriage; Female Genital Mutilation; domestic, partner, physical and sexual violence; trafficking; harassment; honour killings; and lack of access to education and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

### ***Resolved to:***

Support and promote legislation as well as education that prohibits female genital mutilation as well as other practices inimical to the dignity, safety and integrity of women and children, while withholding support for legislation and practices detrimental to the interests of women.

Enact legislation to regulate the practice of surrogacy in all states where none exist, in order to protect the interest of all the stake holders in the process, as well as the children who are the products of such arrangements.

Support and promote legislation as well as education at the local, national and regional levels to increase the legal age of marriage to 18 and to regulate the legal age of marriage where none exists.

Support the passage of legislation protecting women from violence and ensure enforcement of existing laws in favour of women.

Work to ensure that governments pay greater attention to issues of women's health by improving access to safe and affordable family planning facilities and ensuring that health services reach young married women, and women who are home bound.

Encourage education and awareness of the society as a whole on the dangers of STD's and provide for free or in the alternative, affordable and stigma free treatment of women.

## ***The Importance of Women in Leadership: Politics, Religion and the Community***

*Acknowledged* that women have made considerable impact internationally, regionally and at the national level as leaders in politics, religion and the community.

*Recognised* that in religion it was necessary to overcome through faith, stereotypes of women in the priesthood; in carrying out the functions of clergy; and the reluctance and refusal of congregations in some instances to accept female priests.

*Noted* that the vote for female priests to be eligible for the office of Bishop in the provincial Synod (Anglican Church) in 2015 represented a milestone in the protestant religion and an advancement for women in religion.

*Noted* that women accounted for approximately twenty-three percent (23%) of Members of Parliament in national parliaments in 2017 globally, yet made up a much higher percentage of eligible voters. In The Bahamas they represented fifty-five percent (55%) of eligible voters.

*Recognised* that women and children represented forty percent (40%) of FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and consequently were entitled to and did participate at the negotiating table for the peace talks between the Government and FARC.

*Noted* that the contribution of women in the negotiating process was key to the eventual peace agreement with FARC and the Colombian Government.

### ***Resolved to:***

Urge States to recognize the sexual abuses suffered by women globally as a result of war and conflict and to legislate against such abuses.

Advocate for the end of violence against women and girls in all its forms.

Work to develop programmes to ensure that women who participated in armed conflict were able to transition from members of a “junta” to ordinary citizens with a right to vote and run for elected office.

Encourage the participation of women in the electoral processes as female candidates for office and greater participation in the political process.

Promote the practice of reservation (affirmative action) to facilitate the entry and retention of women in leadership and decision-making positions.

## ***Female Advancement in Education and Technology #Freedom***

*Acknowledged* that there is a gender gap in the technology field with just thirteen percent (13%) of the STEM workforce being made up of women and only seventeen percent (17%) of computer sciences graduates being female.

*Noted* that few women are creators of ICT (Information Communications Technology) or hold corporate officer positions in Fortune 500 technology companies.

*Noted* that Digital Literacy has become the prerequisite for employment opportunities in nearly all sectors and that there is an estimated shortfall of over 2 million skilled ICT professionals worldwide.

*Observed* that gender equality makes business sense. Eliminating barriers to female employment raises company productivity. Further there is a positive correlation between gender balance on top leadership teams and company turnaround results.

### ***Resolved to:***

Encourage girls and women into ICT studies by improving the relevance of educational curricula; providing female role models; funding internships, apprenticeships and training opportunities; and promoting the transition of women and girls into the sector.

Urge Women Employers, to recruit women into the workforce and to advocate at a national level for the recruitment of women by revising job descriptions to reduce gender stereotypes; building gender-diverse hiring teams; setting targets to hire technical women and measuring and evaluating efforts to increase the representation of women.

Support international efforts to promote and recognize women and girls in ICT, such as the International Girls in ICT Day and supporting STEM learning initiatives.

## ***Corruption, Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development – Connecting the Dots***

*Acknowledged* that women are more vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by Corruption;

*Recognised* that there is a need to pay particular attention to the gender perspectives of Corruption such as Body Currency Corruption (sexual extortion) which are heightened by women's limited income and education levels, as these are lost in the broader definitions of Corruption;

*Noted* that Corruption and Rights Abuse thrive in an atmosphere of silence and inaction and there is a need to mobilise men, women and communities to demand for gender justice and thereby enforce change;

*Observed* that the policy implications of the participation of women in the political space result in greater attention to the indices that promote sustainable development;

*Noted* that women's rights and concerns are often sacrificed on the altar of political expediency;

*Restated* FIDA's commitment to securing the rights of women and the need to identify and highlight the nexus between Corruption and Rights Abuses which impact women negatively and threaten sustainable development expectations.

### ***Resolved to:***

Urge governments, state actors and all relevant stakeholders to track and document all gender specific Corruption incidents and initiatives in order to establish a credible database for responding to women-specific Corruption. Encourage governments, state actors, political leaders and parliamentarians to take definite steps to facilitate the increased participation of women in the political space in order to ensure greater attention to matters affecting women and ultimately, protection for women.

Advocate for building women's capacity in decision making and public life as well as women's economic empowerment, to catalyse their active participation in the war against Corruption.



Highlight the link between Corruption, Women's Empowerment and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, recognizing that the debilitating effects of Corruption will render the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals a mirage.

Dated the 12th March, 2019

***Members of the Resolution Committee***

Chair – Charisse Brown (Bahamas)  
Ezinwa Okoroafor (Nigeria)  
Johanna Sterbin (USA)  
Jethlyn Burrows (Bahamas)  
Hsiu Fon Chen (Taiwan)



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