



WFTO GLOBAL GENDER POLICY

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PREAMBLE

Given that the AGM of 2013 held in Rio de Janeiro unanimously approved the revision of Principle 6 and the Draft Gender Policy,

Given that the AGM of 2015 held in Milan unanimously approved the resolution to urge the regions to develop their own gender policy and action plans for implementation of Principle 6 and mandated the Gender Working Group to revise the draft gender policy of 2013,

The following policy sets out strategies for the successful implementation of Principle 6, as well as guidelines for gender-sensitive employment approaches to be adopted by WFTO Regions and their member organisations.

Embedded within Principle 6 is an informal economy perspective which acknowledges that the vast majority of producers in the WFTO system are informal women workers. It is important, therefore, that Fair Trade networks and their members begin to document information about the producers who make and grow Fair Trade goods in a way that unpacks the different worker categories in the Fair Trade system and assists FTOs in their capacity-building support to producers in compliance with WFTO Fair Trade Principle 8 (providing capacity-building). The existing conceptualization of producers and workers masks a host of different categories of employment relations, which means that many informal workers remain unaware of their rights and many employers unaware of their responsibilities towards their employees.¹

The Gender Working Group would like to acknowledge the pioneering leadership of WFTO Asia in developing a regional Gender Policy which has been modified here to make it suitable for global application. Although the WFTO Asia Gender Policy was informed by a survey of its own membership to make it context specific, the policy content is considered suitable for global application.

¹ Elaine Jones and Carol Wills: Building Capacity for Change: Developing Women's Business and Leadership Skills, WIEGO (forthcoming; available for download at <http://wiego.org/wee/securing-economic-rights-informal-women-workers>)

WFTO GLOBAL GENDER POLICY

PRINCIPLE 6: WFTO GLOBAL

COMMITMENT TO NON DISCRIMINATION, GENDER EQUITY AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, AND FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The organisation does not discriminate in hiring, remuneration, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, political affiliation, HIV/Aids status or age.

The organisation has a clear policy and plan to promote gender equality that ensures that women as well as men have the ability to gain access to the resources that they need to be productive and also the ability to influence the wider policy, regulatory, and institutional environment that shapes their livelihoods and lives. Organisational constitutions and by-laws allow for and enable women to become active members of the organisation in their own right (where it is a membership based organisation), and to take up leadership positions in the governance structure regardless of women's status in relation to ownership of assets such as land and property. Where women are employed within the organisation, even where it is an informal employment situation, they receive equal pay for equal work. The organisation recognises women's full employment rights and is committed to ensuring that women receive their full statutory employment benefits. The organisation takes into account the special health and safety needs of pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers.

The organisation respects the right of all employees to form and join trade unions of their choice and to bargain collectively. Where the right to join trade unions and bargain collectively are restricted by law and/or political environment, the organisation will enable means of independent and free association and bargaining for employees. The organisation ensures that representatives of employees are not subject to discrimination in the workplace.

GOALS OF THE GENDER POLICY

The goals of the WFTO Global Gender Policy are defined at three levels:- 1) to improve the situation of women within membership organisations through policies to ensure equality and equal rights; 2) to ensure that all Fair Trade relationships between organisations and workers who produce for Fair Trade markets are examined through a gender and employment lens, including identifying the differential impacts of business transactions on women and men and the gendered distribution of power and 3) to incorporate gender justice demands into the advocacy agendas of member organisations, as a means to influence policy and decision-makers to address the structural barriers which keep women from realising their rights.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER POLICY

The objectives of the Gender Policy are based on the extensive evidence that in the global South, women's work remains undervalued, unrecognized and underpaid. It is still perceived as a secondary

activity even when it is the main source of family income. Women themselves remain unaware of their rights, largely unrepresented in consultations and policy forums, and under-represented in governance structures and the membership of cooperatives².

- 1) To engage women and men in the implementation of Principle 6, together recognising the barriers to gender equality and women's economic empowerment and working together to find solutions to overcome these,
- 2) To acknowledge that women's historically disadvantaged position has led to their limited access to education and employment opportunities compared to men, and to provide equitable solutions to counteract this inequality by providing opportunities to empower women in the workplace and beyond,
- 3) To increase women's voices in decision-making and leadership positions within the Fair Trade movement and beyond (e.g. in local authorities and trade unions), including the voices of more-marginalised groups of women, such as women with disabilities and transgender persons,
- 4) To contribute to the elimination of all acts of violence against women and girls, in their households, in their communities and in their workplaces,
- 5) To ensure recognition of all women in the supply chain, especially where women work alongside men in a family unit, women working informally, and women's membership in their own right within cooperatives and other forms of worker organisations.
- 6) To involve women from the ground up in designing the changes recommended in this document.

² Building Capacity for Change: Developing Women's Leadership and Business Skills, Elaine Jones and Carol Wills, March 2016, WIEGO (forthcoming; available for download at <http://wiego.org/wee/securing-economic-rights-informal-women-workers>.)

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Definition:

Empowerment refers to the process of change that gives working poor women – as individual workers and as members of worker organizations – the ability to gain access to and control over the resources they need while also gaining the ability to influence the wider policy, regulatory, and institutional environment that shapes their livelihoods and lives³.

WFTO-Global and its members will:

- Embed the values of Fair Trade Principle 6 into all activities,
- Provide space for women to participate in contextually-relevant training programmes that contribute to their economic empowerment, including; basic education, technical skills and leadership trainings,
- Support and promote equal pay for equal work policies, as all too often women are paid less than their male counterparts for the same role,
- Provide and disseminate positive experiences and best practices of women's economic empowerment as a means to inspire other women and men to strive for change,
- Continue to promote women's economic empowerment, including the development of programs that lead to greater awareness of gender discrimination and its impacts on women's economic empowerment,
- Ensure that all workers who produce for the Fair Trade market can engage in the application of the principles of the Fair Trade movement, and benefit equally from access to domestic and international markets and government support for Fair Trade,
- Strengthen regional and national networks to become stronger platforms for advocacy in favour of women and informal workers,
- Promote organising women into collective forms of enterprise as an effective vehicle for improving market access and influencing the wider policy, regulatory, and institutional environment that shapes their livelihoods and lives,
- Encourage women's marketing groups by providing them with information enabling them to access group savings, micro-finance and other business financing schemes,

³ WIEGO Definition of Economic Empowerment (insert reference)

- Recognise women as workers and acknowledge their contribution to the economy,
- Encourage women to utilize their domestic savings to fund income-generating activities,
- Introduce projects, which will involve new low-cost technologies affordable to assist women by reducing their workload and expenditures,
- Engage and coordinate with their networked organizations, associated groups of workers producing for the Fair Trade market, governments and funders to promote and support effective, creative and impactful ways to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment,
- Reinforce positive perceptions of women and their gendered roles within the household, workplace, and community.

GENDER EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Definition of gender equity:

The process of being fair to women and men regardless of sex or gender identity which may require different gender specific interventions; equity leads to equality⁴.

WFTO Global and its members will:

- Ensure equal treatment for women and men without discrimination, always, including equal opportunities for job-trainings and personal development activities,
- Ensure that women have equitable access to the workplace, including the provision of flexible working conditions for breast-feeding mothers, single mothers, and women with disabilities,
- Provide equitable measures to ensure women have equal access to top-management positions within WFTO and its member organisations,
- Ensure that working hours are flexible for all workers (provided that an agreed number of hours are worked each day or week) and so that women who are heads of households, including single mothers and widows, can participate effectively and have a sense of job security,
- Engage and encourage male and female workers in the Fair Trade movement, and other relevant stakeholders, to overcome thoughts, behaviours and practices that are barriers to gender equality and women's economic empowerment,
- Show sensitivity to familial and societal expectations that are placed upon women and how these may interact with their work responsibilities,

⁴ Oxfam Australia, Gender Mainstreaming Policy, effective 2011

- Ensure that women workers have the support necessary to maintain their work and home lives with dignity,
- Provide culturally sensitive workplaces that reflect tolerance in the face of diversity and taking into account religious beliefs. For example, in situations where there are fasting months women may require different working schedules than they would during the rest of the year,
- Recognise the different capabilities of different women, including women with disabilities and other marginalised sectors, giving them opportunities to exercise their rights and potential,
- Provide safe spaces for women to work. Where they are expected in the evenings or night time, ensure there is sufficient lighting and transport leaving from the venue,
- Ensure that all workers are paid individually for their work, and not as collective family units. Furthermore, make steps to ensure that women are receiving their wages and benefits, as per their contribution, and that they have control over their income,
- Be supportive of women’s organisations, including unionising, as a means for strengthening their joint-capacities through mobilisation that can be an effective tool to ensure the realisation of their rights as women.

WOMEN’S EQUALITY IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Definition of Equality:

The equal enjoyment by women and men of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards and the same level of dignity and respect. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that their rights and opportunities are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male⁵

WFTO-Global and its members will:

- Support the promotion of equal opportunities for women in decision-making processes at the organisational *and* community levels. Where it is observed that men are taking on these roles in the place of capable women, WFTO members may need to consider how to address this imbalance,
- Provide equal opportunities for leadership roles to both women and men,
- Provide and encourage leadership training for women, to equip them with the skills necessary to be effective leaders in their fields. Furthermore, provide gender mainstreaming training for *all* employees,
- Ensure greater representation of women in governance roles,

⁵ As cited in Oxfam Australia Gender Mainstreaming Policy op cit

- Promote women’s control over credit and income and the right to participate on equal terms in the decision-making process with their male counterparts in the household and community level.

THE PROMOTION OF GENDER JUSTICE

Definition of gender justice:

The goal of full equality and equity between women and men in all spheres of life; resulting in women jointly and on an equal basis with men defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole, based on their own interests and priorities. Gender Justice commits to taking a gender perspective on the definition and application of civil, political, economic and social rights. Gender justice is an outcome and a process. As an outcome, it implies access to and control over resources, combined with agency (the ability to make choices). As a process, it brings an additional essential element: accountability, which implies the responsibility and answerability of precisely those social institutions set up to dispense justice⁶

WFTO Global and its members will:

- Support capacity building and training of international human rights and women’s rights frameworks, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights,
- Sensitise all stakeholders on gender and women’s economic empowerment through the dissemination of resources and the provision of trainings,
- Incorporate the use of a “**gender lens**” to view all strategic plans and ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated in the strategic planning stage,
- Promote gender equality as an internationally recognized human right and eliminate internal systems / procedures / practices that hinder its realization.

GENDER-SENSITIVE EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES FOR WFTO GLOBAL AND MEMBERS

- The gender-ratio of governance structures, including leadership boards and committees, must be reflective of the gender-ratio of the workforce they are leading. Where the workforce is comprised of more men than women, whether at the production or management levels, steps must be taken to address this.
- There shall be no gender discrimination when recruiting. This means that a woman’s family situation shall not be a consideration when recruiting, nor is a woman’s age.
- There shall be no gender discrimination in the case of promotion.
- Gender sensitivity must be applied in all interactions and activities, including the designation of fieldwork postings or long working hours.

⁶ Oxfam Novib position paper on Gender Justice cited in Oxfam Australia Gender Mainstreaming Policy 2011

- Provide child-friendly offices, which may be inclusive of day-care facilities and/or private spaces for breastfeeding mothers.
- Provide paid maternity leave and make paternal leave available on request for a certain number of days for each child for contracted staff, the length of such leave to be determined by law and context in each country.
- Ensure provisions for women workers producing for the Fair Trade market that support their job security, even within casual agreements, so that if they take leave due to illness, pregnancy or marriage, that they may also receive financial support and are free to re-join the workforce after the stipulated time.
- Sex will not be grounds for dismissal.
- Discrimination based upon sexual orientation, shall not be tolerated in any form.
- Sexual harassment will not be tolerated in any form and the organisation shall provide adequate safeguards and culturally sensitive complaint mechanisms. An employee found guilty of harassment shall be immediately dismissed.
- Gender issues must be taken into account in all project planning and implementation activities and women need to be directly involved in designing these plans and activities.
- Safe working conditions will be provided for all employees, specifically for women, including the provision of additional transport options for women who are expected to work after hours.
- Special attention shall be given to strategizing the prevention of gender-based violence in the workplace and in the community.
- There shall be the provision of separate toilets for men and women in the workplace, as well as the provision of sanitary napkins for women and means for their hygienic disposal.
- Special consideration will be made for pregnant women and new mothers, particularly in regards to field work.
- Encourage and support employees, especially women, who are interested in furthering their own professional development.