



# Socialist International Women

## SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN

Council Meeting

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### Democracy in Crisis, Populism on the Rise – Where do Women’s Rights fit in?

#### RESOLUTION

The issue of women is closely linked to that of democracy. The advance of the rule of law serves for the advancement of human rights in general, and of women in particular. On the contrary, the level and quality of democracy in a society is measured by the perception of the notions of citizenship and the rule of law, in particular the place given to equality and justice.

Socialist International Women (SIW) is very concerned about the current climate of progressive erosion of the principles of social democracy and the damaging effects of populism on women's rights. The equality of rights between women and men throughout the world and the equal political participation of both sexes, based on the ideology of a “true democracy”, taking into account human rights and the specific rights of women has always been in the heart of the vision of SIW.

The current crisis that democracy is going through is mainly in response to the global climate of uncertainty that reigns worldwide, which includes the financial crisis, extreme climate change and terrorist acts, which has resulted in tense electorates, with unfortunate consequences for the economic and social development of our countries. While populism has sometimes led to some positive changes for women, the current ideologies on which popular uprisings rest – fostering divisions, xenophobia, or gender discrimination – have swept away democratic values.

The toxic environments created by contemporary populism have proven to be very damaging to vulnerable groups, such as refugees and migrants, especially women and girls, fleeing conflict and persecution. The increasingly manipulative and repulsive role played by certain media in the political arena, with false information containing malicious, hateful and aggressive content, and in particular, those intended to violate the dignity and human rights of minorities, women and girls, in a highly deregulated world of social networks, are particularly worrisome.

The harmful effects of populism on women's rights include actions such as the misappropriation of funds for women's initiatives, the repeal of reproductive rights laws and the reduction of popular support for the rights of women victims of gender violence. These actions not only affect women and girls, but also impact families and entire communities.

Meeting the challenge of destructive populism requires a renewed commitment to true democracy and the principles of cooperation and gender equality. Solidarity among women around the world is a force of great power to curb the perverse effects of populism. Increasing women's political participation is crucial to protect the freedoms already achieved and to build gender-sensitive societies and ensure that the issues and needs of women and girls remain a priority on political agendas. SIW supports initiatives such as the UN HeForShe

campaign, which recognises that by working together, women and men are powerful catalysts that can improve the present and the future.

SIW reaffirms its support for efforts to strengthen solidarity among women and to enrich and sustain progress in the field of gender equality.

SIW reiterates its conviction that the principles of social democracy are essential for the creation of equitable and harmonious societies, as well as for lasting peace between regions and nations.

The Socialist International of Women calls all governments, member parties of the Socialist International, as well as NGOs that defend beliefs and values similar to those of SIW, to place special emphasis on the values of progressive socialism and be proactive in defending society against the destructive pandemic of populism, promoter of social divisions and hatred.

SIW calls to:

- *Encourage* the effective participation of women in political processes at local, national and international levels in order to make visible the crucial role they play in political life.
  - *Urge* governments to effectively implement equality between women and men, including equal remuneration, and take bold measures to fight poverty, providing funds for gender equity initiatives and women's projects, in business, care for women health and education.
  - *Combat* the content of malicious and virulent media in all its forms and encourage global cooperation to put an end to this worrisome trend.
  - *Challenge* all discriminatory and abusive practices, behaviours and laws, and guarantee solutions.
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