**List of Abbreviations**

**CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**

**CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**CRPD Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**ICC International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

**ICPD International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action**

**ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

**ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

**MDG United Nation Millennium Development Goals**

**NHRI National Human Rights Institution**

**OHCHR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**

**UN CSW United Nations Commission on the Status of Women**

**UNDP United Nations Development Programme**

**UNFPA United Nations Population Fund**

**UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund**

**AMMAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The Amman Declaration and Programme of Action is a statement that was concluded at the 11th Conference of the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions (ICC), which was held in Amman, Jordan, on 5-7 November 2012. It sets out a series of concrete actions to address not only issues of discrimination and violence towards women and girls, but also to promote gender equality at all levels, including the local, national, regional and international levels.

1.2The Rights of Women and Girls

Although all human rights agreements guarantee women’s and girls’ rights, namely their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, there is a growing realisation that billions of women and girls still experience either violations or outright denials of their rights. To make matters worse, many women suffer from multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination.

It was also recognised that the following groups of women and girls were more vulnerable to having their rights denied and/or violated:

* Women belonging to minority groups
* Indigenous women
* Afro-descendant women
* Refugee and internally displaced women
* Migrant women
* Women living in rural or remote communities
* Women living in extreme poverty
* Women in institutions or in detentions
* Women with disabilities
* Elderly women
* Widows
* Women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations
* Women who are discriminated against on the bases of HIV status, domestic and family violence, sex workers, females of diverse sexuality, and/or gender, females who abuse drugs, female victims of trafficking.

A number of significant factors were also found to contribute to the rise of women and girls’ rights being abused. For example, poverty and inequality increases vulnerability to discrimination, hunger and gender-based violence, while the existence of male dominated structures/systems devalues the lives and contributions of women. Another example is situations of on-going militarisation, war, violence, unemployment and insecure employment which tend to impact negatively on women’s and girls’ time, health, safety, education and social security.

With the formulation of the Amman Declaration and the Programme of Action, there is a growing recognition that National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) have an important role to play in the promotion of gender equality. The Declaration has outlined a number of practical steps that NHRIs can take to advance and protect women’s and girls’ rights, in cooperation with other actors such as, government bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, and leading international experts.

**2.0 Principles and Areas of Work**

2.1 In order to effectively address the issue of women’s and girl’s rights, NHRIs have agreed to the following broad principles and areas of work:

1. Prioritise and ensure that human rights of women and girls as well as gender equality are consistently included in all their strategic planning, processes, policies, programmes and activities.
2. Encourage NHRI departments relating to women’s and children’s rights to work together with specialised actors at the national, regional and international levels, including trade unions, UN agencies, non-State actors, civil society organisations, regional and inter-governmental organisations.
3. Where permitted, NHRIs should monitor the State’s and non-State actors’ fulfilment of their human rights obligations, including those relating to the rights of women and girls as well as gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action and its twelve areas of critical concern should serve as the guiding framework for assessing State’s actions to ensure women’s and girls’ rights.
4. Investigate and address potential cases of violations of women’s and girls’ human rights, including all forms of discriminations against them, and identify common factors that have led to such violations.
5. Where permitted, NHRIs should ensure that victims have access to straight-forward procedures, including legal and non-legal remedies, when seeking justice.
6. Where NHRIs are granted semi legal powers, exercise them fully to support victims and to pressure authorities into taking legal action against offenders, e.g. criminal prosecution of offenders.
7. Ensure that national laws and policies include the protection and promotion of human rights of women and girls, as found in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and other human rights norms and standards.
8. Encourage the full adoption of all human rights treaties in order to strengthen the implementation of said treaties.
9. Monitor the implementation of treaty recommendations, special procedures, and the resolutions of UN intergovernmental bodies, including the General Assembly, Human Rights Council, the Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW) and the Commission on Population and Development; and also the recommendations accepted by States in the context of the Universal Periodic Review.
10. Cooperate with defenders of women’s rights, in particular groups that may include those who suffer for being women or because they defend gender specific cases, in order to promote their access to solutions in case of violations.
11. Establish cooperative partnerships with UN agencies such as United Nations Women, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in order to strengthen NHRIs capabilities, to more effectively promote and protect women’s and girls’ human rights.
12. Launch education, promotion and awareness-raising activities on women’s and girls’ rights and on gender equality, with particular focus on eliminating prejudices and practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes, or on stereotyped roles for men and women.
13. Develop guidelines relating to the rights of women and girls and monitor State compliance with such guidelines.
14. Monitor and work with individuals and groups in the private sector and non-governmental sphere to ensure that they do not discriminate against women and girls.
15. Monitor the activities of local and multinational businesses and report on any negative impacts on women’s and girls’ enjoyment of their human rights.
16. Promote women’s and girls’ rights by using existing international and regional human rights mechanisms along with global processes such as the post -2015 development agenda, the International Conference on Population and Development Programme (ICPD) Beyond 2014 Global Review, the Beijing Platform of Action, and the Vienna Programme of Action.
17. Urge States to prioritise the human rights of women and girls, in their engagement with international financial and trade institutions, and in the negotiation of international agreements in these areas.

**3.0 Areas of Work for NHRIs**

3.1 The Conference Committee has highlighted a number of key areas, which are issues that are particularly relevant to the work of NHRIs in all regions:

1. **NHRIs and Women’s Political and Public Participation**
2. Promote the removal of any discriminatory laws, which restrict women’s ability to participate in public and political life.
3. Promote the elimination of traditional, cultural and social barriers that prevent women from exercising their right to vote or from participating in public, peace and political processes.
4. Provide assistance to women who face social and economic barriers to public and political participation, such as illiteracy, language, poverty, and impediments to women’s freedom of movement.
5. Encourage the adoption of temporary special measures to ensure that women are satisfactorily represented in elected as well as appointed positions, within the government and political parties.
6. Advocate mechanisms to ensure that girls’ voices are heard in matters affecting their well-being.
7. **NHRIs and Women’s Economic and Social Rights**
8. Ensure that States’ respect, protect and fulfil women’s economic, social and cultural rights, and guarantee non-discrimination in the exercise of these rights.
9. Support efforts to assess States on whether they are spending the maximum available resources on the improvement of women’s economic, social and cultural rights. Findings of such assessments should be shared with the Parliament to assist in State decision-making.
10. Ensure the removal of discriminatory practices by examining laws, public policies and budgets, including economic policies, as well as poverty reduction strategies, population strategies and other strategies aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Declaration and Goals (MDGs)[[1]](#footnote-2).
11. Facilitate training of lawyers, prosecutors, judges, parliamentarians, and government officials on women’s economic, social and cultural rights.
12. Support and ensure that women who have suffered from human rights violations have access to aid, and promote women’s economic, social and cultural rights in countries where there is a lack of awareness.
13. Carry out awareness-raising activities with women to educate them about their rights and mechanisms at their disposal for claiming their economic, social and cultural rights.
14. Monitor development assistance programmes to ensure that they do not discriminate against or disadvantage women and they prioritize the achievement of gender equality.
15. Support efforts to monitor women’s rights to decent work, including equal compensation and equal access to education, training and professional development, as well as ensuring women’s health, safety and well-being in all workplaces.
16. Support efforts to monitor women’s unpaid work and provide recommendations for support to women who have child-caring responsibilities[[2]](#footnote-3), while promoting equal division of labour in the home.
17. **NHRIs and Violence against Women and Girls**
18. Encourage and aid the compilation of an evidence-based database (e.g. data, inquiries, research) on the nature, extent, causes and effects of all forms of gender-based violence, and on the effectiveness of measures to prevent and address gender-based violence.
19. Promote the adoption of laws against domestic and family violence, sexual assault and all other forms of gender-based violence, in accordance with international human rights standards.
20. Support the adoption of National Action Plans to address violence against women, which allows independent monitoring and evaluation.
21. If authorised, conduct training of judicial and law enforcement officers, medical professionals, and other public officials on responding to violence against women, gender equality and women’s human rights.
22. Promote measures, including severe punishments, preventive and rehabilitation measures to protect women and girls subject to trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation.
23. Assist women and girl victims in accessing complaints procedures and remedies, including compensation and the use of NHRIs’ quasi-judicial powers to address complaints of violence against women and girls.
24. Develop programmes to prevent and combat sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence in the workplace, schools, or in other institutions such as places of detention.
25. Establish or support efficient services for victims of gender-based violence, including rehabilitation, counselling and legal services, and to ensure that these services are accessible to particularly disadvantaged groups of women.
26. Promote implementation of the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, as well as the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).
27. Establish and support measures to address human rights violations experienced by women in situations of armed conflict, especially sexual violence, and to hold perpetrators responsible.
28. **NHRIs and Women’s Health and Reproductive Rights**
29. Protect and promote reproductive rights, which include the right to self-determination and the right to the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, violence and coercion, as laid out in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.
30. Encourage and aid the compilation of an evidence-based database (e.g., date, inquiries, research) on cases relating to violations of reproductive rights and sexual health. Examples include forced sterilisation, forced abortion, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, biased sex selection and other harmful practices.
31. Review national laws and administrative regulations relating to reproductive rights, which are discriminatory or criminalise access to sexual and reproductive health services, and propose recommendations to assist States in meeting their human rights obligations.
32. Promote measures to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, and to support the establishment of accountability mechanisms when obligations have been breached.

**4.0 Additional Roles of NHRIs**

4.1NHRIs may also take the following actions:

1. Using the Amman Declaration and Programme of Action as a guideline to ensure the implementation of regional NHRI action plans, along with other specific initiatives that will be reported on at regional NHRI network meetings and at ICC Conferences.
2. Translate this Declaration and Programme of Action into local languages and distribute it widely through press releases, websites, social media, civil society networks and other mechanisms to ensure broad national community awareness of the Declaration.
3. Organise national forums that include all relevant parties to discuss the outcomes of the 11th Conference and steps for the implementation of the Amman Programme of Action at the national level.
4. **Role of the ICC**

5.1 The Conference also agreed that the ICC should:

1. Dedicate a session to the role of NHRIs in promoting and protecting women’s rights in its annual general meetings.
2. Promote a diverse composition of NHRIs as required by the Paris Principles, with regards to gender, ethnicity, minority status, equal representation and participation of women in the NHRI.
3. Continue its advocacy for the independent participation of A-status NHRIs at the UN CSW, as encouraged by UN Human Rights Council Resolution 20/14. The ICC, along with its regional NHRI coordinating committees and NHRIs should also engage with their respective governments, at the 57th session of CSW (4 to 15 March 2013) focused on the ‘Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls’.

1. Refers to eight specific development goals that have been agreed upon by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions. The goals are to: a) Eradicate poverty and hunger, b) Achieve universal primary education, c) Promote gender equality and empower women, d) Reduce child mortality,

   e) Improve maternal health, f) Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, g) Ensure environmental sustainability, and h) Establish global partnership for development. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Responsibilities include ensuring adequate child care, paid parental leave and flexible working arrangements. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)