

Submissions by IWRAW Asia Pacific on the Zero Draft of the Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries (8 August 2021)

1. Introduction

International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW Asia Pacific) is an international women's rights and feminist organization based in the Global South and committed to the full realisation of women's human rights through the pursuit of equality. We work for the advancement of women's rights globally, ensuring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) using the substantive equality and a non-discrimination framework as the basis of our analysis and advocacy for the progressive interpretations of women's human rights, including in creating momentum and co-organizing spaces to address the macro-level legal, policy, and social contexts which impacts on the daily realities of women and girls.

This statement is made in relation to the Zero Draft of the Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries (the "Zero Draft") and in advance of the 5th United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, scheduled for January 2022 in Qatar ("LDC5"). IWRAW Asia Pacific **endorses the submissions made by the Third World Network and Social Watch, the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development, and the Civil Society Working Group on Financing for Development** and encourages State Delegates to refer to their recommendations for the removal of the structural barriers faced by LDCs - the elimination of which goes hand-in-hand with the elimination of gender discrimination and is central to the success of the LDC5 process.

We invite the Preparatory Committee and State Delegates to consider this statement as a first step in strengthening the integration of a gender perspective throughout the Zero Draft. This integration is essential to achieving the scope and scale of structural transformation identified in the Zero Draft and called for by civil society through the LDC5 preparatory process.

First, we welcome the steps taken by the Preparatory Committee, particularly the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Bangladesh and Canada, in organising civil society consultations and expressing a commitment to meaningful and continued engagement with civil

We are confident that the Preparatory Committee and State Delegates recognise the fulfilment of women's human rights and gender equality as an essential and cross-cutting issue that must be integrated into all parts of the Programme of Action.

However, we note that the Zero Draft falls far short of achieving the above standard. **An express commitment by the Preparatory Committee and State Delegates to fully integrate a gender perspective into the Doha Programme of Action is needed, including a commitment to engage in inclusive and meaningful consultations with diverse women's rights and feminist activists on the textual amendments required to create a gender responsive and transformative Programme of Action.**

This statement provides some examples of both the cross-cutting issues that need to be considered throughout the Zero Draft and the kinds of textual amendments that are required to meet international standards on women's human rights and gender equality. **It is not exhaustive.** And silence on a particular section does not mean that we endorse the framing or language used. Rather, as noted above, we invite the Preparatory Committee and State Delegates to view this statement as a first step in a comprehensive review of the Zero Draft and commitment to the full integration of a gender perspective and **ensuring that women's voices, rights, experiences, and visions are visible and prioritized throughout the LDC5 process.**¹

Please refer to the **attached Annex** for a non-exhaustive list of comments and text suggestions to begin shifting the Zero Draft towards alignment with minimum international standards on women's human rights and gender equality.

2. Cross-cutting themes necessary for integration of gender perspective into Zero Draft

The following cross-cutting themes reflect a gender responsive and human rights-based approach to the eliminating inequality and discrimination within the global economic and financial architecture and are guided by the principles of international cooperation, global solidarity, and democratic global governance. It focuses on the CEDAW Convention as a framework for integrating a gender perspective throughout the Zero Draft. However, the principles and obligations outlined below are confirmed by multiple international and regional human 1-5p5(ogr)4(am)-6(n

unequal gender relations. **These principles cannot and should not be siloed or confined to the issues identified under the subheading, “Empowerment of women, girls and youth to address inequality and drive economic growth” (Zero Draft, paras. 48-53).** They are integral to and interconnected with all matters of development, including macro-level, structural issues, such as trade, investment, financing and resource mobilisation, global governance, and technology, among others.

Substantive equality: The concept of equality is traditionally understood to mean “the right to be equal to men”. This becomes problematic when it is extended to the understanding that women must be treated exactly like men if they are to gain equality with men. Initiatives for the realisation of women’s rights need to compensate for or cater to the difference, disparity, or disadvantage, rather than a “one size fits all” approach. Substantive equality means taking into account the ways in which women are different from men, and ensuring that these differences are acknowledged and responded to by State measures toward achieving equality.² **In the context of development and global economic and financial structures, it includes recognising how gender inequality is maintained or exacerbated by dominant approaches macro-level economic policy and assessing the distributive outcomes and results of each section of the Zero Draft, with the aim of designing measures and commitments towards the creation of both equality of opportunity and equality of results, while transforming unequal gender relations in the process.** This requires an understanding of the gender stereotyping norms and attitudes that underpin unequal economic and development relationships at the global level,³ developed through the meaningful participation of diverse groups of women rights advocates at all stages of the LDC5 process.

Non-discrimination: Substantive equality is achieved through the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This means ensuring laws, policies, and plans of action are **not discriminatory in either how they are designed or in their effect or outcome and requires taking into account the lived experiences of women** in regard to intersecting forms of discrimination based on class, race, caste, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, and migrant status, among other forms of discrimination.⁴

State obligation: The CEDAW Convention is one with one of the most widely ratified international human rights treaties with 189 State Parties and only six States worldwide that have not sign-on.⁵ Every country that is a signatory to the CEDAW

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Convention has voluntarily agreed to a range of legally binding obligations to eliminate discrimination against women and bring about substantive gender equality in all ar

global system that simultaneously excludes women, while relying on their unpaid and undervalued labour to shoulder the burden of structures designed to benefit a small, powerful few.

We repeat our **call for an express commitment by the Preparatory Committee and State Delegates to fully integrate a gender perspective into the Doha Programme of Action, including a commitment to engage in inclusive and meaningful consultations with diverse**

	<p>competence in line with LDCs national priorities and in collaboration with relevant national government institutions. Contributions by private sectors and foundations will be in accordance with obligations and responsibilities under applicable international human rights instruments.</p>	
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**Introduction,
para. 25**

We affirm that the national and local governments play a very important role in articulating and implementing the policies and programmes that will support a sustainable future that leaves no one behind. National parliaments will have a great role to play in enacting legislation and allocating funds that serve all to leave3 272.08 250.13 97.-8(ure)7 nBT/F1 12 Tf1 0 0

We recognize that good governance at all levels, strong institutions, democracy, the rule of law, transparency and accountability along with a healthy and well-educated population, with the knowledge and skills needed for productive capacity building and full participation in the decision making process are crucial to achieving sustainable development. However, LDCs still face challenges in ensuring universal access to quality education and health care and their vulnerabilities and limited capacities exacerbate the impact of external shocks such as COVID-19, natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.

**Theme I,
Investing in
People in LDCs,
Universal Access
to Quality
Education**

*General recommendation made in next column for
whole section.*

Recommend reviewing entire section to ensure the specific impact of the right to education on girls, including a commitment to upholding the rights of girls in this area and confirming the need for disaggregated data to support evidence and results-based policy as the foundation to State commitments to impact-based gender responsive policy and F1 12 Tfgender responsive policy and

50. We commit to establishing support programmes to prevent and respond to

		<p>context of development, trade, and global supply chains.</p> <p>It is also critical to examine and address how xenophobia and racism translate to discriminatory immigration laws and policies that particularly impact marginalized groups of migrants, such as sex workers.</p>
<p>Theme I, Investing in People in LDCs, Good and Effective Governance at all Levels, para. 81</p>	<p>Targets: Strengthen good governance and the rule of law at all levels</p> <p>Substantially enhance the voice and participation of LDCs in global governance architecture, including taking all appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in political and public participation at all levels and to uphold gender equality and non-discrimination in opportunities to represent Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations</p>	<p>Refer to Articles 7 and 8 of CEDAW.</p>
<p>Theme III, Structural Transformation as a Driver of Prosperity, para. 151</p>	<p>Target: Create an enabling environment for private sector development.</p> <p>Ensure full and equal access to financial services and products for MSMEs, including insurance, and improve financial literacy, especially for women. (IPoA, 2011, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, 2015)</p>	<p>We repeat our concern about the focus in the Zero Draft on micro-level solutions for the economic empowerment of women. Gender responsive transformations are also required at the macro-level, including in the area of economics, trade, investment, and finance to ensure the fulfillment of women’s human rights and advancement of gender equality.</p>

