

2014 BPW International General Assembly Resolutions Report

These are the resolutions as passed by the General Assembly in Jeju, Korea, at the 2014 Congress

Resolutions related to BPW International external advocacy			
E-1	BPW New Zealand	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Amended and PASSED
E-2	BPW New Zealand	OP Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Amended and PASSED
E-3	BPW New Zealand	CEDAW and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	PASSED
E-4	BPW Japan	Gender empowerment to reduce damages by disasters	Amended and PASSED
E-5	BPW France	Gender Balance on Boards	PASSED
E-6A	BPW Africa	Prevention of Child Marriage	PASSED
E-6B	BPW New Zealand	Prevention of Forced Marriages	Amended and PASSED
E-7	BPW Germany	Endorsing the Clean Clothes Campaign – renamed Endorsing the campaigns for decent working conditions in the garment industry	Amended and PASSED
E-8	VP UN	BPW International Statement to CSW	PASSED
Resolutions related to BPW internal matters			
I-1	Past President Antoinette Ruegg	Renewal of Committees, Taskforces and Projects	Amended and PASSED
I-2	Past President Sylvia Perry	Maintaining the virtual Webex web office platform	Amended and PASSED
I-3	BPW Australia	Rotation of Regional meetings within a Region	PASSED
I-4	BPW Australia	Allocation of budgets to Regional Coordinators	PASSED
I-5	BPW Legislation Chair	Procedure Manual: review and reform	Amended and PASSED
I-6	BPW New Zealand	Procedure Manual: voting on amendments	PASSED

E-1 Signing and ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from BPW New Zealand

The BPW International General Assembly 2014

- notes that there is only one United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD);
- is aware that not all countries and regional organisations have signed and ratified the UNCRPD since it was open for signature (adopted in 2006);
- understands that women with disabilities face significantly more difficulties - in both public and private spheres – in attaining access to adequate housing, health, education, vocational training and employment, and are more likely to be institutionalised; and experience inequality in hiring, promotion, rates and pay for equal work, access to training and retraining, credit and other productive resources, and rarely participate in economic decision-making;
- knows that the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) does not address the prevention of discrimination against disabled women and girls;

and therefore resolves that:

1. all Affiliates will investigate whether their government or state has signed and ratified UNCRPD
2. if their government or state has not undertaken both signing and ratifying the UNCRPD, the Affiliate will *ask why and* strongly urge this to be undertaken.

E-2 Signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from BPW New Zealand

The BPW International General Assembly 2014

- notes that an Optional Protocol to the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has been open for signature and ratifications since 2007;
- is aware that State Parties which have ratified the UNCRPD have the opportunity to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol;
- knows that women with disabilities who are experiencing discrimination because of their disability, who have exhausted all domestic means of preventing this occurring and continuing, and the government or state or its agencies have either been the perpetrator or not provided adequate means of eliminating discrimination;
- understands that women with disabilities, their families or agents acting for them, currently have no other recourse for redress than to communicate with the UN Committee directly;

and therefore resolves that:

1. all Affiliates will investigate if their government or state has signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
2. if their government of state has not both signed and ratified the Optional Protocol, that the Affiliate will *ask why and* strongly urge this to be undertaken.

E-3 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from BPW New Zealand

The BPW International General Assembly 2014

- notes that CEDAW does not include an Article of Women and Girls with Disabilities;
- is aware that it would be politically difficult to utilise Article 26 of CEDAW to request a revision of the present Convention to include an Article of Women and Girls with Disabilities; but
- knows that General Recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women stand alongside the Convention and should be included within State Reports;

and therefore resolves that:

1. all Affiliates strongly will urge their governments or states to address General Recommendation 18 (10th session 1991) – Disabled Women that “State Parties provide information on disabled women in their (CEDAW) periodic reports, and on measures taken to deal with their particular situation, including special measures to ensure that they have equal access to education and employment, health services and social security, and to ensure that they can participate in all areas of social and cultural life.”
2. Affiliates will contribute to NGO Alternative or Shadow Reports to reflect the situation on women and girls with disabilities

E-4 Gender empowerment to reduce damages by disasters from BPW Japan

The BPW International General Assembly 2014 recognises that *global warming* and plate tectonics will increase natural disasters such as mega earthquakes, tsunamis, mammoth typhoons and tornados and floods; that the number of victims and the damage to people by these disasters are higher for females than males; that the human rights and dignity of women victims at shelters and refugee-places are often neglected; and that gender gaps exist for job opportunities and access to support systems to rebuild women's lives; and therefore

- urges BPW Affiliates to demand of their government gender equality in the decision-making process of disasters which means women should be included on planning committees and on administration bodies, including:
 - before the disaster, women should be included on committees to discuss disaster prevention measures, to reflect women's interests
 - at the disaster, women managers should be assigned in addition to men managers at shelters to ensure women's human dignity
 - women should be included on committees to discuss support systems for their economic independence, in order to prevent women's status being neglected.
- *urges our representatives to the United Nations in Geneva to request the Special Rapporteur on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters to call on all UN Member States to include gender-sensitive procedures in their disaster preparedness and post-disaster management.*

E-5 Gender Balance on Boards from BPW Europe

The BPW International General Assembly 2014

- has close regard to Women's Empowerment Principle 1 (UN Women and Global Compact), which aims to establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality, and the European Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 and Women on boards – European Commission Factsheet 2 (Gender equality in the Member States) which states that countries with legislative quotas remain the motor of change;
- recognises the Women at Work Initiative of ILO (International Labour Organization) which surveys the place and conditions of women in the world of work and engages constituents in concrete action to realize equality of opportunity and treatment;
- recalls article 11 of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - adopted by the United Nations by resolution 34/180 – 18 December 1979) which expects States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular the right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
- notes CSW57 (2013) agreed conclusion #19 which stresses that the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women, including women's economic empowerment and full and equal access to resources, and their full integration into the formal economy, in particular in economic decision-making, as well as their full and equal participation in public and political life, is essential for addressing the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls;

and therefore resolves to:

1. call on Affiliates to lobby governments and private and public corporations, in order to implement at country or regional level appropriate and binding measures to increase the number of women on boards and in decision-making positions by 2020:
 - These measures should allow a legally-regulated or self-regulated gradual implementation and should be applied to all listed and unlisted companies and all state-owned or participating state companies, excluding companies with less than 50 employees.
 - These measures should be supported by dissuasive and effective sanctions and appropriate to the country or region such as fines, nullity of board decisions and the suspension of benefits of directors
2. propose measures to increase women's representation on boards and executive committees within both the private and public sector, such as:
 - corporate commitment to fill the pipeline of women leaders by reaching a target [at least 40% women in the top 10 most senior positions for companies over 1000 employees]

- fostering the publication of gender indicators on the company website, in order to raise awareness of the company's effort to achieve gender equality at the highest level
- favouring companies with gender-balanced boards in public procurement
- introducing accompanying measures to change attitudes and ways of working in companies (supporting "work life fit", non-linear career)
- empowering women in order to have them reach the ladder (coaching, mentoring initiatives).

E-6A Prevention of Child Marriage from BPW Africa

The BPW International General Assembly 2014

- is mindful that action to stop and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls is a BPW International priority policy; that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child considers marriage before the age of 18 a human rights violation; and that child marriage, described by UNICEF as "perhaps the most prevalent form of sexual abuse and exploitation of girls", is one of the biggest obstacles to development, destroys the innocence of millions of girls in Africa and worldwide and often condemns them to lives of poverty, ignorance and poor health;
- recognises the loss of opportunity for child brides to reach their potential, the economic impact of child marriage on the woman and her children, and the effect on the economy of the disempowerment of whole communities of women through child marriage;
- shares the global concern on the ills of child marriage;
- and therefore notes with grave concern the rationale for prevention of child marriage and resolves to address the issue as a top priority policy issue through:
 - a. advocacy – creating awareness and sensitizing traditional and religious leaders, government officials, women groups, opinion leaders and other stakeholders on the implication of child marriage; and advocating for free and compulsory basic education for the girl child.
 - b. education – building capacity through training key stakeholders on human rights abuse and rights protection, and alerting them to existing laws and platform they can use to protect their rights or rights of their children; specifically building capacity of mothers through sensitization and knowledge sharing to equip them to serve as agents for the prevention of early marriages; providing platforms for men to advocate for the prevention early child marriages.
 - c. conducting community mobilization programmes and evaluating interventions.
 - d. media campaigns – promoting national discussions on gender violence; increasing public awareness through campaigns designed to change attitudes and behaviours.
 - e. lobbying and engaging governments and other relevant policy decision makers, through existing platforms, networks and coalitions for the inclusion of human rights in school curriculum and for enactment of policy and law prohibiting child and forced marriage.
 - f. locally adapting, adopting and distributing all charters, treaties, policies, laws and agreements targeted countries have committed to.
 - g. identifying and working with agencies that can provide legal support to young girls whose rights are violated through forced marriage.
 - h. collaborating with credible local and international organizations working on prevention of early/child marriage i.e. FIDA in Nigeria, Tostan in Senegal and other research institutions.
 - i. conducting research on existing programmes aimed at preventing early/child marriage in developing countries; facilitating cross communication and learning to improve efficiency of intervention.

E-6B Prevention of Forced Marriage from BPW New Zealand

The BPW International General Assembly 2014

- notes the United Nations Committee on CEDAW is concerned about the reports of forced marriages among migrant women in New Zealand, but understands that this is not a localised New Zealand issue;
- knows that General Recommendation 21, made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in 1994, stands alongside the Convention and therefore should be included in State Reports;
- and, given that there is a Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (resolution 1763 A (XVII), annex) which is signed by 16 countries and there are 55 parties to the Convention, resolves that

1. All BPW International Affiliates will strongly urge their Governments or State Parties to sign and/or ratify the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (resolution 1763 A (XVII), annex) and to
 - set the legal minimum age of marriage for girls and boys to 18 years ~~without any exception for parental consent~~ with the only exception being cases where the age of sexual consent is 16 years and a girl over 16 years who is pregnant or has given birth may marry with parental consent or the approval of a competent authority
 - introduce legal measures to prohibit underage and forced marriages and
 - promote measures to protect women harmed by polygamy and dowry-related violence.
2. All BPW International Affiliates will strongly urge their Governments or State Parties to include their actions on General Recommendation 21 in their reports to the CEDAW Monitoring Committee
3. BPW International Affiliates will contribute to NGO Alternative or Shadow Reports to reflect the situation of underage girls being forced into marriages.

E-7 Endorsing the campaigns for decent working conditions in the garment industry from BPW Germany

Given that BPW International endorsed and actively promotes the Women's Empowerment Principles; and

- reaffirming the resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1999 on the Clean Clothes Campaign *but also seeing the need for modernizing and reviving its implications and implementation*;
- recalling the devastating occurrence when Rana Plaza collapsed in Bangladesh in 2013;
- applauding the activities of *campaigns and activities such as the Clean Clothes Campaign (Originating from Europe), the Fairwear campaign in Australia and the activities of the ILO related to the "decent work agenda"*;

BPW International resolves to address this issue as a policy priority by endorsing the Clean Clothes Campaign and similar initiatives in other regions and countries and actively advocates through its Affiliates and UN representatives for the implementation of the "Decent Work Agenda" and initiatives derived from that, with gender equality as a crosscutting objective and adoption of the WEPs by the companies involved to create a safe garment industry with living wages and equal treatment.

E-8 BPW International Statement to CSW from BPW Vice President UN

The BPW International General Assembly 2014

- refers to the triennium 2012-2014 main issue to be promoted: the Women's Empowerment Principles which BPW International endorsed and actively promotes;
- recalls earlier BPW resolutions on water-related issues;
- welcomes BPWI membership of the World Water Council, Women for Water Partnership and the Butterfly Effect, who all actively advocate for a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal on Water and Sanitation;
- acknowledges that the Executive within its mandate has endorsed the statement prepared by BPW International's CSW and other UN Representatives and submitted to the Bureau of the CSW for the CSW58;

and therefore endorses the following recommendations that BPW International

- urges UN member states to adopt a dedicated goal for equality and non-discrimination that
 - obliges companies and governments in their policies to adopt and implement the Women's Empowerment Principles
 - includes in those policies equal employment, equal pay, pension, accessible and affordable care, social and health services, maternity leave benefits and child care
 - publicizes these issues through broad media coverage and social networks
 - establishes women entrepreneur networks to provide continuous and independent learning programmes and access to materials with technical information about production, processing, procurement, management and marketing
 - raises awareness of the pay equity gap with employers and women and develops strategies to mitigate it

- recognises and compensate (previous) experience and competences acquired in unpaid and volunteer jobs by “scaling” women into the pay scales
- empowers women through training to advocate for themselves
- recognises and affirm women as full participants in the formal economy and formal labour force
- ensures that women, including in rural areas, are included in the formal labour force and their work, including in caring for their children
- rewards women fairly for taking care of the family and the home
- ensures vocational secondary level education (as minimum) especially for women and girls becomes part of the sustainable development goals
- encourages and facilitates women to follow vocational and in-service training programs to increase their employment opportunities
- accepts and implements the recommendations on the above mentioned issues of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Global Education Digest 2011)
- urges UN member states to adopt a dedicated goal for water and sanitation including all areas of concern that
 - requires the Sustainable Development Goals to go beyond numbers, consider substance and quality and ensure full integration of the different pillars of sustainable development, avoiding a “silo” approach and connecting the various targets with other goals
 - requires universal ratification and implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action to be part of the Sustainable Development Goals, since they underpin and connect all the different areas of concern
 - treats all Sustainable Development Goals as equally important, ensure they are underpinned by a human rights framework, and guarantee a full range of connected services
 - requires governments to translate the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals and targets into national frameworks, investing where resources are most needed
 - and includes clear language throughout that recognises and affirms women’s equality and economic empowerment
- recommends BPW Affiliates adopt these recommendations and
- advocates actively for these recommendations in the UN system and towards national governments.

I-1 Renewal of Committees, Taskforces and Projects from BPW International Past President Antoinette Ruegg

The BPW International General Assembly 2014, given that the Constitutional Reform process found that BPW International’s Standing Committees on advocacy have not been successful in engaging the full range of experience and expertise of our members, whereas our operational committees have generally been effective

- recognises the need for BPW International’s advocacy committees to operate effectively and for our expert and interested members to be included and involved in the work of BPW at the international level;
- acknowledges that when the new BPW International Constitution and Regulations were passed by the General Assembly in 2011, the committee arrangements were not finalised and a motion was passed to defer their consideration to the 2014 General Assembly so the committee arrangements remained unchanged from the previous Constitution and By-laws; and that many Affiliates, Clubs and individuals conduct excellent local projects that deserve recognition and acceptance as BPW International projects and can therefore use the leverage of BPW International;
- adopts the following plan for renewal of the international committees which establishes a pilot project to develop a proposal for new arrangements and procedures for BPW International committees, taskforces and projects over the period 2014 to 2020. Reports will be delivered to the Executive and the 2017 and 2020 General Assemblies;
- accepts that this is a PILOT trial, it is not appropriate to formally change the Regulations until the trial is reported to the 2020 General Assembly. Based on the results, the PILOT Coordinating Team will submit a resolution to the BPW International 2020 General Assembly where the delegates will decide the definitive structure and amendments to the Regulations will be based on that decision.

- ~~DELETED agrees that during the 2014-2020 period, the General Assembly resolves to put aside the Regulations that pertain to Standing Committees [principally Regulation 15] for the purpose and duration of the trial. The planning and documentation is already prepared so the trial can commence at the end of the 2014 Congress. This means that, if this resolution is passed by the General Assembly, Standing Committee Chairs will not be elected in 2014. Candidates nominated as Standing Committee Chairs will be invited to register on the database and will be considered for roles on Taskforces established under the new arrangements.~~

REPLACED WITH *and therefore agrees that*

- *the new structure will be phased in alongside the current Standing Committee arrangements for the 2014-2017 triennium;*
- *Standing Committee Chairs elected in 2014 will have a vote at the 2017 General Assembly;*
- *there will be no call for nominations for Standing Committee Chairs prior to the 2017 General Assembly [depending on the results of the evaluation of the trial];*
- *the full trial will continue during the 2017-2020 triennium with no Standing Committees;*

The BPW International General Assembly 2014 also agrees that

1. The scope of this endeavour will cover:
 - Advocacy Taskforces established by BPW International to implement resolutions and extend our advocacy for women
 - Projects and Taskforces initiated and established by Affiliates, Clubs and individual members that are determined to qualify for adoption as BPW International Member-initiated Projects or Taskforces
 - Operational Committees established to support individual Executives in their work would not be included in this review.
2. The advocacy-based Standing Committees will be replaced with responsive taskforces focussed on discrete topics, under 5 priority advocacy areas. Advocacy Taskforces can be formed under each topic, and may research and develop policy proposals, establish and deliver programs and/or initiate and run campaigns.
3. A PILOT Coordinating Team will be established to develop, implement and improve the procedures to bring the new Taskforces, Projects and the Register of Expert and Interested Members to success. The Chair of the PILOT Coordinating Team will liaise closely with the Executive, and will lead and evaluate the new structure during the next two terms.
4. A PILOT Administrator will be appointed to support the PILOT Coordinating Team.
5. BPW International will establish a database of expert and interested BPW members who have volunteered to serve on BPW committees and taskforces, and the PILOT Administrator will manage this database. All members who are interested being a chairperson or member of a BPW taskforce or operational committee will be invited to register their areas of interest and/or expertise on the database. The database will be used to source members for Advocacy Taskforces and Operational Committees.
6. Member-initiated Taskforces and Projects: the PILOT Coordinating Team will recommend to the Executive that BPW International formally recognise Taskforces and Projects which are initiated and established by BPW Affiliates, Clubs and individual members that meet the following criteria: membership is voluntary; they add value to the work of BPW International; they are relevant to or focussed on business and professional women; and they have met reporting standards. Such Taskforces would receive no funding or reimbursement of expenses, but would be listed on the BPW International website.

I-2 Maintaining the virtual Webex web office platform from BPW Past Presidents Sylvia Perry, Elizabeth Benham and Yvette Swan

The BPW International General Assembly 2014 recognises that since 2009 considerable human and technical resources have been invested in the build-up of a secure reliable virtual platform for the storage of the BPW International historical data and archives; and that the financial annual outlay on the system is viable, secure and well contained within BPW International budgets and represents value for money and is mindful that the material (some otherwise irreplaceable) must be protected and therefore agrees that the current online virtual web office platform component is retained as an ongoing administrative and archival tool.

I-3 Rotation of Regional Conferences within a Region from BPW Australia

The BPW International General Assembly 2014 agrees that

- Regional Conferences will be rotated around the Affiliates in the Region so that host Affiliates represent members from different language and cultural groups
- Regional Coordinators will actively encourage Affiliates from around the Region to bid to host the Regional Conference.

I-4 Allocation of budgets to Regional Coordinators from BPW Australia

The BPW International General Assembly 2014, given that BPW International's regions have very different geographies and populations, recognises that travel costs vary significantly between Regions and resolves to disburse the pool of funds allocated to Regional Coordinators on the basis of the cost, frequency and distance of travel required to perform their role within their region.

I-5 Updating of Procedure Manual following each General Assembly in line with the 2008 General Assembly decision from BPW Europe

The BPW International 2014 General Assembly directs that *a new 2014-2017* Constitution Taskforce undertake the required triennial review and updating of the 2013 Procedure Manual to ensure that it complies with the Constitution and Regulations following the 2014 General Assembly as well as aligning with the expressed requirements and expectations of members from the five regions, including language that ensures a common understanding when translated, as received during the democratic consultation carried out during the 2008/11 triennium, in line with the decision of the 2008 General Assembly, which resulted in the Procedure Manual drafted by the Constitutional Reform Taskforce in 2011.

I-6 Updating of Procedure Manual following each General Assembly to ensure the Regulations are properly applied from BPW New Zealand

The BPW International General Assembly 2014, given that the Regulations clearly require the International Board to be invited to vote to accept the revised Procedure Manual after each General Assembly and do not require the General Assembly to vote to amend the Procedure Manual at the General Assembly, recognises that the Procedure Manual requires review by the Executive after every General Assembly to take account of any Constitutional Amendments passed to the Constitution and Regulations, any resolutions passed by the General Assembly, any votes taken by the International Board between General Assemblies, plus any other developments over the previous triennium that the Executive believe should be included and directs that the incoming Executive ensures

- the required triennial review and updating of the 2013 Procedure Manual amends the Procedure Manual to comply with the Regulations, so that the non-compliant sections 8.5 and 14 of the 2013 Procedure Manual fully comply with the Constitution and Regulations
- to ensure democratic consultation and participation by all Affiliates, Members and Past Presidents, the Procedure Manual be amended after each General Assembly to reflect the Resolutions passed at the General Assembly, not through Constitutional Amendments.