

The Amman Principles

for National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls

Executive Summary

What are “The Amman Principles for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls”?

The Amman Principles for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls **are a set of 9 proposed fundamental principles and an accreditation framework** designed to enhance the effectiveness of national mechanisms for gender equality around the world and equip them with the necessary powers and means to achieve their goals. These principles and their accreditation framework are **modeled after the Paris Principles for national human rights institutions**. They were developed through rigorous research that examined the progress made and the challenges faced by national mechanisms for gender equality in the Arab region and around the world. The research was followed by several expert meetings and consultations held with civil society and other relevant actors.

Results affirmed that progress has been made in terms of creating national mechanisms for gender equality in different forms around the world in compliance with international law. It showed that progress has been made in terms of reforming gender discriminatory laws and in the production of gender disaggregated data. Signs of promising collaborations between national mechanisms, civil societies, and members of parliaments have also been

shown. However, challenges facing these national mechanisms remain ominous and threatening to the pursuit of gender equality. These challenges lie in the lack of clarity in the allocation of tasks and powers, the lacking or weak political will, the limited competencies and gender equality expertise, the insufficient financial resources, the limited statistics and gender disaggregated data, the weak or irregular monitoring and the lack of accountability between the various bodies concerned with gender equality. They also lie in the contentious, and at times competitive, relations with civil society and women’s movements. But it is important to note that progress made and existing challenges are manifested within different countries in varying degrees.



THE AMMAN PRINCIPLES

With the aim of holding state members accountable to gender equality goals as well as enhancing the performance of national mechanisms and strengthening their structure, we propose the following 9 guiding principles:

- **Human Rights Principles are the Reference:** Human rights principles should be the foundational reference of national mechanisms for gender equality.
- **Guaranteed Autonomy and Independence:** Guaranteed independence from governments' interventions in the promotion and protection of women's and girls' rights, and in mainstreaming gender in all legislation, policies, strategies, and programs.
- **A Well-Defined and Non-Restrictive Mandate:** A well-defined, yet broad gender equality mandate, should be enshrined in constitutions and/or through legal provision and legislation.
- **Representative Composition and Independence:** Democratic, equal, and fair representation in the composition of national mechanisms and guaranteed non-restrictive powers to execute their mission.
- **Intersectionality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Pluralism are the Core Values:** Work methods and means are governed by respect to the principles of diversity, inclusion, and pluralism.
- **Non-Restricted Powers to Form Alliances and Partnerships:** Non-restricted ability to create solidarities and build local partnerships across government and civil society spectrums.
- **Sufficient Resources:** Sufficient financial resources, and enhanced competence

and capacity of personnel to reflect real commitment to the goal of gender equality.

- **Adequate Investigation Powers:** Powers to investigate and hold governments accountable to commitments and goals for achieving gender equality.
- **Enhanced Resilience:** Adequate resources and enhanced abilities to confront crises and emergencies.

These 9 principles *form the outline of a proposed accreditation framework*, upon which national mechanisms are ranked based on their compliance in terms of their structure, mission, resources, jurisdiction, and overall performance.

THE ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK: STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

The proposed principles and accreditation framework are drafted with the hope of creating a special unit at the UN level and within the UN Women under the **National Mechanisms for Gender Equality Unit** name. This unit should be responsible for overseeing the compliance with the Amman principles and awarding proper accreditation ranking to the respective mechanism based on a set of indicators. The UN Women is the ideal entity to handle such a task, since it already has a system in place where a list of national mechanisms around the world is compiled. We hope that it sets a parallel mechanism, in the form of an **International Coordinating Committee**, to be in charge of receiving accreditation applications, assessing them and recommending the compliance category that they deserve.

The following steps describe the application procedures and requirements:

- The principles and accreditation application forms are obtained from the **National Mechanisms for Gender Equality Unit**.
- Amman Principles compliance and accreditation applications should be first submitted to the **President of the International Coordinating Committee**.
- Application forms shall be received by the **Secretariat of the International Coordinating Committee**. Work scope, rules and regulations of the Secretariat are yet to be specified.

National mechanisms will be ranked on the basis of their compliance in one of three main categories: A (for full compliance), B (for partial compliance), or C (for non-compliance).



Why adopt the Amman Principles and Accreditation Framework?

The proposed set of principles and accreditation framework build on a history of accumulative national, regional, and international efforts which that began in the 1980s. They are dedicated to institutionalizing, mainstreaming, and systematizing the principles of gender equality in public policies and in decision-making processes at all levels. These efforts are articulated in several international conventions, calls for action, and in the proceedings of international conferences and reports as summarized below.

AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

- **The Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action (1974)** called upon member states to establish national mechanisms and give them the mandate to lead public policies on women's issues, conduct research on the status of women, and build relevant coalitions in pursuit of gender equality.
- **The UN conferences on women, held in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995)** urged member states that do not have national mechanisms to establish them and those that already have them to further develop, support and strengthen them.
- **The Commission on the Status of Women at its sessions No. 32 (1988), 35 (1991) and 49 (2005)**, proposed a definition of national mechanisms in session No. 32, and stressed the importance of information systems and access to gender disaggregated data and the analysis and dissemination of the data

in session No. 35. While in Session No.49, CSW called for a high-level meeting to discuss strategies to strengthen and expand the role of national mechanisms.

- **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)** defined national mechanisms and described their mandate in Paragraph 201. Paragraph 202 urged governments to promote an active and visible policy of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programs. The declaration also identified the creation and strengthening of national mechanisms as one of its strategic objectives (strategic objective H.1).
- **Conclusions and recommendations of the Economic and Social Council Meeting on gender mainstreaming 1997/2** stressed the importance of national mechanisms in gender mainstreaming.
- **The Economic and Social Council resolution E/2004/4** consolidated and confirmed the role of national mechanisms as key actors in promoting gender mainstreaming.
- **Conclusions adopted by CSW 1999/2** assessed the effectiveness and sustainability of national mechanisms based on their ability to mainstream gender in the national, sociopolitical and economic systems, and on the situating national mechanisms at the highest possible level in government where they are provided with needed resources to fulfill their mandate.
- **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, specifically the fifth goal related to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, highlights the commitment on an international level to accelerate the advancement towards gender equality.

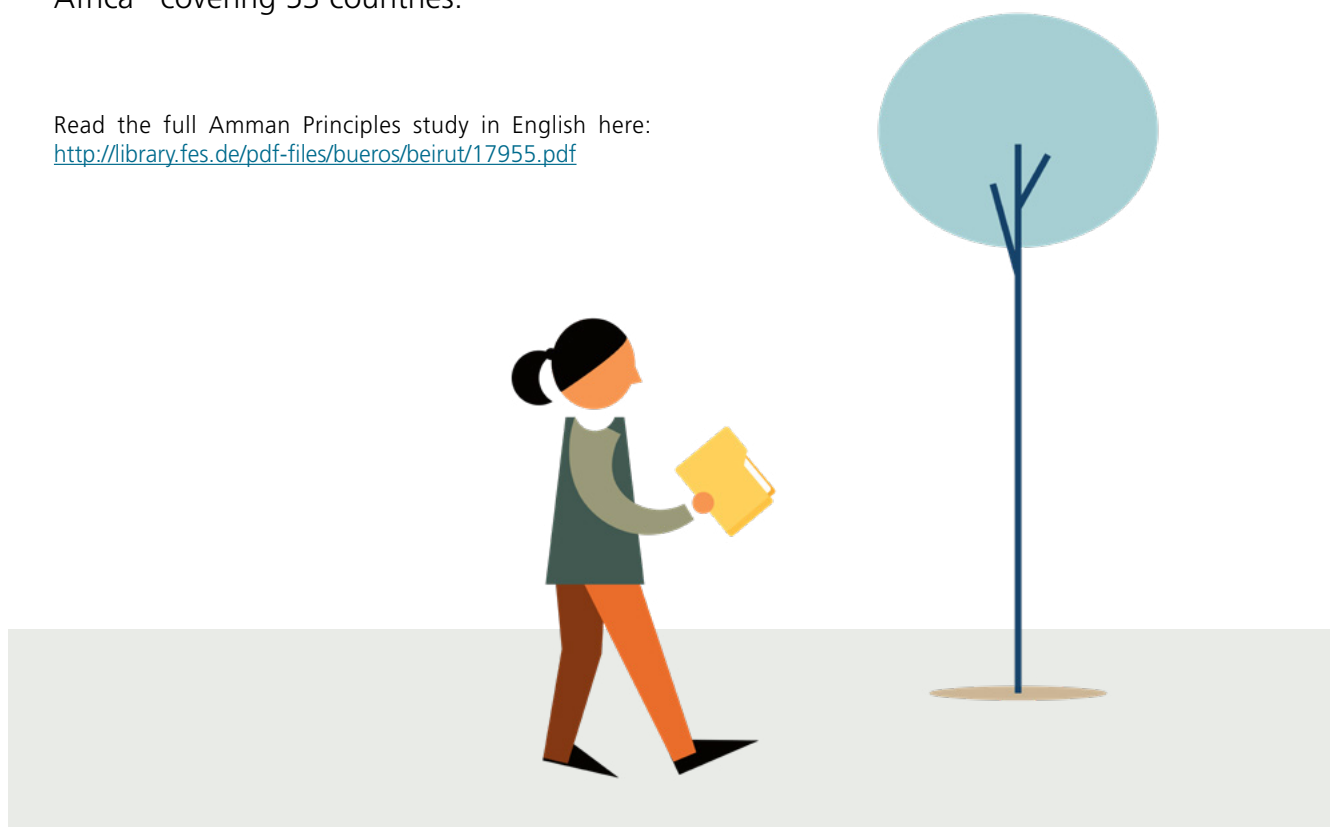
- **The twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"**, specifically Paragraph 24, points out that national mechanisms around the world have been acting as "catalysts" in the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. This progress is attributed to their clear activities, awareness-raising, and effective coordination. Paragraph 25 highlights the obstacles faced by national mechanisms which include insufficient funding and human resources, lack of political will and commitment at the highest level, insufficient understanding of gender equality and mainstreaming among government structures, unclear mandates, and structural problems and inadequate means of communication within government institutions and among different national mechanisms.

AT THE REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL LEVELS

- **The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in association with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)** organized a subregional conference in 1996 on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Central and Eastern Europe and made recommendations on strengthening national mechanisms at a regional level.
- **Also in 1996, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for**

Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), held a regional meeting on the strengthening of national mechanisms for the advancement of women. The meeting issued guidelines for mainstreaming gender and enhancing the effectiveness of mechanisms for the advancement of women and a study on “Recent Trends in National Mechanisms for Gender Equality in Africa” covering 53 countries.

Read the full Amman Principles study in English here:
<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/beirut/17955.pdf>



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