



Special Video Conference of the ICAPP Women's Wing:  
Women's Empowerment During and After COVID-19  
(Online Conference, 24 February 2021)

**Statement of the ICAPP Women's Wing on  
Women's Empowerment During and After COVID-19**

1. We, the representatives of 32 political parties from 22 countries, gathered virtually for the Special Video Conference of the ICAPP Women's Wing. The meeting was co-hosted by the ICAPP Women's Wing and the ICAPP Secretariat and held on 24 February 2021. The meeting was organized over an online platform due to physical constraints as a result of COVID-19. The main theme of the conference was "Women's Empowerment During and After COVID-19." The conference was structured into two sessions. The first session addressed the topic of economic insecurity, in particular, how to mitigate the negative and disproportionate economic impacts of COVID-19 on women. The second session dealt with gender-based violence with a focus on preventing and redressing domestic violence against women.
2. We recalled takeaways from our five previous meetings of the ICAPP Women's Wing in Baku (2013), Colombo (2014), Baku (2015), Kuala Lumpur (2016), Moscow (2018), and Baku (2019), which underlined the importance of promoting gender equality in achieving sustainable and inclusive societies. We revisited the 2019 "Baku Statement for the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ICAPP Women's Wing," which emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive environment and addressing the needs of the female population.
3. We acknowledged the economic challenges faced by women due to COVID-19. As stated in the UN Women report, "From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19," 435 million women and girls, including an increase of 47 million as a result of COVID-19, are estimated to live in poverty, or less than \$1.90 a day. We noted the higher vulnerability of the female labor force under current circumstances as is evident from the report's statistics that 50 percent of women have experienced a reduction in working time compared to 35 percent of men.
4. We acknowledged the rise in domestic violence since the inception of the pandemic, noting that in some countries, reports of violence against women have surged by as much as 25 percent. We further recognized the prevailing environment, in which restrictions of movement, transition of domestic violence shelters into health centers, the lack of judicial, police and health support services, and an inability to seek help have led victims of domestic violence to become isolated.
5. We called upon members to adopt gender-responsive policies and programs that can ensure the economic stability of women by means of equal opportunities to access

education, financial assistance, and social protection mechanisms. We urged for state-led motions to combat harmful stereotypes around gender roles to improve social integration. Meanwhile, we underlined the necessity to establish support measures that can ease women's increasing burdens of domestic and unpaid care work during the pandemic.

6. We emphasized the importance of continuation in funding and operation of domestic violence shelters and services supporting women against gender-based violence. Also, we called upon governments and political parties to actively consider incorporating the designation of such resources as essential services. Furthermore, in light of the recent increase in gender-based domestic violence, we stressed the need to revise and enhance existing systems of reporting domestic violence and separating victims from abusers.
7. We expressed our strong support for the United Nations 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, calling for all government policies and programs to reflect gender perspectives. In line with the objectives in the declaration, we reaffirmed our commitment to ensure women's economic empowerment by securing full and equal access to the labor market, a safe work environment without discrimination or abuse, and equal pay for work of equal value. We also endorsed the declaration's call for gender-sensitive policies and programs that can address domestic violence at a societal level rather than as a private matter. We concurred with the declaration's appeal to fill gaps in gender-disaggregated data and statistics, which can improve monitoring of violence, and to promote the integration of mental health services into primary health-care systems, so that victims of domestic violence can be better assisted.
8. We pledged to continue the strong international partnership and collaboration among ICAPP Members to share best practices, experiences, and insights from overcoming obstacles to gender equality. We called on responsible governments and political parties of ICAPP member countries to promptly address the current threats faced by women and girls in the interest of creating a safe and secure environment for all members of the community. We agreed to share updates on the progress made on these policy measures at the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> Women's Wing Meeting, which will be held in Mongolia later this year.
9. We expressed our profound gratitude to the representatives of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Economic, and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) for

participating in the conference to share their invaluable insights and expertise. We also showed our appreciation to the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (*COPPPAL*) for participating in the conference and sharing their knowledge and actions in light of their contributions to women's empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean. We agreed to strengthen our respective partnerships with multilateral organizations to ensure standards for gender equality are effectively designed and implemented and to promote accountability through sharing regular updates on system-wide progress.

10. We expressed our appreciation to the ICAPP Women's Wing and the ICAPP Secretariat for the successful organization of the conference. We also shared our excitement and anticipation for the next meeting of the ICAPP Women's Wing, which will be hosted by the Mongolian People's Party in the later half of this year.

Adopted on 24 February 2021.