

Religion in the Platform

In general, reference is made to religion in the discussion sections of the Global Framework and the Strategic Objectives, but much less in Strategic Actions to be taken by specific parties. The numbers attached to each statement correspond with the paragraphs in which they appear in the Platform.

Global Framework

9. ... While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and *religious* backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The implementation of this Platform ... is the sovereign responsibility of each State, in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the significance of and full respect for various *religious* and ethical values ... and their communities should contribute to the full enjoyment by women of their human rights in order to achieve equality, development, and peace.

24. *Religion, spirituality and belief* play a central role in the lives of millions of women and men, in the way they live and in the aspirations they have for the future. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and *religion* is inalienable and must be universally enjoyed. This right includes the freedom to have or to adopt the religion or belief of their choice either individually or in community with others, in public or in private, and to manifest their *religion or belief* in worship, observance, practice and teaching. In order to realize equality, development and peace, there is a need to respect these rights and freedoms fully. *Religion, thought, conscience and belief* may, and can, contribute to fulfilling women's and men's moral, ethical and *spiritual needs* and to realizing their full potential in society. However, it is acknowledged that any forms of extremism may have a negative impact on women and can lead to violence and discrimination.

Strategic Objectives and Actions

46. The Platform for Action recognizes that women face barriers to full equality and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, *religion*, or disability, because they are indigenous women or because of their status ...

B. Education and training of women

72. Creation of an educational and social environment, in which women and men, girls and boys, are treated equally and encouraged to achieve their potential, respecting their freedom of thought, conscience, *religion and belief* ... would be effective in

elimination of the causes of discrimination against women and inequalities between women and men.

80. (Under Strategic Objective B.1, Actions to be taken) (a) Advance the goal of equal access to education by taking measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender, race, language, *religion*, national origin, age or disability, or any other form of discrimination and, as appropriate, consider establishing procedures to address grievances; (f) Increase enrollment and retention rates of girls . . . by ensuring that the rights of women and girls to freedom of conscience and *religion* are respected in educational institutions through repealing any discriminatory laws or legislation based on *religion*, race or culture;

83. (Under Strategic Objective B.4, Actions to be taken) (o) Acknowledge and respect the artistic, *spiritual* and cultural activities of indigenous women; (p) Ensure that gender equality and cultural, *religious* and other diversity are respected in educational institutions.

D. Violence Against Women

124. (Under Strategic Objective D.1, Actions to be taken) (a) Condemn violence against women and refrain from invoking any custom, tradition, or *religious* consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination as set out in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

E. Women and Armed Conflict

131. . . . Gross and systematic violations and situations that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights continue in different parts of the world. Such violations and obstacles include, as well as torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, summary and arbitrary executions, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, all forms of racism and racial discrimination, foreign occupation and alien domination, xenophobia, poverty, hunger and other denials of economic, social and cultural rights, *religious intolerance*, terrorism, discrimination against women and lack of the rule of law.

132. . . . Such violations (gross and systematic) and obstacles include, as well as torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or summary and arbitrary detention, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, denial of economic, social and cultural rights and *religious intolerance*.

136. . . . Particular attention should be paid to sexual violence against uprooted women and girls employed as a method of persecution in systematic campaigns of terror and intimidation and forcing members of a particular ethnic, cultural or *religious group* to flee their homes.

G. Women in power and decision-making

183. . . . the under representation of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture, sports, the media, education, *religion* and the law have prevented women from having a significant impact on many key institutions.

I. Human Rights of Women

224. Taking into account the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the work of the Special Rapporteurs, gender-based violence, such as battering and other domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual slavery and exploitation, and international trafficking of women and children, forced prostitution and sexual harassment, as well as violence against women, resulting from cultural prejudice, racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia, pornography, ethnic cleansing, armed conflict, foreign occupation, *religious and anti-religious extremism*, and terrorism are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be combated and eliminated. Any harmful aspect of certain tradition, customary or modern practices that violates the rights of women should be prohibited.

225. Many women face additional barriers to the enjoyment of their human rights because of such factors as their race, language, ethnicity, culture, *religion*, disability or socio-economic class or because they are indigenous people, migrants, including women migrant workers, displaced women or refugees.

232. (Under Strategic Object I.1, Actions to be taken) (a) Give priority to promoting and protecting the full and equal enjoyment by women and men of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind to race, colour, sex, language, *religion*, political or other options, national or social origins, property, birth or other status; (g) Take urgent action to combat and eliminate violence against women, which is a human rights violation, resulting from harmful traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and extremism; (h) Prohibit female genital mutilation where it exists and give vigorous support to efforts among non-governmental and community organizations and *religious institutions* to eliminate such practices.

L. The girl child.

259. The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that "State Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, *religion*, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status." (article 2, para. 1).

276. (Under Strategic Objective L.2, Actions to be taken) (d) Take steps so that tradition and *religion* and their expressions are not a basis for discrimination against girls.

282. (Under Strategic Objective L.6, Actions to be taken) (a) In conformity with article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, protect children from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to

interfere with the child's education, or be harmful to the child's health, or physical, mental, *spiritual*, moral or social development.

Institutional Arrangements

A. National Level.

295. The active support and participation of a broad and diverse range of other institutional actors should be encouraged including legislative bodies, academic and research institutions, professional associations, trade unions, including women's organizations and feminist groups, the media, *religious groups*, youth organizations and cultural groups, as well as financial and non-profit organizations.