



BRICS Feminist Watch Statement to the BRICS Leadership

The BRICS Feminist Watch (BFW) is a Southern alliance of feminists from emerging economies and developing countries which undertakes critical feminist analyses and advocacy to promote ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable development. We are committed to bringing the voices of women into policy making spaces, upholding the economic, social, and cultural rights of women, and ensuring gender and social equality.

We recognize that:

- **Women including gender non-conforming and trans-women, constitute majority of the world's poor.** Women are food insecure, lack basic healthcare, access to education, employment opportunities, and have little or no social security.
- **Women face multiple oppressions** on grounds of caste, race, class, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, literacy, disability, and age.
- **Women face structural barriers to access and control over resources**, including dispossession of land which has negative impacts on their lives and livelihoods.
- **Women bear an unfair and unequal burden** in providing food, water, fuel and care for themselves and their families due to prescribed gender roles. Lack of access to infrastructure, energy, appropriate technology, and the effects of climate change add to this burden.
- **All women work whether paid or unpaid, but** despite its obvious economic and social worth, much of the work that women do remains invisible, unaccounted, undervalued, and under-appreciated. Moreover, a majority of women in developing countries are in subsistence forms of livelihoods such as farming, fish-work and informal sector work.
- **Women's reproductive work remains undervalued and unpaid and they continue to face discrimination at the workplace due to their parental responsibilities.** Women are liable to lose their jobs and livelihoods owing to marital status, pregnancy and maternity, especially in the informal sector, where they are forced to cut down rest and nutrition during pregnancy and after childbirth because they do not receive maternity allowances or paid leave.
- **Women will bear a disproportionate burden owing to global macroeconomic changes.** As the global economy is increasingly digitized and datafied, women who lack access to new technologies and digital skills are at the risk of being pushed into informal and precarious jobs, in addition to the structural barriers they face at workplaces.
- **Without the informed, meaningful and full social, political, and economic participation** of women in all their diversity, there can be no sustainable development.

Therefore BFW calls upon the BRICS governments to:

1. **Recognise all women as workers, farmers, producers, and independent economic, political and development agents**

- Women, as workers, farmers and producers, need to be guaranteed individual unmediated access, control, ownership, and management of productive resources including
 - a. natural resources such as land, water, forests
 - b. financial resources such as credit, sustainable livelihoods including decent jobs
 - c. social resources such as skills, and access to social infrastructure including energy, technology
 - d. other resources such as housing, commons, markets
 - e. and social protection schemes including social security entitlements
 - Women's traditional livelihood skills and knowledge need to be recognized, preserved, and nurtured.
 - Women's undervalued, underpaid, unpaid work and care work needs to be recognized, reduced, and redistributed in the following manner-
 - a. **Recognition of** women as workers and unpaid work as work that should be valued, paid and shared by across the household regardless of gender
 - Redefine the whole concept of work to include all activities – economic, social, human and environment development.
 - Uphold women's right to work and rights at work that are critical for the economic empowerment of women Recognise care as a public good and basic right.
 - Ensure paid parental leave for women in response to their needs and in respect of their rights.
 - b. **Redistribution** of unpaid care work
 - Redistribution from women to men so that it is shared equally.
 - Redistribution from households to the state, but not to the market.
 - Redistribution of time and resources, particularly to poor households.
 - c. **Reduction of** women's undervalued and unrecognized work
 - Guarantee women's access to basic services such as water, sanitation (toilets), education, health, fodder, energy, fuel and housing to reduce women's time burden, and drudgery.
 - Provide gender-sensitive infrastructure for the care economy (child care/crèche, and adult care).
 - Conduct publicly-financed time use surveys periodically to review paid and unpaid work done by women
- 2. Ensure protection and accountability mechanisms for women**
- Include gender-disaggregated data collection, analysis and systematization in monitoring and accountability mechanisms as a precondition for the adoption of social, labour, economic and corporate policies;

- Include women's rights organisations and women's collectives in developing national mechanisms to monitor women's human rights violations and guarantee efficient judicial and pre-judicial procedures to protect women from violence and violations of their rights;
- Remove persistent gender discrimination in the labour market as well as in access to economic assets through a variety of measures, such as enforcing norms and legal frameworks that prevent and remedy sex-segregation and gender-based discrimination at work;
- Address poverty and structural inequalities including patriarchy by adopting and implementing comprehensive policies and legislations that tackle violence and discriminatory norms including violence at the workplace and intimate partner violence;
- Introduce and enshrine in legislation mechanisms to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value, and provide incentives for employers in order to expand opportunities for women in diverse sectors as well as provide higher skills training for women, etc.;
- Guarantee and protect bodily autonomy and universal access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) (including access to legal and safe abortion and post-abortion care, Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART), and other health services) and sexuality education and information (including for adolescents and marginalized women) with their full and informed consent and respecting the evolving capacity of adolescents;

3. Ensure women's participation in decision making processes and foster women's leadership through economic and political empowerment

- Create and support business models aimed at developing women's leadership potential (such as women's cooperatives and social enterprises);
- Provide state support for women-owned micro-entrepreneurship and Small-Medium Enterprises;
- Cultivate, monitor, and share best corporate practices aimed at supporting women and promoting them to decision-making positions;
- Ensure equal opportunity to realize women's potential including through gender equal access to quality education at all levels, creation of policies and programs that encourage women to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and pursue their professional interests;
- Create and provide effective and accessible social protection schemes for self-employed entrepreneurs, including maternity and paternity benefits and healthcare;
- Allocate resources for women's economic empowerment and rights and support grassroots organizations and movements led by women, girls and youth.

4. Put women at the center of all developmental interventions, including those of the New Development Bank (NDB)

We believe that as a Southern institution committed to sustainable development, the NDB has the opportunity and responsibility to play a transformative role towards achieving substantive equality for all women and girls by tackling structural inequalities and injustices.



We therefore, reiterate our demands to the NDB management to-

- 1) **Set up an external multi stakeholder gender advisory committee**
- 2) **Develop a comprehensive, mandatory gender policy to guide all NDB structures, governance, and operations**
- 3) **Set up an internal gender unit with senior feminist experts within NDB to lead these processes**

5. We welcome the initiative of the South African government to establish a BRICS Gender and Women's Forum and urge the BRICS governments to

- Ensure that women are equally represented in planning and decision making processes, especially women from disadvantaged communities such as dalit and indigenous women.
- Enshrine gender-disaggregated data collection and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in national frameworks and national plans for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).