FEMINIST AGREEMENTS AND DEMANDS

The Fourth UN World Conference on Women was held in Beijing in 1995. At that time, member state governments adopted the Beijing Platform for Action. Work by the women’s global movement and its strong desire to reach agreements were prerequisites for the adoption of the Platform for Action. The governments that signed the twelve articles of the Platform for Action undertook to implement CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, by conducting active and visible work.

There has not been a World Conference on Women’s Rights since 1995. Voices have been raised for a new conference, but there are also concerns of a potential backlash if the Platform for Action were to be renegotiated. There is lack of international progress; One example of this is that in 2012 the UN member states could not reach agreed conclusions at the Commission on the Status of Women, CSW. Other examples are the watered-down text on women’s empowerment and gender equality in the final document from Rio +20 and that the Millennium Development Goals furthest from being achieved are those involving women and gender equality.

All over the world, women’s rights are questioned and restricted with reference to traditions, religions and cultures. Principles of universal rights and democracy are called into question. Economic, environmental and political crises have repeatedly been shown to have the most negative impact on women, especially poor women, while women have been excluded from decision-making that led to the crises.

The Nordic countries are also facing major policy challenges to achieve gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action formulates clear demands, which the Nordic countries still do not live up to. There are major shortcomings in areas such as violence against women, labour market conditions and equal pay, women’s economic independence, organizing and sharing of care work and women’s influence and power.

Women’s right to development, full participation in democratic decision-making, nationally and internationally, in times of peace or conflict, personal income, better working conditions, less unpaid work, the elimination of oppressive stereotypes, freedom from violence, the right to health and to decide over their own bodies, childbirth and sexuality are all highly relevant issues that require specific actions. It is imperative that each government upholds previous commitments and shows how gender equality policy challenges can be tackled. Women’s rights and gender equality are prerequisites for global sustainable development goals.

The women’s movement is a result of women reacting against injustice and oppression. Individual women and groups of women have different living conditions, experience different forms of discrimination and have thus prioritized different goals on their feminist agenda. Despite differences, we meet in a collective struggle for women’s rights and gender equal societies.
Goals of Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014

Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014 - New Action on Women’s Rights aims to:
• Formulate demands and specific proposals directed at the Nordic governments and politicians involved in future gender politics.

• Build commitment and understanding for the gender equality policy challenges and opportunities within the region.

• Promote and develop the Nordic debate on women’s rights, locally, regionally and globally.

• Build networks for the exchange of experience between activists, researchers, organisations, government agencies, industry and the public.

• Provide information on CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Formulate recommendations on future strategies for gender sensitive sustainable development and the global agenda to replace the UN Millennium Development Goals through Sustainable Development Goals, SDG, post-2015.

• Break new ground by engaging, involving and using innovative skills of the new generation that has entered the scene since the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

• Strengthen the Nordic women’s movement, its organisation and efficiency and further develop international perspectives and commitments.

The 12 themes of the final document

The demands formulated in this final document are based on the 12 themes at the Nordiskt Forum, which in turn are included in the Beijing Platform for Action. The demands are directed first and foremost to the Nordic governments and politicians, but also towards authorities, institutions, employer organizations, trade unions, municipalities and private enterprises and to the feminist movement

Demands directed to the Nordic governments

We the participants of Nordiskt Forum invite all the Nordic governments to implement the recommendations and demands formulated in Nordiskt Forum’s final document. We recall the commitments made at the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action. At that time, the governments guaranteed the full implementation of human rights for women and girls as an undeniable and indivisible part of human rights and undertook to incorporate a gender perspective in all policies and programs. We stress that women’s groups and networks were singled out as particularly important for the effective implementation of the Platform for Action.
Nordiskt Forum recalls the first article of the CEDAW Convention.

**Definition of discrimination**

Discrimination against women is defined as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition or exercise of women’s human rights and fundamental freedoms. Nordiskt Forum also recalls that human rights are individual, universal, indivisible and non-hierarchical.

1. **Feminist economy - economic and social development**

The strategic objectives on women and the economy in the Beijing Platform for Action is still an important basis for action, in the Nordic region and globally. We need profound knowledge and more research on how macroeconomic principles and structures sustain inequality and how these could be adapted to include gender equality in order to create a fair and sustainable society.

Models that are based on feminist economics and research consider both women’s and men’s daily lives and different living conditions, leading to a society which prioritizes the importance of reproduction and care functions in the welfare society. International institutions and economic networks emphasise gender equality as a determining factor for good economic and social development. Despite this, obsolete economic models are applied, which in many cases lead to policies that risk increasing gender inequality in society. It is a political challenge to reveal and modify the structures that value differently women’s and men’s life experiences and contributions to the society.

Poverty has different meanings in different countries, but women are over represented in poverty situations everywhere. Even in the Nordic countries, there are more women living in economic vulnerability than men. Certain groups of women are particularly vulnerable. In the last few years of economic crisis, large groups of women have suffered the consequences of cut-downs when employment opportunities have disappeared and welfare services have been reduced.

The Beijing Platform for Action states that all economic policies must be gender mainstreamed. It is an important tool to increase economic equality with a direct impact on social development. It is time for the Nordic governments to live up to their commitments.

**We demand that:**

- The Nordic countries gender mainstream state budgets so that the gender perspective is made visible in documentation and decisions in order to systematically monitor gender equality policy goals and become the basis for new actions.

- The Nordic authorities promote women’s economic independence and rights, including access to remunerated work and satisfactory working conditions, as well as monitor the specific needs of
vulnerable groups.

• The Nordic governments define actions and follow up on work to reduce income differences between women and men.

• Unpaid care work is made visible, reflected in economic models and taken into account in socio-economic planning.

• Global economic crises are analysed from a gender perspective both in terms of causes and consequences and welfare services are maintained to protect women’s economic independence.

2. Women’s and girls’ bodies – sexuality, health and reproductive rights

The significance of sex and gender on health, disease and treatment is well known. Yet the Nordic countries are far from gender equality in health service provision for women and men when it comes to the diagnosis, investigation, treatment and monitoring of disease.

There is a need to draw attention to the fact that women’s health is more than diseases connected to the reproductive organs. Diseases such as rheumatism and joint injuries affect more women than men and receive comparatively limited resources considering their prevalence in society and the suffering to the individual. Moreover, greater attention, good knowledge and a regulatory framework are required to guarantee women’s access to prevention and treatment of women’s health disorders. The requirement of a widespread gender perspective in all health care interventions is not respected. Women are provided fewer, less expensive and belated interventions compared to men in terms of comparative health status.

Physical integrity is of utmost importance for women’s health, though a controversial issue. Women’s right to decide over their own bodies, sexuality, pregnancies and free access to contraception and abortion are the cornerstones of a gender equal society. Bans on abortions do not lead to fewer ones, but rather to more risky abortions. The objectification of women, the sexualisation of society and unreasonable performance expectations all impact on women’s mental health and causes eating disorders and other forms of self-injury. There is also a need for more gender-specific research on and knowledge about health issues that take into account other variables such as age, class, and sexual orientation as well as targeted interventions for vulnerable groups in order to achieve an equivalent health care for all.

Nordiskt Forum emphasises the link between violation of human rights to violence against women, including buying sex, and to women’s sexual and reproductive health rights. Women’s reproductive rights are called in question even in the Nordic countries. The legal right to abortion is challenged in many places, and new restrictions on women’s rights are being imposed, which leads to restricted access to treatment and medicines for reproductive health.

We demand that:

• Funds are allocated to gender-specific research and understanding of how diseases affect women and men differently and require different interventions, including preventive care and treatment for women’s diseases.

• The Nordic governments and responsible authorities ensure gender equality in the diagnosis, investigation, treatment and monitoring of diseases with respect to the specific needs of different groups. There is a need to customise care for women with disabilities.
• The healthcare and judicial systems recognize women’s experiences of unwanted sexual acts, abuse and violence in a serious manner and with respect for the individual’s integrity and legal rights.

• The Nordic governments and responsible authorities guarantee compulsory sex education of good quality, access to modern contraceptives, safe pregnancies and deliveries as well as access to legal and safe abortions.

• Nordic authorities promote their important commitment to women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, SRHR, including issues dealing with LHBQT and surrogate motherhood in the health-related Millennium Development Goals and in the post-2015 work.

3. Women at work, equal pay, education and career

The Beijing Platform for Action requires extensive efforts on the part of governments to promote women’s economic independence. A basic requirement is to be able to support oneself. Women have fewer opportunities than men to achieve this. Some of the causes are differences in labour force participation, working conditions, wages and pension benefits. Fewer women than men are gainfully employed and a higher proportion of women work part-time - the degree varies in the Nordic countries.

Involuntary part-time work is a female phenomenon. Part-time in typically female shift-based occupations, such as nursing and care, hotel and retail and other service professions is the norm, contrary to male shift-based occupations. The proportion of women working part-time or in precarious employment, such as hourly employment, temporary and fixed-term contracts has increased in recent years. Another reason for the lower economic independence is that a large proportion of the female workforce is employed in low-wage occupations. The difficulty of reconciling paid work with having a family and caring for a family also affects women more than men. Women’s anticipated high use of parental leave leads to so-called statistical wage discrimination against all women.

Wage discrepancies between men and women have remained stable at about 15 percent for the past 20-30 years based on part-time work recalculated to full-time work. There is a far stretch from achieving equal pay in the Nordic countries. Additionally, the majority of poor pensioners in the Nordic countries are women and the expected pension levels of today’s young women are also low.

Women pursue education to a higher degree than men and today form the majority of university graduates. Studies show that women are granted lower wages in relation men with equivalent education, which is explained by so-called value discrimination. The UN CEDAW Committee has recurrently criticized the fact that women’s higher education has not led to a level playing field for advancement, whether in academia or in the workplace in general.

We demand that:

• Women’s rights to equal pay and career opportunities be strengthened and the possibility to support themselves is significantly improved through tangible structural measures. The Nordic governments, employer organisations and trade unions act to establish reasonable working conditions. The right to full-time employment be guaranteed in the Nordic region where women’s unwanted part-time work is widespread problem, and hourly and time-bound employment are transformed to a full-time norm.
• The Nordic governments prioritise structural interventions so that financial independence after retirement is assured.

• The Nordic governments implement a parental system that leads to sharing responsibility for childcare between men and women and ensure public childcare and elderly care with guaranteed high quality.

• Responsible authorities ensure that teaching materials are quality-assured from a gender perspective and that active measures are carried out to change gender-stereotypical choice of education and training options.

• The Nordic governments give priority to women’s access to research careers and prevent that various excellence initiatives remove funding from female-dominated education and research. Women’s educational choices, regardless of specialisation, should be guaranteed equivalent resources.

4. Violence against women and girls

Sexual harassment, psychological and physical violence, rape, incest, threats, genital mutilation, forced marriage, pornography, prostitution, trafficking in women and murder are words that describe the wide-ranging criminal acts committed against women and girls worldwide. Violence against women is a human rights issue, a democracy issue, a gender equality issue, a criminal and a public health issue, in other words, a major social problem in the Nordic region.

Violence against women and girls is a consequence of the unequal distribution of power between women and men. It reflects the fundamental structures of power and the perception of femininity and masculinity. We are concerned over the fact that the Nordic countries have moved towards the use of terminologies and approaches that are gender neutral. Preventing violence before it occurs has not received enough attention, neither in the Nordic region or internationally.

Cyber hate, the sex industry’s aggressiveness and organised criminal trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation are threats to democracy and the freedom of expression as well as to women’s legal rights. The disparity between defined ambitious political goals and the structure for implementation is worrisome. Many perpetrators escape without punishment while help and protection for victims of violence are lacking.

We demand that:

• The Nordic governments ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and an independent national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings is appointed in each Nordic country to work closely with the civil society, particularly with women’s organisations.

• The Nordic governments strengthen women’s organisations who work for women’s right to freedom from violence and provide them adequate and predictable resources, in particular with regard to women’s refuges/shelters. Action plans with clearly established targets to prevent gender violence form the basis for guaranteed access to justice and protection initiatives.

• Nordic authorities have greater focus on the root causes of violence and abuse. We propose national campaigns with focus on prevention whereby the society demonstrates zero tolerance on violence and the subordination of women, and prevents guilt and shame. Such campaigns include a
debate on the root causes of violence and abuse and the reasons why women end up in prostitution.

- The Nordic governments develop legislation on the prevention of violence against women and girls, including the criminalisation of the purchase of sex where such a law does not already exist, the development of strong exit strategies to abandon prostitution and the reinforcement of the capacity of the police and the judiciary to prosecute sex buyers, pimps and organised crime,

- The Nordic governments protect the special needs of vulnerable women to be exposed to violence and abuse. Abused women with serious mental health and/or drug problems lack equal access to women’s shelters, and shelters are not sufficiently adapted to women with disabilities.

5. Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development

Environmental and climate change are the greatest challenges that the world faces. Men and women affect and are affected by environmental and climate change in different ways. A reinforced action on the environment and climate change presupposes a gender perspective and women’s active involvement according to the Beijing Platform for Action.

Environmental and climate change has an impact on a number of areas. Floods, droughts and other natural disasters affect people in poor countries hardest and reinforce existing differences. This means that women, who constitute the majority of the poor, will be the hardest hit. Today, billions lack adequate water, sanitation and food. Overall, this causes the displacement of people, climate refugees and human trafficking.

Women must be involved in defining needs and discussing solutions and participate in decision-making. Everything from issues of food supply, water and energy to the management of resources, transport and technological innovations that reduce environmental impact, require the participation of women in order to be solved. So far, women have been underrepresented in all areas and levels of political processes and decision-making towards a sustainable development. The responsibility to deal with poisoned food, nutrition during pregnancy, children’s exposure to chemicals, etc., now rests with the individual woman rather than on those who are responsible for the emissions. A safe environment must be secured.

Women should be included, not because they are more vulnerable, but because they have other perspectives and experiences with which to contribute. The world will not succeed without women participating in the efforts to find sustainable solutions to environmental and climatic challenges.

Nordiskt Forum’s hypothesis is that sustainable development requires a holistic approach with an integrated gender perspective based on ecological, economic and social conditions.

We demand that:

- Nordic authorities contribute to women not remaining victims but to play and active role as innovators, organisers, teachers, leaders and ambassadors for sustainable development.

- Women is granted an increased political participation and contribution in environmental and climate work, and that women represent at least 40 percent in negotiations on climate and environmental agreements.

- Nordic authorities ensure the right of Sami people, and especially Sami women, to be heard on environmental issues in their areas.
• Nordic authorities implement stronger measures to reduce harmful emissions and to ensure that the energy consumed increasingly come from renewable and sustainable energy sources.

• The Nordic governments and authorities assume responsibility for demonstrating impacts of environmental pollutants, chemicals and other emissions on the society and that the effects on women are considered in legislation and in the development of a green economy and green jobs.

• Women’s sexual and reproductive rights are protected during environmental and climate-related crises and that violence and trafficking targeting in women and children during natural disasters are avoided.

6. Care Work and Welfare Society

Many Western countries have made major cuts to their welfare systems, which has affected the health and welfare of the most vulnerable in the society. Welfare cuts are particularly damaging to women. When institutions do not offer individuals the care they need, the responsibility to provide care falls on the immediate family. Frequently, women become responsible for the care of children, the sick and the elderly. Women perform most of the unpaid household and care work.

Cuts affect employees in the health and welfare sectors when demands for savings are met with unstable employment, shared work-shifts and tight schedules. Administrative functions in the healthcare sector are also reduced leaving highly educated and specialised professions to take over their functions. Policy interventions are limited to formulating requirements for monitoring and quality control based on various models such as New Public Management, without examining how realistic or effective these are.

The high level of sick leave among women employed in the welfare sector requires action. With a consistent gender perspective, the main challenges can be pinpointed and solutions can be found to promote the health and well being of the employees. The Nordic countries need to exchange experiences on functional models to reduce sick leave due to illness and work-related injuries in the welfare sector.

Nordic countries are increasingly multicultural and the welfare system must be able to cope with the varied needs of the population. Another challenge is the increasing life expectancy and its effects on women and men and on our society. An important aspect is that women live longer under worse living conditions than men. It is obvious that the care of patients with incurable age-related diseases will require major efforts on the part of the state and local authorities but also on the part of families where it is often women who bear the burden.

We demand that:

• The Nordic social model is safeguarded especially during economic crises. What is the goal, what can we be proud of and what can be improved are crucial questions.

• The Nordic governments prioritise good working conditions and the health of employees in the welfare sector. Lower trained and unlicensed employees are given the opportunity for further training.

• The Nordic governments emphasise the importance of increasing the number of men employed in health and social care sectors, both in unpaid home-work and in remunerated work in the health
and welfare sector.

• Nordic governments prioritise education and research on the demographic shift towards a higher proportion of elderly people in the population, and invest in both technical and organisational innovations and require consistent gender mainstreaming.

• Authorities and other institutions are given the task of creating programs in order to use technological advances to improve public health. Special consideration is given to the needs of vulnerable groups and, based on respect for the dignity of the individual, assistance is provided in order for the elderly to live independently as long as possible.

7. Peace and security

The Beijing Platform for Action calls for the participation of women in conflict resolution at the decision-making level. It calls for non-violence and the promotion of a culture of peace. During the past decade, the role of Nordic countries’ in international conflicts has changed from being a leader in peace-keeping operations and peace negotiations to increasingly focus on military action in international crisis management.

The Nordic governments see themselves as powerful promoters of women’s participation in peace processes in the context of foreign policy, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security. But in reality, women remain excluded from formal peace negotiations and decision-making processes.

Based on Resolution 1325, the UN has focused its work on women as victims and appointed a Special Representative. Perpetrators of sexual violence and gender-based violence during war often escape punishment, even though such acts are recognised by the international community as a cynical tactic of war, as a war crime and, in some cases, as crime against humanity and genocide. Sexual violence is a part of a war strategy and should also be dealt with as such. The medical and psycho-social needs of women and girls who have been sexually abused during war are rarely prioritised. Women and girls also suffer from rape, forced marriage, forced pregnancies, torture, trafficking, sexual slavery and intentional transmission of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, both during and after armed conflicts. These significant challenges must be dealt with and regulated by the international community.

We need to explore and develop democratic means towards peace and security and ways for women to control their own lives. Violence against women in war reflects a general culture of violence. We need to redefine sustainable peace as presence of security, justice and equality rather than as the absence of war. Sustainable peace is when people have sufficient resources to live in dignity, free of hardship and fear. We must reclaim the importance of peace.

We demand that:

• The Nordic governments ensure the representation of women at the decision-making level in all peace processes, to prevent war, mediate in conflicts, monitor peace processes and participate in peace negotiations. The Nordic governments request the United Nations to appoint a Special Representative who is responsible for promoting the right of women as actors and decision-makers in peace and security issues.

• The Nordic governments revise, make explicit and strengthen their action plans for Resolution 1325, earmarking financial resources towards and promoting participation of civil society,
especially women, to achieve the goals.

• The Nordic governments increase their efforts to strengthen institutions and structures to prosecute and punish perpetrators of sexual violence during war and victims receive active support.

• The Nordic governments take indigenous people and the environment into account in peace and security issues.

• The Nordic governments promote peace initiatives, appoint disarmament ambassadors and reinforce their active efforts to abolish nuclear weapons.

8. Political participation and community development

Women’s empowered and independent participation, as well as the improvement of women’s social, economic and political status are essential for developing a democratic citizenship. It is crucial for sustainable development in all areas of life. Women in the Nordic countries are highly represented in the directly elected political institutions. However, surveys show that women’s representation is drastically reduced in positions subject to internal selection.

The goals formulated in the Beijing Platform for Action formulated on gender equality, development and peace cannot be achieved solely with equal representation. This also requires the active participation of women in all decision-making and implementation, and that a gender perspective is incorporated at all levels. Only then can the composition of the population be reflected.

Drop-out from political assignments is more common among women elected representatives than among men. The conditions of decision-making and forms of political work are important to ensure women’s full participation. The Nordic women’s movement calls for a holistic and proactive approach to make the commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action a reality.

Women in politics have testified about various types of mockery, indifference and harassment. This is democratically unacceptable. Even the media coverage of women in politics has been criticised for being gender-stereotypical. It is important that women are represented in all areas of society. Areas where women traditionally have long been involved, such as primary education and health care, should receive adequate resources considering their critical role in society. This means that gender mainstreaming of budgets at the national and local level is necessary apply.

We demand that:

• The Nordic governments set clear targets for women’s real opportunities to exercise their citizenship. Authorities give priority to work actions against cyber hate and the harassment of women politicians.

• Political communities and state, regional and municipal committees, commissions, working groups and delegations ensure, for example by introducing quotas, equal representation of women and men.

• Government, local government, media and business-related bodies invite women experts without restriction to gender stereotypes regarding the assignment’s subject matter. Women in minority groups are heard as experts.
• Women represented at local level are included in horizontal decision-making in all sectors, including finance and business.

• The labour market organisations take responsibility for appointing more women in senior management positions, in trade unions and employers associations and their respective member organisations.

• All recruitment, nomination committees and other selection bodies have clear criteria that do not discriminate against women. Political mentoring programs are initiated to increase women’s participation in politics and to reduce the number of dropouts.

9. Gender mainstreaming and gender equal activities

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to achieve a gender equal society and one that permeates the Beijing Platform for Action. The strategy ensures that needs and experiences of women and men form the basis for policy decisions, institutional structures and resource allocation in an equal manner.

Gender mainstreaming is a proactive approach that aims to not only correct but also prevent the emergence of inequality between women and men. The strategy counteracts the negative effects of gender-blindness, which is usually called gender neutrality, but which in practice often means that men’s experiences form the basis for decision-making.

Gender mainstreaming requires that gender equality and gender perspectives are included as part of all policies, at all levels and at all stages of decision-making and execution, in order for women and men to receive equal conditions. The strategy challenges structural discrimination and women’s subordinate position in decision-making. The strategy aims to achieve identified national gender equality goals and international commitments regarding political and administrative processes.

The implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy has not been sufficiently systematic and has moved too slowly in the Nordic countries. The Nordic governments’ gender mainstreaming efforts vary, with often weak to moderate but occasionally significant success.

There are many good examples of gender mainstreaming at the national and local levels. However, these are not spread to other similar activities and findings are not sufficiently allowed to affect general decisions relating to different areas of society. Higher education and training has not integrated the experience and knowledge that have resulted from gender mainstreaming.

We demand that:

• The Nordic governments anchor and specify gender mainstreaming in national laws, regulations and processes across all its policies and adopt and fund specific actions for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming.

• Government agencies are mandated to include a gender equality perspective in all its activities and to properly implement gender mainstreaming, which entails training of all relevant personnel, gender budgeting and other control processes, gender and gender equality analyses, as well as mechanisms and procedures for monitoring. Action plans are formulated with guidelines (conceptual framework), criteria (standardised comparisons), indicators, values, key performance indicators (measurement) and sex-disaggregated data and statistics (evidence) in order to identify and eliminate obstacles to the effective integration of gender equality.
• The Nordic governments use gender mainstreaming in all international commitments, including the post-2015 agenda and sustainable development goals, SDG.

• The Nordic governments use gender mainstreaming as a key strategy in all international commitments and global efforts, including in the post-2015 agenda.

• Private sector employers integrate the gender perspective into their operations.

10. Asylum and Migration

Globalisation means that more and more people move between different countries for different reasons and under different conditions. The Nordic countries receive, for example, quota refugees, refugees and others in need of protection, unaccompanied minors, families, students, migrant workers and undocumented persons.

One reason for women to seek asylum in the Nordic countries is that they have been persecuted due to their gender. They are women who are victims of violations of fundamental human rights and even death threats. They are women who have been sold, exploited and exposed to subjected to inhumane cruelty and torture, raped, forced to marry as a child, abused, or women who have argued in favour of girls’ education, women seeking a divorce or are gay. It should be clarified how women’s asylum claims are acknowledged in the Nordic countries’ asylum processes and to what extent women are granted international protection because they have been persecuted and demand their rights.

Each year, several thousand women come to the Nordic region with a residence permit on the basis of family ties. The residence permit is temporary and tied to a partner. Permanent residence requires that the woman have stayed lawfully in the country and lived with her partner for a certain amount of time (two to five years depending on the country). Some of these women are subjected to violence and would need to leave the relationship before they can obtain permanent residency and then risk being deported and, in some cases, risk losing custody of their children. It is important to investigate how common it is for men to repeatedly exploit women in this way and that women are deported for leaving a relationship.

People seeking work in different countries are employed in increasingly diverging conditions. Human trafficking is not only for sexual exploitation but also for work. Women often leave their children in their home countries to increase their income in the short or the long term. Those who live as undocumented migrants are particularly vulnerable, as they are not covered by social safety nets. Labour immigration and free movement should be treated separately, as a global phenomenon in today’s business world, where equal rights and obligations apply to women and men.

We demand that:

• The Nordic countries recognise women’s asylum claims and become frontrunners in protecting women through clear gender-sensitive guidelines on women’s asylum grounds. All women who are in need of protection should be treated equally.

• Women with a family relationship are accorded a residence permit that is not tied to a man. The Deportations of victims of abuse are stopped. Women subject to trafficking are given protection and assistance, whether or not they able to or want to testify in court.

• The Nordic governments and authorities implement a humane refugee policy with special
consideration given to women refugees in accordance with the UN Refugee Convention.

• Governments and authorities improve integration and training of foreign-born women who have inadequate education. Illiterates are given priority in the educational system.

• Migrant workers and labour immigrants are guaranteed the equal pay and employment conditions as native workers.

11. New Technology and Media

Women are less visible in media than men. Research shows that women make up 30 percent of the persons seen and heard in the news. This situation has changed very little over the past two decades despite this fact being explicitly raised by the Beijing Platform for Action. It is still men who tell the news and are the news. Men are predominant among experts whereas women express themselves in general terms. The influence of women in the media must increase in order for women’s voices from across the society are heard.

Equal participation and representation of women in media is vital for democratic discourse. The media is a cornerstone of the democratic society in the Nordic region and in the world. We must secure freedom of the press and of expression and, at the same time, counteract stereotypical presentations of women and women’s issues and who writes what.

The media landscape is becoming increasingly diverse, and new technology has changed the way we present and consume news. Women can now create their own media and write and blog about topics that interest them. Social media offers great opportunities for citizens to participate in public discourse. At the same time, there is a negative tendency that the rapid technological progress increases the differences between women and men’s participation. Moreover, discussions on the Internet are unregulated and can be spiteful. During the past decade, women who write on the Internet and participate in discussions in social media, on blogs and other online forums meet increasing hostility and harassment. This organized sexist harassment threatens the empowerment of women and is a way to silence women’s voices in the public sphere.

We have to discuss how we can balance freedom of expression with the right to privacy and the regulation of sexist hate speech. Cyber hate has both short- and long-term harmful effects on women’s quality of life and mental health and weakens the potential for active participation in society. Women taking a public role are more exposed to phenomena as bad language and outright threats. This is a threat to democracy and freedom and to women’s legal rights.

We demand that:

• The Nordic governments draw up annual media barometers that give tangible proof of the participation of women in media in terms of recruitment, management, content, perspectives, etc.

• State-controlled media is commissioned to create gender equality by implementing a model for participation and non-stereotypical representation that can be used by private media.

• Educational authorities and training programs in media as well as teacher training programs implement initiatives in order for young people in the Nordic countries to become more socially conscious media consumers, as media literacy is essential for active citizenship.

• Prohibitions against sexist advertising in Nordic laws are enforced and the advertising industry is obligated to provide information on the retouching of images as advertisement images that build on
and reinforce gender stereotyped roles have a negative impact, particularly on young people.

• The Nordic governments prepare more effective prosecutions of violations in social media and set up an independent complaints body to deal with discrimination against women and girls in media.

12. Future of feminism in the Nordic countries and the organization of women’s movement

The women’s movement has always consisted of different groups of women who have raised specific issues of importance to them at different times. As far back as a hundred years, women fought for suffrage, health, better housing, union demands, the portrayal of women in media, the right to education, equal pay, peace, sexual rights. In fact women’s movement of today is still working on the same issues. Many of those issues are now an established part of the society. Women’s movement is a strong and important voice in society, which has achieved remarkable success over the years. It has changed structures and improved living conditions for women.

Different voices and efforts are still needed. Women’s movement has always chosen different organisational forms and practices, from extra-parliamentary actions to political parties, but its strengths has always been to unite and work together on specific demands. A continued and strengthened cooperation between generations of feminists and between women’s groups working on specific social issues is crucial to achieving a gender equal society. For a progressive development of the organization of women’s movement and the future of feminism in the Nordic countries, it is important to include various groups and interests. In that way common demands can be formulated.

Nordisk Forum Malmö 2014 – New Action on Women’s Rights is proof of the determination of Nordic women’s movements not to accept a decline in women’s conditions of life but to work for a better future. It is also proof of the solid support for women’s and men’s equal value and rights.

The political consensus on the importance of gender equality is not a problem that disarms women’s movements, but an opportunity to stimulate grass root movements and initiate well-founded discussions based on alternative social solutions. Gender equality policy focuses on women and men, girls and boys. It is guided by the national gender equality policy objectives and international commitments such as the CEDAW convention and the Beijing Platform for Action. Other policy areas – everything from integration, disabilities, welfare policy to labour market, industrial policy, education, the environment, taxes - are still not sufficiently based on gender equality. Enhanced gender mainstreaming, men’s involvement and cooperation between different areas are therefore necessary.

The roads to a common goal are many and different forms of work and organizations will continue to be encouraged, but we also emphasize that basic women’s organizations have been historically effective in fighting for women’s rights. Together we are working to achieve a gender equal and feminist society!

We demand that:

• The Nordic governments finance the organizations of the women’s movement at least on a par with other organizations in civil society so that feminism has an impact and true gender equality is attained in the society.
• In accordance with the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, women’s organisations and civil society networks are given economic and social opportunities to participate in policy formulations at the local, national and international level.

• The Nordic governments support, financially and otherwise, collaboration between the women’s movement’s organisations at the Nordic level.

• The Nordic governments finance an assignment for women’s organisations to make the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action known to the public and emphasize their consequences for policy-making.

• Nordiskt Forum commits ourselves, our cooperating organisations, networks and individuals to create conditions for solidarity. This struggle reveals how the oppression of women and stereotypical roles go hand in hand with other power structures and interests and it is our mission to change them.