



Koinadugu Women's Group (KWG)



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KOINADUGU DISTRICT WOMENS CONFERENCE

POSITION PAPER OF KOINADUGU WOMEN PRESENTED TO STAKEHOLDER ON THE 25 JUNE 2022

Equality is a core value for the Koinadugu Women's Group (KWG). Ensuring that all gender have equal opportunities to succeed, economically, socially and politically, is at the heart of KWG mission. The KWG and its executive have consistently sought to advance women's opportunities in society and in the economy, including the labour market, and to promote the balance between work and family life for the benefit of all. KWG in Koinadugu district seeks to ensure that every woman has the opportunity to lead an ambitious and fulfilling life.

From a healthy birth to a fulfilling education, from the decision to enter a fair labour market and choosing to have a family, from full participation in public life to providing for women as they grow older, KWG is working to ensure that every woman is empowered to reach their full potential. Our goal is to advance equal rights, opportunities and equality for all. As equality between women and men is a core and horizontal value of KWG, it should be at the heart of this gathering on the Future of Koinadugu.

Women should be actively encouraged to participate in all decision making platforms, and women's organisations MUST be involved in setting the agenda of every gathering, because every decision made affects women and children. Their voices should be heard and included in EVERY recommendation, this is crucial in achieving gender equality and the collection of gender disaggregated data in all policy.

KWG therefore, calls on the Council which is the highest body of Government, Paramount Chiefs and other bodies to accelerate their efforts to promoting gender mainstreaming and addressing violence against women. However, these are key obstacle women in Koinadugu district are REQUESTING our stakeholders to develop bye-laws so that these issues can be address within our communities at large.

1. Combatting violence in all its forms (physical, psychological, financial, cyber violence, as well as sexual violence or female genital mutilation) and in all locations, including both inside and outside of the home, is an absolute priority for our families in Koinadugu district.

2. Violence against women is not just a major obstacle in achieving gender equality, but an unconscionable violation of human rights. Currently 1 in 3 women in the Koinadugu aged 15 or over have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence.

3. In recent times, reports of domestic violence have risen rapidly through confinement of several data from structures working to end violence. KWG has zero tolerance for gender-based violence, Violence against women is not only societal violence, but is often used as a means of controlling the population by the populist, illiberal, or anti-democratic regimes.

4. Political violence perpetrated by politicians is a way of suppressing women dissent and this has led to the low participation of women in politics both in the council and parliament. Remember, every act of violence against women should be treated as a direct attack on our democratic values and as a threat, not only to a specific group of persons, but as a threat to our existence as a healthy, participative and equal society.

5. Women in Koinadugu continue to be underrepresented in senior positions in many fields, including businesses, science, trade union representations, and most importantly in politics and public offices, the proportion of women in decision-making roles increased since but progress has been slow and uneven. In October 2018, just 2% of chairs of boards in institutions in Koinadugu were women.

6. Insulting languages against women is closely linked to the hate speech increasingly directed at women, the membership of KWG will closely work with the community custodians to prepare a comprehensive strategy addressing the issue of such violence as well as hate speech directed at women, and to increase synergies between existing instruments at community levels e.g. Bye-Laws on the development of prevention techniques and response mechanisms including cooperation with justice agencies and develop indicators on the prevalence of violence against women to measure the effectiveness of interventions to further develop awareness-raising campaigns for women and girls on their legal rights and available support services.

7. Sexual harassment is the most persistent form of gender-based discrimination, and approximately half of the women in Koinadugu district have experienced sexual harassment. The KWG strongly condemns all forms of harassment and insists on effective implementation of the existing legal framework addressing this phenomenon, at the same time encouraging legal structures, public and private companies in Koinadugu and institutions to take further measures to effectively end and prevent harassment against women. The membership of KWG and its partners will closely monitor for the effective implementation of the existing laws.

8. Gender mainstreaming, that is catering to the specific circumstances and needs of women, must be taken into account across all recruiting areas. While this paper does not expand on them specifically, a gender lens in development programmes design for Koinadugu district must be applied, and policies tailored to suit a gender sensitive response.

9. Women in Koinadugu play a crucial role in maintaining their communities and in keeping agriculture viable. Yet despite their substantial contributions, they continue to face numerous challenges, including

limited agricultural inputs, access to market, access to agricultural loans, less developed infrastructure. Much of the work of our women farmer is informal and unacknowledged and faced with unique challenges that put them at an initial disadvantage, including gender-specific obstacles such as lack of access to land, financing agricultural training and education, and equal treatment.

The membership of KWG will be working to lobby with the Line ministry to support entrepreneurial initiatives, access to credit and encouraging women's employment. Female entrepreneurship using opportunities linked to agro-tourism and the development of female farmers to improve their skills and performance through education, training and advisory services, increased participation in action groups in agriculture and explore the development of partnership models in relation to farm ownership.

10. Majority of people living with disability are women and girls and women with disabilities experience multiple and intersecting challenges and discriminations. KWG will work to further incorporate the gender perspective including improved access to the labour market and justice and continues campaign to end all forms of violence against disable women and girls and to further gender mainstream in disability policymaking, and to ensure full access to rights for women and girls with disabilities who are in institutions in Koinadugu district.

11. Women in the media Plays a pivotal role in societal representation and cultural dissemination, as well as in information provision, traditional and social media are hugely influential in their capability to advance women's rights. Stereotypes and the under-representation of women in media continue to persist, and can be seen clearly in media content. Women represent only about a quarter of the persons heard, read about in the news, they are rarely represented in an expert. Women are also under-represented, underpaid, sexually harassed, less or no protection from security apparatus so women undergo psychological distress through bad mouthing by politicians in the profession, media ownership, information production, and decision-making processes.

In all of, we call for specific commitment statements, in ensuring women realize their fullest potentials in all facets of life.

Long live Koinadugu district women!!!

Long live our duty bearers

Thank you all.