

## Resolution 3

### POLYGAMY

*Proposed by: the Finnish Federation of Graduate Women (FFUW)*

*Seconded by: the Swedish Association of Graduate Women (KAF, Sweden) and the Turkish Federation of Graduate Women (Türk Universiteli Kadınlar Derneği)*

**The 32<sup>nd</sup> GWI General Assembly resolves that:**

- 1. National Federations and Associations (NFAs) urge their respective Governments to raise women's awareness concerning possible problems of polygamy;**
- 2. NFAs increase their efforts to make the case of polygamy public to educate families, both women and men, about the possible consequences of polygamy in order to protect the human rights of women and girls;**
- 3. GWI encourage NFAs to seek strong support from governments and the judiciary, including appropriate legislation and publicity of positive judicial sentences, to increase awareness of polygamy and its consequent effects; and**
- 4. GWI utilise its consultative role with ECOSOC, UNICEF, UNFPA and other international bodies to assist in the implementation of this resolution.**

### **Suggested Plan of Action**

1. NFAs should urge their respective governments to implement the existing national and international laws related to polygamy and report on their efficacy
2. NFAs should coordinate with Human Rights organisations and other NGOs to raise awareness about the consequent effects of polygamy
3. NFAs should help national and local authorities to identify the hidden cases of polygamy and encourage a local awareness of the existence of the issue
4. NFAs should encourage academic research to examine the causes and the consequences of polygamy

5. GWI should seek support from international organisations to highlight the issue of polygamy in order for the issue to command greater public attention

**Supporting Statement:**

*Polygamy has been described as a form of human rights abuse. Many international human rights organisations, as well as women's rights' groups in many countries, have called for its abolition. In 2000, the United Nations Human Rights Committee considered polygamy a violation of the internationally binding International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on the grounds that it violates the dignity of women, and recommended it be made illegal in all states. The UN Commission on the Status of Women agreed to work for "choice, dignity of the wife, monogamy, and equal rights to dissolution of marriage", rights, which are stated in UN Universal Declaration, article 16.*

*Polygamy has become a problem in Western countries with increasing migration. Bigamy is illegal, but in many cases polygamy is so hidden that the authorities do not recognise it. Because of the obscurity of this problem it is not given enough space in integration programmes organised for immigrants.*

*There are cases when women, whose husbands have several wives, do not understand that they are living in illegal relations, or their cultural beliefs or practices do not allow them to divorce. Men also circumvent the existing legislation by divorcing in the secular court, but on a religious level the first marriage continues even if the husband marries another wife/wives.*