

Resolution 5

TO BRING AN END TO INTOLERANCE OF MINORITY GROUPS AND MAKE THE WORLD MORE INCLUSIVE

Proposed by: Indian Federation of University Women's Associations (IFUWA)

Seconded by: Women Graduates - USA

The 32nd GWI General Assembly resolves that:

- 1. National Federations and Associations (NFAs) urge their respective governments to enact laws protecting minority groups against intolerance and enabling them to enjoy their rights peacefully; and**
- 2. NFAs urge their respective governments to implement these and any existing laws that provide punishment for acts of intolerance to minority groups.**

Suggested Plan of Action:

1. NFAs should urge governments to enact laws protecting the minority groups and affirming their entitlement to peaceful enjoyment of their rights
2. NFAs should urge their governments to ensure that legislation has relevant and appropriate penalties in relation to acts of intolerance to minority groups
3. NFAs should urge governments to implement existing laws that provide for punishment to acts of intolerance to minority groups.

Supporting Statement:

Intolerance of ideas, ideologies and lifestyle choices should end. As tolerance is important for peaceful coexistence and harmonious living, it is important to accommodate and understand each other. Conflicts of religion, caste, gender and ideologies should be understood, discussed and tolerated peacefully. Women belonging to minority groups and smaller groups of religion, caste, ethnicity, and gender (including transgenders, a minority which has remained neglected) should be able to enjoy and exercise their rights — like the majority — without fear. It is important to accept and acknowledge that differences and dissent are an inevitable aspect of democracy in the developed world.

Intolerance to ideas and ideology is increasingly becoming a threat worldwide. There is a tendency to impose the views of the majority — 'majority' refers to the dominant caste group, religious group and race here — on the minority groups on matters of personal

choice. For instance, while in some parts of the world, women are told to wear the veil, in others they are asked to remove it, both in the name of the law. They are told whom to marry and when to marry, what to wear and what to celebrate. Marrying outside the caste or religion is punishable in many societies, at times even by death.

All human beings have a right to freedom of thought, belief, actions and choice. This freedom should be preserved at all costs. As women, we have a duty to inculcate inclusive values in society and our countries.

People who express dissenting views or question the system are not tolerated. They are persecuted or marginalised. Thus it is the majority that decides what the minority groups can eat, wear, see or read. It is important to create an atmosphere of inclusivity for all, including women, to grow.

Educated women can play an important role in fostering values of inclusiveness and recognition of others' rights in both their families and place of work. At the same time, they can advocate for laws that protect and enforce these values.

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