

# INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME 2015-2018

Adopted by the International Congress

April 2015

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR  
**PEACE & FREEDOM**



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Author: Madeleine Rees in cooperation with WILPF Executive Committee 2011-2014 and 2015-2018.

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[www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org)



Women's International League  
for Peace & Freedom

Rue de Varembe 1

Case Postale 28

1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

# International Programme 2015-2018

## 1. About the International Programme 2015-2018

For each Congress, the Secretary General drafts an International Programme of work in cooperation with the Executive Committee. This programme sets the framework on the work of the Secretariat and the National Sections until next Congress.

In 2011, Congress adopted an expanded, and somewhat different International Programme, which the Secretariat was to implement in the period 2011-2014. The International Programme 2011-2014 introduced the WILPF Integrated Approach as the new working methodology.

The outline for the International Programme 2015-2018 builds on the experiences and results made by the Secretariat by using the Integrated Approach in the previous period. It also leans on elements from the 2015 Manifesto, which was adopted by the International Triennial Congress in April 2015.

In 2011, Congress decided that the priorities should be:

- Challenge Militarism
- Invest in Peace, and
- Strengthen and Reform Multilateralism.

These priorities are core to all of the work WILPF does, but Congress may also wish to have specific reference to the issues that will be drawn out in the 100th Anniversary Conference:

- Political economy and gender relations as a root cause of conflict
- Building the social movement

## 2. Introduction

In 2011, Congress approved a progressive International Programme for WILPF's international offices to implement: an Integrated Approach to connect the grassroots work of our Sections and partners and the multilateral system to strengthen action for human rights (in particular social and economic rights), to increase our efforts on advocacy for policy change on militarism, the arms trade, and nuclear weapons, and to promote human security, gender justice, environmental responsibility and sustainable peace. The aim was that Sections and partners would leverage local to global connections and hold their governments accountable for delivery on commitments and obligations, and for WILPF to ensure an Integrated Approach on our thematic areas of work.

The approach was pioneered by WILPF and lay absolutely in the principles established in 1915.

It built on the already existing expertise and strengths of WILPF, within the Sections and the four international programmes, and increased the communication, outreach and engagement between the Secretariat, the Sections and partners (each of these are further elaborated in this document):

- The Human Rights programme
- The Disarmament programme
- The Women, Peace and Security programme
- The Crisis Response programme
- Organising Intelligently Work (Communications, and Section and Membership Outreach)

As of 2016 it will also include specific work on the environment.

From 2011-2014, WILPF has succeeded in articulating and implementing the Integrated Approach. We have learnt lessons and evaluated the gaps. There are numerous examples on how we used the Integrated Approach, and the following is a snapshot of just two areas where it has been applied in practice: work on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and work in the Middle East North Africa region (MENA).

#### Example 1; How It Works

WILPF's Disarmament programme, Reaching Critical Will (RCW), started working on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2006. In the lead-up to the negotiations in 2012 and 2013, RCW engaged in a coordinated campaign with WILPF's Women, Peace and Security programme (PeaceWomen) to ensure that the prevention of armed gender based violence would be legally binding in the treaty.

WILPF's international offices and National Sections worked hard to gather support from all over the world, and together they lobbied governments vigorously throughout the negotiations to ensure that the gender perspective was not dropped at the last minute.

Sections from various countries, including Nigeria, DRC, Colombia, Mexico, Spain, and the Philippines, participated in advocacy and workshops in New York and Madrid.

The Arms Trade Treaty finally included a gender provision supported by over 100 governments and hundreds of civil society groups around the world. This provision prohibits the sale of arms if there is a risk that the weapons could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law. This makes the Arms Trade Treaty the first-ever treaty that recognises the link between the international arms trade and gender based violence.

#### Example 2; How It Works

Firstly, the MENA Agenda 1325 project, a project under the Crisis Response programme, has engaged in identifying and working with grass roots organisations in the MENA region and responding to their specific demands and needs for training, capacity building and support.

The Women, Peace and Security programme (PeaceWomen) has linked the work in the region with UN Security Council and other bodies. Among other things, they helped create space for women from Syrian civil society to speak at the historic January 2014 high-level closed meeting of the UN Security Council.

The Human Rights programme, in turn, has helped our partners in the MENA region make their voices heard at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. This has included assisting the partners in making submissions and reports to the Council, as well as giving them the chance to participate directly in events and discussions taking place.

Finally, the Disarmament programme (Reaching Critical Will) has been vital in addressing the militarism that has undermined the hopes of the "Arab Spring". Their work on armed drones, small arms, the international arms trade, military spending, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and gender perspectives in disarmament, has provided important input on the situation in various countries in the MENA region.

The International Programme 2015-2018 follows and develops the lessons and progress of the past. We have made considerable advances but more work needs to be done to implement and excel the Integrated Approach. It will develop and build on the strong capacities and specific methodologies of work in each of our four programmes (Disarmament, Human Rights, Crisis Response, and Women, Peace and Security), integrate within them environmental issues, and further strengthen how we bring our work together in practice. It will place significant emphasis on working with Sections, partners and members and providing opportunities for work and outreach in local, national and regional fora connecting these with the international mechanism.

The challenge of the next three years is to ensure there is sufficient capacity to increase the support to Sections where and when it is needed, for example, as of 2015 places like Nigeria and Cameroon where the situation of extremism, proliferation of weapons, high levels of militarisation, politicisation of local issues, corruption and lack of basic rights fuel the violence, and women's voices and gender perspectives are systematically excluded.

The work of WILPF on prevention must be expanded and understood. Being aware of the political economy, the creation of violent masculinities as root causes of conflict will enable us to be more strategic in our activities and targeted in our advocacy at all levels.

Where prevention has failed and there is crisis, WILPF will provide critical non-violent gendered assessment and analysis. This will include further WILPF engagement in new and old conflicts, such as Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We aim to engage more directly on climate and environmental justice issues by weaving concrete proposals on gender, militarism, and the environment: for example on gender

and reforestation as vital elements in post conflict transitional agreements. Moving from an economy of war to an economy of peace which requires moving from unsustainable and exploitative economic growth to environmental security, women's human rights, and development justice for sustainable development and peace. There will be more work on climate change, and engagement with the Special Envoy and proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that includes a stand-alone goal on peace, to focus our support for the work of the environmental working group to be included more tangibly into the Integrated Approach.

This illustrates the unique nature of WILPF as a world movement with women from different countries that share a common vision.

The International Programme 2015-2018 will build WILPF as a social movement and as such we will further our outreach, partnership and communications work. We will work with other, similarly motivated organisations that have specific areas of expertise and focus to achieve our goals. By so doing we bring their skills into our work and vice versa, avoid duplication, and build a "coalition" of those working towards peace. In the next three years, WILPF intends to build on the partnerships already established, and those resulting from the 100th Anniversary Conference, to reinvigorate the peace movement.

### 3. International Programmes

WILPF's four International Programmes are a reflection of our organisation's priorities, as reinforced by the 2015 Manifesto, as well as opportunities for WILPF to bring significant, meaningful change at the international level.

#### Human Rights Programme

*WILPF's Human Rights programme monitors and advocates at the international human rights bodies and mechanisms in Geneva. It works from local to global by bringing grassroots activists, like our members, to the international stage in Geneva and vice versa, bringing WILPF's core philosophy as the Integrated Approach to the table.*

*Currently, María Muñoz Maraver is the Human Rights programme Director. She is assisted by a Human Rights programme intern.*

#### What?

##### **Thematic Advocacy**

The Human Rights programme will **continue monitoring and advocating** on topics such as the use of drones, women's participation in peace and security, the flow and use of small arms and light weapons, military spending, transnational companies, climate change, human rights defenders, gender identity and sexual orientation, xenophobia, sexual and reproductive rights, indigenous peoples' rights, and many more.

WILPF has for long been advocating for **social and economic justice** as a prerequisite to sustainable peace. The Human Rights programme therefore aims to further expand their thematic work on issues relating to economic and social justice especially, hopefully increasing their professional expertise on this matter.

#### **Country-Based Advocacy**

Considering that some UN human rights mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review and treaty bodies like CEDAW, are country-oriented rather than thematic, part of our advocacy also has to be country-based. In this regard, WILPF's Human Rights programme has been working and will continue to **engage with our Sections and local partners worldwide**, while building as much as possible on their valuable knowledge and capacities as local actors.

This includes continuing to **provide training, technical assistance and support** to submit reports, participate directly or have local voices heard in other ways at the UN human rights bodies. In this way the Human Rights programme aims to reinforce the connection between the local and international level.

#### **Follow-up on Past Recommendations**

Our previous work with WILPF's National Sections and partners has been quite successful in obtaining recommendations issued by the UN human rights bodies to national governments. However, human rights reviews do not have any meaning for the ultimate target of WILPF's work if they are not monitored to ensure that they are applied in practice.

It is thus vital that we are capable of ensuring the monitoring of these recommendations and develop well-aimed advocacy for governments to uphold their obligations towards human rights and, ultimately, peace. Also, first successes have created readiness from the United Nations human rights bodies to listen to our advocacy, which should be used to advocate further towards peace.

The Human Rights programme would therefore like to **give larger space to follow-up work** in the future with our Sections especially,

developing a coordinated strategy towards monitoring implementation with our Sections and local partners.

## Why?

The Human Rights programme's work with Sections and local partners has demonstrated that it is vital to work towards reinforcing the connection between the local level and the United Nations human rights system. In this regard, the Human Rights programme wants to be the bridge between local actors and UN bodies.

The programme's ambition to advocate for more social justice is in line with WILPF's Integrated Approach: we firmly believe that the fair distribution of economic resources is a pre-requisite to lasting peace and global stability, as much as disarmament and women's participation. It is part of WILPF's Constitution and 2015 Manifesto, yet our work on this matter can be increased.

The capacity of civil society actors to translate a local or national situation into human rights terms is crucial to the realisation of WILPF's Integrated Approach. It is the ambition of WILPF's Human Rights programme to work with local and national actors, including our National Sections, in order to ensure that what is actually being observed can be addressed to the appropriate body with the appropriate language, format and strategy to maximise impact and produce a timely and effective response. Building this capacity therefore is and will remain a major priority of the Human Rights programme.

Finally, WILPF's Human Rights programme aims to emphasise the follow-up procedure, especially because advocating for the realisation of promises made by governments in Geneva is essential to fulfilling our core mission and gaining from our work already done. It is also a

process that empowers and strengthens local actors, like our members, to be involved and hold their governments to account.

## Disarmament Programme

*Reaching Critical Will (RCW) is WILPF's Disarmament programme. Through monitoring, reporting, research, analysis, and advocacy, RCW has sought to promote transparency, accountability, debate, and action on a wide range of disarmament issues.*

*The Disarmament programme currently has three staff members; Ray Acheson (Director), Mia Gandenberger (Manager), and Gabriella Irsten (Associate), and is supported by a Disarmament programme intern.*

## What?

### **Gender and disarmament**

RCW seeks to mainstream gender perspectives on the use of weapons, gender diversity in disarmament discussions and negotiations, and confronting the relationship between violent masculinities and armed conflict. Over the next three years, working with WILPF Sections, programmes, and partner organisations, RCW will consolidate WILPF's presence and **lead on this issue**. This includes holding events, producing materials, and strengthening the integration of gender perspectives into disarmament fora, resolutions, discussions, and negotiations.

### **Nuclear weapons**

RCW represents WILPF on the International Steering Group of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), in which it will continue to play an active role to achieve a **treaty banning nuclear weapons**. In addition,

RCW will continue to monitor relevant UN fora and produce research and publications and deliver presentations on nuclear weapon issues, working with WILPF Sections and other organisations to oppose nuclear weapons and demand their elimination.

### ***The use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA)***

RCW represents WILPF on the Steering Group of the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), in which it will continue to work to develop standards to restrict and prohibit the bombing of towns and cities. Over the next three years, RCW seeks to **become a more prominent actor in the EWIPA issue**, expanding our engagement with INEW by contributing primary materials and research related to EWIPA and supporting the securing of political commitments.

### ***Autonomous weapons***

RCW represents WILPF on the Steering Committee of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. Over the next three years, RCW aims to **further develop intersections between WILPF's work on human rights and disarmament in the context of autonomous weapons**, working closely with the Human Rights programme and relevant partners. It will also develop positions and materials on this issue that reflect WILPF's overarching goal of ending and preventing armed conflict for advocacy in relevant disarmament and human rights fora.

### ***Armed drones***

RCW has engaged in research and advocacy against the use of armed drones, examining the human rights, international law, and gender aspects of this issue. Over the next three years,

we will continue to do so, working with relevant Sections and programmes.

### ***Small arms and light weapons***

RCW monitors relevant UN fora such as meetings of the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the UN General Assembly First Committee to represent WILPF's views on small arms. Over the next three years, RCW will **continue to engage in the mounting debate over how to best address small arms issues**. This includes producing materials relevant to this debate in order to foster discussion on the most relevant ways to reduce armed violence in the small arms context.

### ***International arms trade***

RCW led WILPF's advocacy during the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), including the campaign to include the prevention of gender based violence in the treaty. Over the next three years, we will **carry out a capacity-building project** on implementation of the GBV provision in the ATT. This project seeks to advance an integrated approach to the ATT by strengthening the understanding of the links between arms proliferation, gender-based violence, and implementation.

### ***Militarism and military spending***

RCW participates in campaigns and initiatives to highlight the challenges of excessive military spending and the culture of militarism. Over the next three years, RCW will **continue to lead WILPF's work on this issue**, providing resources and materials to Sections and other partners on military spending, aiming to ensure cutting-edge analysis and advocacy on issues related to militarism, violent masculinities, war profiteering, and other related issues.



## **Outer space security**

RCW has covered outer space issues in a variety of ways. Over the next three years, it will **remain engaged with international efforts to develop instruments related to outer space security**. With other civil society partners it will continue to promote a ban on space weapons and the weaponisation of outer space, through continued research, the creation of materials, and monitoring and advocacy in relevant fora.

## **Cyber security and militarism**

Cyber security is beginning to emerge as a key issue in the disarmament field. Over the next three years, RCW will work to move forward on cyber militarism issues. It looks forward to engaging to ban cyber weapons and to ensure the full protection of the right to privacy, freedom of expression, and freedom of association in the digital age.

## **Why?**

All of the above areas are directly relevant to WILPF's opposition to war and armed violence. The weapon systems we have chosen to work on represent some of the critical tools of war, economic waste, and global injustice, as well as areas in which RCW and our Sections can play a significant, meaningful, and unique role.

## **Women, Peace and Security Programme**

*PeaceWomen is WILPF's Women, Peace and Security programme, which promotes a progressive gender perspective in preventing conflict and creating peace through women's full and equal participation. It works to bridge global and local efforts to implement a holistic and transformative Women, Peace, and Security agenda.*

*It has a team based in the New York office of WILPF, which includes a Programme Director, Maria Butler, a Manager, Abigail Ruane, and group of passionate fellows and interns.*

## **What?**

### **Participation**

In the next three years, PeaceWomen aims to **strengthen inclusive participation** by working with and supporting the participation of Sections, members and partners throughout its work. This especially includes PeaceWomen's Local to Global Work which aims for more informed global and local policymaking through increased engagement of local women's rights advocates in Women, Peace and Security work including at the Commission on the Status of Women and the Security and the elevation of women's voices who are working at a local/national level.

Through various outreach and convenings, including PeaceWomen's innovative WPS Lecture Series, we aim to widen the reach and understanding of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, both in terms of content and audience. PeaceWomen will continue to provide accessible tools and materials, like its revamped website launched in 2015, [peacewomen.org](http://peacewomen.org), and provide space for continuous dialogue with its stakeholders. By supporting and working collaboratively with Sections, partners and members, PeaceWomen will strengthen local understanding and ownership of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

### **Accountability**

PeaceWomen will continue comprehensive, independent and transparent monitoring of the Women, Peace and Security agenda by the Security Council, member States and the United Nations through PeaceWomen's

monitoring systems and tools. Over the next three years, it aims to advance this work to **promote accountability for promises made**, like the international obligations States have in implementing Security Council Resolution 1325. PeaceWomen will further develop and build on its targeted advocacy, education and awareness campaigns for action and/or policy developments on country and thematic issues of concern including direct regular recommendations vis-à-vis the UN Security Council and other key stakeholders and policy-makers. This work includes monitoring National Action Plans on 1325 at the local level through the work of our Sections and partners. For the 15th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325, PeaceWomen will lead WILPF work in advocacy and engagement including by ensuring a focus on conflict prevention, disarmament and demilitarisation for the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security and the High-Level Review.

### **Conflict Prevention**

Under conflict prevention, PeaceWomen will continue to implement the Integrated Approach in international fora, strengthening linkages between Women, Peace and Security, human rights, and disarmament. Towards the upcoming three years, it aims to especially **include a number of emerging and relevant issues to its work**, including sustainable development, extremism and human rights defenders.

PeaceWomen will build on work vis-a-vis "Post2015" Sustainable Development discussions linking demilitarisation, women, peace and security and development and work with delegations on the integration.

### **Why?**

The Women, Peace and Security agenda is at an important junction. There is a need for

strong progressive voices to keep the true spirit and commitment of the agenda moving forward, rather than narrowing the conversation to "protection" only. We also reject any and all militarisation of the agenda. Ensuring WILPF's voices are heard on this is important to not the gains made in the last 15 years.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda can be a tool for moving from conflict and violence to peace, from exclusive to democratic decision-making, and from gender inequality to gender justice. Women's agency, voice, and capacities, and a real gender perspective are critical to local dialogues, better policies and more equitable peace deals.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda is now recognised internationally, but there are still challenges. To realise its transformative potential, it is time to move from commitments to accomplishments. Governments, the United Nations, civil society, the private sector, and other actors must implement commitments across all thematic areas. Ensuring a gender perspective and women's participation, protection, and rights is critical, including in prevention and disarmament, protection in displacement settings, peacekeeping, policy-making, and reconstruction. Action is critical now to build a sustainable and peaceful world for all of us.

It is therefore crucial PeaceWomen continues to work on the implementation of the holistic and transformative agenda, especially focusing on participation, accountability and conflict prevention.

### **Crisis Response Programme**

*For decades, WILPF has been bringing women together from the different parts of the world engaged in conflict. Since 2011, WILPF International has been developing a focused programme to continue this critical work and*

*recalibrate the political debates on conflict and crisis.*

*It is overseen by Madeleine Rees (Secretary General) and Barbro Svedberg (MENA Agenda 1325 Project Manager), and involves MENA Agenda 1325 Project Associate Laila Alodaat (based in London), Women Organising for Change in Bosnia and Herzegovina Project Consultant Nela Porobic (based in Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Ukraine Project Consultant Lesia Pagulich (based in Ukraine). The team is supported by interns, and involves staff from all WILPF programmes. The work is done in coordination with various Sections and partner organisations depending on context.*

#### What?

Over the past three years, WILPF has brought women from different conflicts together **to share experiences and lessons learnt, to develop their abilities to organise for change, and to bring their voices into the debate at all levels.** We use human rights law to address the UN fora and treaty body mechanisms in Geneva and New York.

We have brought women from Syria to Bosnia and Herzegovina, from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Ukraine, and from Iraq and Syria to Turkey, to work together and share experiences. This type of initiative has a multiplier effect: it builds solidarity and understanding and reenergises the women who participate, including those of us who do not live in conflict zones. It provides vital information as to the reality of their conflict and so helps to indicate opportunities and mechanisms for problem solving and eventual resolution.

This dedicated function will continue over the next three years and expand by capacity building at local level, particularly on combatting and documenting violence, transitional justice, law and human rights, and using the international system to effect policy change.

#### Why?

There is an obvious need to change the narrative of conflict, a narrative which has largely ignored the experience of civil society and particularly of women, and how they have organised, the vital roles they play and why they make a difference in bringing peace. There is a demonstrable lack of understanding of how to be inclusive on the part of the UN and others, and a failure to turn Security Council resolutions, commitments, and human rights obligations into practice. From Syria to Ukraine the patterns have remained the same. It is this pattern that we will be addressing and changing with this work.

## 4. Organising Intelligently

In addition to the content we work on, the Manifesto also addresses the ways in which we work, namely calling for a need to 'organise intelligently'. Many processes are already underway to address this in different ways, especially the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Organisation, which may bring significant changes to our organisation in the future. This chapter aims to outline practical organisational goals carried out by the Secretariat, which will naturally adjust to these larger processes as they develop. Developing work on human resources has not been included here as it mostly concerns the Secretariat internally, as well as financial developments, as they are covered by other materials developed for Congress.

### Communications

The WILPF Communications Team is responsible for implementing the overall communications strategy. This includes administrating all internal and external communications channels, assisting programmes and projects on outreach activities and providing guidance on communications to Sections.

WILPF's Communications Team currently (2015) consists of a Communications Manager, Nina Hansen, and a communications intern.

## What?

### **One Look**

By 2018, the Communications Team firstly aims for all WILPF programmes, projects and Sections to have adopted a common look in terms of style and design, assuring quality and recognisability of the organisation across all communications channels.

The strategy is to have an appealing look that allows WILPF to go beyond its solid centennial history in peace, to meet the new visual challenges of the modern era, where visual content, technology and multimedia play an increasingly important part in communications.

To do so, the Communications Team will invest in graphic design training for staff and Sections, collaborate more with volunteer graphic designers and increase the production of videos, podcasts and multimedia material.

### **One Voice**

By the same year, the aim is to have defined unified and consistent key messages on different issues WILPF works on. This will the organisation to prioritise and focus on the most important topics, as fundamental elements of its Integrated Approach to peace, making sure that the entire organisation agrees on the same messages.

A complex world requires clear, powerful and consistent messages and the Communications Team will work closely with staff and Sections to carry out these key messages. Together, they will strategise and develop internal guides on

how to communicate WILPF's work to maximise the impact of its outreach activities.

Similarly, to avoid dissolving the impact of communication and public information across multiple platforms, WILPF's international programmes and projects will not open new communications channels during the period 2015-2018, but will rather consolidate the already existing ones and discuss relevant strategies with the Communications Team.

### **One Organisation**

By 2018, the Communications Team envisages that WILPF will appear more as ONE organisation than it does at the end of 2014. The gap between the country level (National Sections) and international level (Secretariat) will be reduced, and the Communications Team will be ready to integrate the work on regionalisation as it develops.

To reduce the gap between the national and international levels, in the period 2015-2018, the Team aims to invest in field training and in the consolidation of the Communicators Network.

During the same period, the Communications Team aims to visit Sections and provide field training and strategic, operational and hands-on communications capacity building for national communicators and regional communications focal points.

The members of the WILPF Communicators Network, which currently consists of one communicator from each National Section, are also to have regular face-to-face meetings. This will help the network take on a bigger role in the coordination of national/international outreach efforts for future campaigns, events and initiatives.

## Why?

In the period of 2015-2018, the Communications Team aims to pursue two main objectives.

Firstly, to continue to strengthen communications at the international level, in an on-going effort to improve the communications tools and channels it uses as part of its daily work.

This is true for external platforms (including social media, website, newsletters) and internal platforms (the consolidation of the membership forum to allow WILPF members to have discussions online on different topics is one of the main priorities for 2015-2018).

Secondly, the Communications Team aims to work on “getting the whole organisation on board” by strengthening communications at the local level. This will also improve the communication flow between the National Sections and the international offices.

The ultimate goal is to strengthen the reputation and recognisability of WILPF as a solid and reputable advocacy player.

## Section and Membership Outreach

Over the last few years and especially in the lead-up to the Anniversary, the connection between the Secretariat and our Sections and members has undoubtedly strengthened. However, much work is still to be done in upcoming years to create a truly strong and united organisation.

## What?

### ***Invest in Sections***

Firstly, the Secretariat aims to invest in our Sections. This includes ensuring all our international programmes are inclusive and offer all our Sections opportunities for participation,

truly working from global to local. It also entails supporting our Sections in their projects and needs. Expanding the current Webinar Series that focuses on thematic teaching is one example of that, providing toolkits and training on fundraising at the local and national level another. Helping connect Sections who are working on similar issues, coordinating the creation of sister sections and creating more accessible and participatory materials and events are all part of that, as well as further developing the small grants programme. This also involves paying special attention and directly liaising with every Committee, Network and Working Group, as well as new and emerging Sections.

To ensure investing in our Sections remains a valuable exercise, the Secretariat also aims to support, guide and assess struggling Sections, together with our recommended new ‘Standing Committee on the Status of Sections’, which is to report to the IB on the condition and circumstances of all our Sections.

Finally, investing in our Sections must mean working together more closely with our Swedish Section in particular, as our in-house experts on capacity-building and regional growth, especially in the Global South.

### ***Improve Direct Communication with Membership***

In terms of direct communication towards all our members, the Secretariat aims to create a centralised membership database to include all WILPF members around the world. In this way we aim to keep our membership engaged with on-going work and initiatives, as well as hear from them more directly. The Secretariat also intends to create a membership discussion forum, which is expanded upon in our communications chapter. Finally, it aims at appointing a membership-staff liaison, to be

the first and central contact point for all our members.

### ***Expand International Membership***

In terms of international membership, the Secretariat aims to expand its international membership over the coming years. This implies creating a number of strategies and policies, including clarifying what international membership exactly entails, including what we expect of our international members and what they can expect from us, how one becomes an international member, including exploring a flexible fee scheme, and how international members relate to national members.

### ***Flexibility yet Accountability***

The Secretariat further aims to continue to be flexible and work beyond the membership with its various partners and supporters, especially in (emerging) conflict countries and in the follow-up of the Anniversary. To ensure accountability and transparency, new procedures are to be put in place on taking on new projects and partners, ensuring as much Section engagement as possible. This approach will also be integrated with the on-going regionalisation process when further developed. It also includes working with our membership in new ways, such as through our three new networks, which are functioning well.

### ***Further Strategies***

Further strategies for the upcoming years include ensuring UN representatives are held accountable to the membership and appointed in a fair and transparent way. In general, the Secretariat would like to move towards a clearer and more positive relationship between it and our Sections, stronger Standing Committees

and working groups with clear mandates and roles that are able to function independently with a staff liaison. For the Secretariat, perhaps the most urgent need is for the ExCom and IB to be able to function efficiently and transparently, while appointments are based on proven skills, knowledge and capabilities. The process towards regionalisation is one positive step in that direction, which the Secretariat encourages and will integrate into its work as the process develops.

### **Why?**

The membership is the heart and backbone of our organisation and responsible for carrying us into our centennial year. Investment into it is an investment into our organisation and very necessary at this moment to be able to make the changes we want to see in the world. Working more inclusively by directly communicating to our members is part of that, as is meeting the growing need for international membership. While remaining flexible and competitive, accountability towards the membership is non-debatable as laid down in our Constitution.

In these ways the Secretariat aims to strengthen our organisation and live up to the legacy of the work of our foremothers.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is an international non-governmental organisation with National Sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations.

Since our establishment in 1915, we have brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means and promoting political, economic and social justice for all.

Our approach is always non-violent, and we use existing international legal and political frameworks to achieve fundamental change in the way states conceptualise and address issues of gender, militarism, peace and security.

Our strength lies in our ability to link the international and local levels. We are very proud to be one of the first organisations to gain consultative status (category B) with the United Nations, and the only women's anti-war organisation so recognised.



## WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR **PEACE & FREEDOM**

WILPF Geneva  
Rue de Varembeé 1  
Case Postale 28  
1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland  
T: +41 (0)22 919 70 80  
E: [secretariat@wilpf.ch](mailto:secretariat@wilpf.ch)

WILPF New York  
777 UN Plaza, New York  
NY 10017 USA  
T: +1 212 682 1265

[www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org)