

**Women's Call to Political Parties and Candidates contesting the Sri Lankan Parliamentary
elections of 2020
A Women's Manifesto**

Declaration

As women, we strive for an ethical political culture and a democratic and just society, within which all human rights are valued, protected, promoted and fulfilled by the State, and where all people are equal and treated without discrimination. We strive for a society in which everyone can be free from harm, live with dignity, choose their own employment, have access to quality healthcare and education, access decent housing, and live within a society and state where diversity, dissent and accountability is valued.

We assert that women's rights have historically been restricted through a socially conservative interpretation of 'gender', which has dictated restrictive gender roles and harmful stereotypes.

We affirm that women and other historically marginalized communities should have the right to access justice and be treated fairly within the justice system.

Our demands:

Political Institutions and Practice

Our demands:

1. Ensure the number of cabinet ministers do not exceed 20 and at least 25% of the Cabinet comprises of women
2. Abolish the preferential system of voting and establish a new electoral system based on a combination of first-past-the post seats and proportional representation
3. Provide for temporary special measures to ensure a minimum 25% representation of women, including at decision making level, in Parliament, and provincial government and government agencies
4. Protect and extend the minimum 25% quota for women at local government
5. Bring in legislation to prevent cross-overs and allow citizens the right to recall Members of Parliament
6. Introduce mandatory legal provisions to ensure that all registered political parties have at least 25% women in their key decision-making structures
7. Ensure progressive thinking of future generations by including education on the concepts of peace, gender and gender equality in all national curricula
8. Ensure all national level data is sex and gender disaggregated
9. Recognize the feminization of ageing (that the ageing population of Sri Lanka will be made up of a majority of women), and formulate policies to address their specific needs and concerns, including inter alia, housing, health, livelihoods and transportation

10. Implementing the transitional justice mechanism without delay to ensure justice and trust building among affected people.

Constitutional Reform

11. Protect the provisions of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution
12. Ensure a gender balance in the appointments to all independent Commissions established under the 19th Amendment to the Constitution
13. Expedite legislation to establish an independent National Commission on Women within the provisions of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution
14. Resume the Constitutional Reform process through the Constitutional Assembly (CA) taking into consideration the recommendations made by the Public Representations Committee and the Sub Committees of the CA immediately

In this process consider that:

15. Recognition is given to the fact that women have been historically discriminated against and marginalized and this warrants a special bill of rights for women including a right to exercise autonomy and enjoy bodily integrity; sexual rights and reproductive health, right to be free from violence and live in dignity, and the right to effective remedy and redress for such violence and its consequences
16. Judicial review is enabled to determine the constitutionality of laws post enactment
17. Article 16 of the current constitution is repealed
18. Sexual orientation and gender identity are introduced as explicit categories and are guaranteed protection under the non-discrimination clause, recognizing historic and continuing discrimination, despite the implicit inclusion in Article 12
19. The Right to Life is recognized as a fundamental human right
20. Economic, social and cultural rights are guaranteed as fundamental rights and are justiciable
21. The liability of non-state actors for violations of the equality clause of the Constitution is recognized

Human Rights and Legal Reform

22. Ensure the independence of the judiciary
23. Fulfill constitutional obligations on equality and non-discrimination and ensure special measures are introduced to protect socio-economic and political rights of all persons, including those with disability.
24. Ensure equal application of the law to all citizens, including all religious clergy
25. Commit to making human rights and non-discrimination corner-stones of all legislation and state structures
26. Progressively incorporate all ratified international instruments, including CEDAW, into domestic legislation and review existing legislation for compliance with international human rights commitments

27. Progressively implement the recommendations of the Consultations Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms (2017)
28. Establish the Commission for Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Non-Recurrence
29. Ensure that all women shall enjoy equal rights to the inheritance, acquisition, management, administration and disposition of property and ensure that all discriminatory laws (specifically including the Thesawalamei Law and the Land Development Ordinance) preventing such rights be repealed or amended
30. Amend the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act of 1951 ensuring full realization of demands of Muslim women and full compliance with fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution within six months of the new Parliament
31. Amend the Penal Code and Election laws to introduce legislation that addresses the issue of violence against women in political life
32. Ensure that public education on human rights and discrimination and all the areas mentioned here, are a key priority of the state
33. Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and commit to not enacting the draft Counter Terrorism Act which is under discussion; instead use provisions in normal criminal law to ensure the safety of all citizens
34. Ensure the Voluntary Social Services Ordinance (VSSO) is amended to protect freedom of association and dissent and that all non-governmental bodies are treated with similar legal and regulatory measures as all other legal entities
35. Ensure that the criminal justice system is operated in a fair and just manner and not abused for political reasons and that the rights of all those who come within its ambit are not violated

Information and Hate-Speech

36. Ensure that multiculturalism is encouraged and prioritized, thereby establishing national coexistence; commit to drafting and enacting a National Policy to ensure this
37. Ensure the state takes proactive measures to counter hate-speech, such as counter-messaging campaigns and public education
38. Ensure the state should hold all perpetrators, irrespective of socio-political and religious status, to account in cases of incitement to violence
39. Commit to strengthen and implement right to information (RTI) procedures and mechanisms through public education and capacity-building, including for the state sector

Language and Culture

40. Ensure implementation of the official languages policy with full compliance of the state sector
41. Ensure greater appreciation of cultural pluralism to promote national integration through policy, legislation, education and practices
42. Notwithstanding the above, ensure that culture should not override human rights of all citizens

Development, Traditional Livelihoods and Ecological Justice

43. Ensure all development policies are inclusive and benefit all communities regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, disability, age and so on
44. Commit to enacting special policies to address the issues of women in poverty, as a recognition of the feminization of poverty
45. Recognize the contribution of women in sustainable agriculture and environmental management, and take measures to protect their role in this sector, including to ensure land tenure and other economic resources for women
46. Make environmental assessments compulsory at the initial conceptual stage of development projects
47. Develop a comprehensive national policy to face ecological challenges and put in place safeguards to minimize various disasters and accidents caused by climatic changes such as drought, forest fires, floods, landslides and sea erosion
48. Take immediate and consistent action, with dedicated resources to prevent and mitigate the impacts of climate change
49. Support vulnerable female and male farmers by increasing pensions and writing off farmers debts
50. Support traditional livelihoods including those of women through more inclusive policy and resources
51. Increase State support to expand the use of traditional seeds, and to prevent the acquisition of a monopoly in seeds by corporations
52. Ensure the non-destruction of forestation and conserve sensitive ecological systems
53. Ensure that all environmental laws will be implemented without reservation and impunity in cases of violations
54. Ensure energy security by developing renewable energy sources such as biomass power, wind power, solar power and ocean energy and reduce the dependence on fossil fuel.

Labour and Work

55. Include unpaid care work in the National Labour Force Survey and in the assessment of GDP
56. Introduce and enforce stringent laws and regulations to effectively monitor and regulate micro finance and micro credit institutions.
57. Ratify ILO Convention 190 on Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the World of Work
58. Ratify ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers
59. Withdraw all current discriminatory regulations restricting the right of women to migrate for overseas employment
60. Ensure the protection of the law to all women, regardless of their chosen employment, thereby giving women the freedom to pursue employment of their own choosing
61. Introduce a pension scheme for women and men migrant workers
62. Introduce a contributory pension scheme to all citizens and ensure this is linked to the Cost of Living Index

Violence against Women and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

63. Expand the legal definitions of rape (to include marital rape), torture (to include sexual violence), and sexual harassment. Definitions of forms of violence against women should include technology-related violence
64. Ensure that sentencing reflects the broadened definitions above, and prohibit suspended sentences in cases of rape and sexual violence
65. Ensure that all girls from all communities are equally protected by statutory rape law
66. Amend legislation where necessary and enforce standardized practices of evidence-gathering which center the testimony of the survivor/victim.
67. Ensure that the practice of independent corroboration in the case of rape and sexual violence is abolished
68. Enact amendments to the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2005 currently before the Legal Draftsperson within six months of the term of the new Parliament
69. Repeal Section 303 of the Penal Code and ensure strengthened access to all sexual and reproductive healthcare choices, for all
70. Repeal sections 365 and 365A of the Penal Code which criminalize private same-sex conduct between consenting adults
71. Amend Cheat by Impersonation to ensure it cannot be used to legitimize discrimination against transpersons; IGP of Police should endorse the validity of the Gender Certificate and issue directives to all police to consider this document valid
72. Amend the Bribery Act and explicitly include the act of compelling sexual bribery
73. Repeal the Vagrants Ordinance
74. Ensure that all policy and legislative interventions affecting women are based on evidence which reflect the lived realities of women
75. Include age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality and reproductive education as an integral part of all educational curricula, including in teacher training

Institutions and Policy

76. Enact legislation to ensure the independence of the judiciary regardless of changes in government
77. Introduce a Directorate of Public Prosecutions bifurcating the office of the Attorney General and taking on the task of all prosecutions, including against the state
78. Ensure that every person can exercise their right to access justice and that this right is justiciable; in cases where this right is violated, the victim should have access to timely remedies and immediate relief to support any required action
79. Provide the necessary human and material resources to fast-track investigation and prosecution of violence against women cases, where cases should be completed at the most within the period of one year
80. Conduct a review of all existing National Action Plans relevant to violence against women and consolidate implementation into one instrument
81. Mandate that each police station should have a well resourced Women and Children's Desk staffed by adequately trained officers who are proficient in local languages and that this service is available 24 hours of the day

82. Develop policies for female heads of households, which enable an environment in which they can live free from harm and oppression, in dignity, where their socio-economic rights are protected, and their access to social welfare benefits are strengthened
83. Commit to increasing the financial provisions towards maternal and child health in the budget to a minimum of 3%

Women and Media Collective Supported by

Organisations

1. Women and Media Collective (WMC)
2. Viluthu
3. Women's Resource Center
4. Rural Women's Front
5. Women's Development Center
6. Women's Solidarity Front
7. Ruhunu Sisila
8. Dabindu Collective
9. Women's Political Academy
10. Equal Ground
11. Human Elevation Organisation (HEO)
12. Islamic Women's Association for Research and Empowerment (IWARE)
13. Amara district union for female headed households – Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mulativu, Mannar, Trincomalee, Batticalo and Puttalam
14. Action Network for Migrant Workers (ACTFORM)
15. Women's Education and Research Center (WERC)
16. International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES)

Individuals

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|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Prof. Camena Guneratne | 12. Velusamy Weerasingham |
| 2. Dr. Sepali Kottegoda | 13. Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala |
| 3. Dr. Selvy Thiruchandran | 14. Raisa Wickremethunge |
| 4. Dr. Thiloma Munasinghe | 15. Hanah Ibrahim |
| 5. Kumudini Samuel | 16. Aaranya Rajasingham |
| 6. Anebriya Hanifa | 17. Nilmini Renuka |
| 7. Chandra Jayarathne | 18. Chandani Pushpalatha |
| 8. Mario Gomez | 19. B.P Liyanage |
| 9. Kshama Ranawana | 20. R.K. Priyadharshini |
| 10. Velayudan Jayachithra | 21. R. Manishalini |
| 11. Nelun Chrisanthi Gunasekera | 22. S. Dharsika |

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|-----|--------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|
| 23. | K. Sowmya | 71. | P. Ampikai |
| 24. | W.M.C. Pushpalatha | 72. | S. Lassumirani |
| 25. | J. Metlickmary | 73. | V. Karthika |
| 26. | P. Logeswary | 74. | A. Thavarani |
| 27. | E.M. Nilmini Renuka Damayanthi | 75. | E. Saila |
| 28. | Thilaka Weerakoon | 76. | P. Rathneswary |
| 29. | K. Chalanika Jayangani | 77. | N.Thilakarani |
| 30. | A. Shamdi Rasangika | 78. | Navarathnam Alakeswary |
| 31. | Kusum Amarasinghe | 79. | Kanalinkam Lakavanthi |
| 32. | Shasthi Karunarathne | 80. | Varatharasa Yokarani |
| 33. | E.G. Amara | 81. | Vaiththinkam Navaransithamany |
| 34. | Sriyani Pathirage | 82. | Vijaratnam Alairarasai |
| 35. | E.M. Indra Irangani | 83. | Makeswaran Vanitha |
| 36. | Nisansala Gamage | 84. | Maikkal Joni Jesithra |
| 37. | Ranmalee Anandagoda | 85. | E. Kanmaniyamma |
| 38. | M.H. Nasmiya | 86. | M.N. Immunijha |
| 39. | W.H. Maneesha | 87. | N. Mireka |
| 40. | W.M. Samanthi Wijerathna | 88. | N. Nirija |
| 41. | R.D.G. Rajapakse | 89. | Ayisaumma |
| 42. | Inoka Edirisinghe | 90. | Paththila Sawasrir |
| 43. | W.A.C. Kumari | 91. | K. aSWINI |
| 44. | R.D.D.S.R. Fernando | 92. | K. Nilani |
| 45. | Sumika Perera | 93. | K. Jeevasalini |
| 46. | Sandya Ekneligoda | 94. | K. Rubiny |
| 47. | Seetha Ranjani | 95. | S. Sutharsini |
| 48. | Maithreyi Rajasingham | 96. | S. Anpurani |
| 49. | Shirani Mills | 97. | S. Nirija |
| 50. | Uda Deshapriya | 98. | T. Santha |
| 51. | Lila Rasool | 99. | S. Kairala |
| 52. | S. Mariyarasali | 100. | S. Genkamma |
| 53. | Subha Wijesiriwardena | 101. | N.N. Pedsuya |
| 54. | Tharanga De Silva | 102. | Rameswary |
| 55. | Edna Malkanthi | 103. | K. Chandra |
| 56. | Stella Perera | 104. | Viola Perera |
| 57. | Inoka Priyadharshani | 105. | Vanamali Kaushalya Galapatti |
| 58. | Kimaya De Silva | 106. | Nelika Rajapakse |
| 59. | Sanchia Brown | | |
| 60. | H. Inthumathy | | |
| 61. | Vasanthan Sumathi | | |
| 62. | Singarasa Saranja | | |
| 63. | Makenthiran Nirmala | | |
| 64. | Paskaran Raji | | |
| 65. | Sivathurai Kulamankalam | | |
| 66. | Sivarasa Mariyarisari | | |
| 67. | Kanthaiya Thurkka | | |
| 68. | Ksntharasa Santhiravanthani | | |
| 69. | P. Saroja | | |
| 70. | Srikantharasa Suseeka | | |

