



## **Swedwatch Equal Opportunities Policy**

Approved by Swedwatch's Board of Directors on 3 October 2008. Revised on 17 November 2010 and on 18 December 2019.

### **1. Policy statement**

The purpose of this policy is to define Swedwatch's ambitions to create equal opportunities, reduce inequalities and prevent all forms of discrimination in its work and staff relations. Swedwatch intends to actively apply this policy to all organisational development and programming.

Swedwatch recognises the importance of SDG 10 on reducing inequalities globally. We agree with the view that economic growth is not sufficient to reduce poverty if it is not inclusive and does not involve the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Factors such as inclusiveness, giving due attention to the ecosystem and ensuring respect for human rights are all vital to reducing inequalities.

Swedwatch also supports the aims of SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. We regard gender equality as not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Our research has confirmed that women and girls do not enjoy the same status or access to opportunities as males; on the contrary they continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. We are dedicated to reversing this condition.

Our values of social justice and equity call us to work toward ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy their human rights and achieve their potential, while creating a society that values women, men, girls and boys equally. Swedwatch is moreover committed to ensuring that all of its programmes, procedures and policies are fully compliant with the Swedish Law on Discrimination (2008:567) calling for active measures to counter discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.

### **2. Principles and goals**

Swedwatch has incorporated the following principles into its work culture and planning:

- Put equality of opportunity, gender equality and non-discrimination at the centre of our work
- Actively maintain a physical and psychosocial work environment suitable for all employees
- Create conditions for all employees to combine work and parenthood
- Prevent harassment in all its forms
- Provide all employees opportunities for development and education
- Actively promote a more even gender distribution within our operations
- Give all employees equal pay and conditions for equal performance
- Apply our inclusive, equal opportunity values to subcontractors
- Recognise the cross-cutting nature of gender equality to our programming
- View the empowerment of women and girls as fundamental to our mission



The goal of this policy is to ensure equality of opportunity, gender equality and non-discrimination permeate Swedwatch programming, organisational behaviours, and public image. The following sections lay out how to we plan more specifically to achieve our goal.

### **3. Programming**

Inclusiveness, gender sensitivity and empowerment are key inputs to Swedwatch programming.

The issue of equal opportunity is closely linked to inclusiveness and marginalisation. Swedwatch's research and analysis explores to what extent rights holders can change or influence their own lives and circumstances. A priority of Swedwatch is to facilitate the empowerment of rights holders, including highlighting the challenges facing those living in most vulnerable situations - for example women, children, migrant workers and environmental human rights defenders. Swedwatch analyses the context of socio-economic inequalities and provides recommendations for their address in order to increase opportunity and choice for rights holders trapped in cycles of poverty. This may, for example, include highlighting impacts on migrant workers who have had their passports confiscated, farmers trapped in debt bondage, or violations associated with child labour.

Business-related impacts affect women, men, girls and boys differently due to the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and power. Women tend to be excluded from decision-making processes, for example within the extractives, agribusiness and energy sectors, where access to land and resources, compensation and benefits are negotiated. Women are also disproportionately affected by gender-based violence - one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. Other gendered impacts of business activities include pregnancy complications, for example miscarriage due to harmful work during pregnancy. Women also face additional barriers in seeking access to effective remedy for business-related human rights abuses. While women are both primary safeguarders of the environment and disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change, women environmental human rights defenders are overly exposed to gender-specific threats, harassment and violence when carrying out their work.

In order to capture business related impacts on women and girls, Swedwatch applies a gender sensitive approach throughout the project cycle, adopting gender analysis in project planning, implementation and reporting. Our activities include research projects that highlight the BHRE impacts on women and girls, facilitation of participation of women in dialogue and engagement forums (structures which empower entry into decision making) and capacity development on the specific BHRE risks and impacts on women. Our capacity building initiatives include resources, training, information sharing, and networking specifically designed to strengthen women's organisations and groups. All Swedwatch research findings include a gender analysis on business impacts on rights holders, specifically on women and girls, and these findings then also constitute a key element in Swedwatch's dialogues with business actors.

Swedwatch reporting also reflects a gender sensitive approach and seeks to document the specific context of female rights holders and the particular impact of business activities on their ecosystem and exercise of human rights. In interviewing rights holders in the field, we continually strive for a balanced participation from women and men. Swedwatch reports make use of disaggregated statistics whenever possible. In addition, we support partners which are aligned to our gender and inclusiveness principles.

### **4. Work environment and organizational development**



Swedwatch takes active measures to promote gender equality, create equal opportunities and prevent discrimination in the workplace.

- Regarding working conditions, we actively strive to maintain a physical and psychosocial work environment suitable for all employees. We take care that all employees, regardless of gender and background, have equal opportunities/conditions regarding working hours, conveniences, language usage and opportunities to perform their duties. All staff are expected to identify and counteract harassment, defined as actions that constitute unwelcome behaviour which can be perceived as infringing on an employee's integrity.
- Regarding salaries and benefits, Swedwatch offers all employees equal pay and conditions for equal performance. We regularly map and analyse our benefits to ensure that no employees face wage discrimination, taking into account level of education, length of contract and the employee's degree of responsibility. Staff receive information on how benefit levels are set and are encouraged to discuss any potential issues with their supervisor.
- Regarding recruitment and promotion, Swedwatch advocates for a more even gender distribution within our operations. We strive for a balanced distribution of women and men and always work towards having both women and men apply for vacancies and receive offers wherever possible. Gender sensitive language forms a part of all vacancy ads and consultancy terms of reference.
- Regarding capacity and skills development, we give all employees opportunities for development and education. Each employee, regardless of gender or other background factors, shall have equal opportunities for development within the framework of the individual's knowledge, will and/or ability. We ensure that staff access to and use of information technology is gender equitable.
- Regarding caring responsibilities outside the workplace, we strive to make it feasible for all employees to combine work and parenthood. Swedwatch offers the means to ease the role of parenting while working, for instance allowing staff to take advantage of flexible working hours, work from home, and minimising work tasks which occur during off-work hours.
- Regarding the board-selection committee, it will seek to ensure diverse representation on the Board as regards gender, age and background.

## **5. Public image and communication**

Gender analysis is central to the development of all Swedwatch products, marketing, fundraising, proposal preparation, and campaign work. Gender sensitivity will be reflected into activities wherever possible.

Swedwatch donors will be informed about its goals related to gender equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination; examples of positive results should be shared where suitable.

All Swedwatch materials and communications will be formulated to reflect our goals and objectives on gender equality and equal opportunities, recognising diversity and promoting inclusiveness.

Gender sensitive language and images will be used in all internal and external communications. Swedwatch always strives to have women's and girl's voices heard in the first person. We ensure that women and men are proportionately represented during press briefings and other PR activities.



Gender stereotypes should be challenged wherever they arise. Our publications should avoid casting women in stereotypical roles (victims, wives, caregivers) as well as men (breadwinners, in-charge, experts)

Swedwatch applies the same values to subcontractors, communicating our policies on equal opportunities, gender equality and non-discrimination during the bidding process and ensuring compliance from potential suppliers.

#### **6. Implementation and accountability**

Swedwatch's Director will be accountable for the implementation of the policy. The Head of Finance and Administration will report annually on any compliance issues, as well as suggesting mitigation measures and adjustments. All staff have a responsibility to show a gender perspective in their work and adhere to the policy guidelines on equal opportunities, gender equality, and non-discrimination.