



National Federation of Democratic Women
Annual Convention

**Resolution Supporting Action to Address the Devastating Situation for
Widows Around the World**

WHEREAS: Organizations globally, including the Woman's National Democratic Club, are expressing horror at the devastating circumstances afflicting at least 245 million widows around the world, circumstances also devastating for their children; and

WHEREAS: Of the 245 million widows number, more than 115 million of them are living in devastating poverty along with their more than 500 million children. The numbers are increasing every day, due to armed conflicts, AIDS, natural and manmade disasters, loss of livelihoods, etc.; and

WHEREAS: Further, in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab region, a widow is doubly victimized as a woman and as a widow; and

WHEREAS: Lack of inheritance rights means no assets or home, no job, no pension; outside movements are restricted, clothes mark her as a widow, she is isolated, vulnerable to rape, sexual exploitation, HIV/AIDS, and shunned by society; and

WHEREAS: A widow can become chattel to her husband's brothers after the husband's death and sometimes stoned to death as a witch for that death; and

WHEREAS: Children also become affected, sharing the poverty, so they cannot attend school. Daughters go begging or sold into prostitution, so the circle of poverty becomes unbroken; and

WHEREAS: The international community is stunned and horrified by these egregious abuses of widowed women and recognizes there is a serious need for policy focus on creating an enabling environment for widows and their families;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the National Federation of Democratic Women hereby supports the recommendations of a coalition of advocacy groups for women, which include urging the adoption of a UN Resolution on Widowhood. The Resolution should call on the UN and the international community

to “mainstream widowhood issues” into UN action to achieve Millennium Development Goals, the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the proposed resolution urge the creation of a UN special Representative on Widowhood and a fund to assist widows’ organizations to mobilize, urge member states to collect data on widows, and that CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) consider monitoring the status of widows at the state level; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Secretary of the National Federation of Democratic Women forward a copy of this resolution to all chartered National Federation of Democratic Clubs throughout the country.

Introduced by Woman’s National Democratic Club