



March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## **Launch of WoPAI – a unified voice for a global women’s movement**

**Women’s Platform for Action International, WoPAI, is holding its global launch in New York on 10 March 2025 to coincide with the 69th Commission on the Status of Women and the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action.**

*“The global deterioration of women’s living conditions and human rights is accelerating. Everything from pandemics to war affect us worse than men in all social aspects and not least economically. Because we are women we are harassed, beaten, raped, exploited and murdered,” says the Chair of WoPAI, Gertrud Åström, “ We must prioritise the rights of women and girls for the sake of our global future.”*

WoPAI’s first action is an open letter of support for United Nations Special Rapporteur for Violence against Women, Reem Alsalem. It has been signed by almost 600 organizations and over 6000 individuals and is still open for signatures.

According to Susannah Sjöberg, the Secretary General of WoPAI: *“Women all over the world are grateful for Ms Alsalem’s courageous, independent and honest voice. She must be supported when she speaks out on controversial issues including prostitution and how the recognition of socially constructed gender identity in place of biological sex is impacting on women and girls’ human rights and fundamental freedoms.”*

Ms Alsalem was subjected to unfair criticism and personal attacks following her report, presented at the UN Human Rights Council in 2024, detailing the exploitative and abusive reality of prostitution. She is now being berated for her forthcoming report on violence that women suffer because we are women.

*“As a survivor Special Rapporteur’s report dignifies me. Prostitution is not a matter of free choice, it is violence. Being in prostitution is being a victim of violence. Being a woman in prostitution is being violated as a female”, Blessing Okoedion.*

Those organisations leading the campaign against Reem Alsalem are supported by powerful foundations such as Gates, Open Society and Ford identified by many women’s rights defenders, and Alsalem herself in her latest article, in promoting a ‘sex work’ narrative that legitimises exploitation of prostitution in contravention of Article 6 of CEDAW. As it is obvious from the latest attack on Alsalem, the same groups are invested in eliminating sex in law in contravention of Article 1 of CEDAW.

WoPAI promotes substantive equality between women and men. We advocate for general, differentiated and temporary special measures, and defend women’s universal and inalienable human rights as they are defined in CEDAW.

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