



# **Ethics Charter**

# **CAP International**

## OUR ABOLITIONIST CONVICTIONS

**CAP International is a coalition of associations united around a common objective: the abolition of prostitution.**

**CAP International and its members act in support of all prostituted persons (women, men and children), in opposition to the prostitution system that exploits their precariousness and vulnerability.**

Becoming a member of CAP International means claiming that prostitution is:

### **A form of male violence against women**

The vast majority of prostituted persons have suffered from violence, often sexual, before entering prostitution. They are also victims of many forms of violence while in prostitution (physical, verbal, sexual, psychological).

The repetition of sexual acts without physical desire, but instead experienced as the consequence of financial need, inequality or as an exploitation of vulnerability, constitutes sexual violence in and of itself.

### **An exploitation of inequalities**

Prostitution is a part of a long patriarchal tradition of making women's bodies available for men's benefit (rape, sexual harassment, "conjugal duties", etc.). It exploits multiple forms of inequality: men's domination and violence over women, rich over poor, colonial and neo-colonial domination of the Global North over the Global South, majority groups over minorities, populations that have been victims of colonization. Minorities, discriminated groups, indigenous women and girls, migrants are over-represented in prostitution all over the world.

### **A violation of human dignity**

By placing the human body and sex into the realm of the marketplace, the system of prostitution and the sex trade reinforce the objectification of all women and their bodies. It is a direct violation of the physical and moral integrity of prostituted persons.

Prostitution reinforces the domination of men over women, in particular the attitude that women's bodies are available and accessible, which is present in other forms of violence against women such as rape, sexual harassment and intimate-partner violence.

The system of prostitution fuels and perpetuates trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation.

Prostitution is a societal obstacle to establishing truly free, respectful and egalitarian sexuality. It is also a direct violation of the physical and moral integrity of prostituted persons.

### **A violation of human rights**

The United Nations Convention of 2 December 1949 adopted by the General Assembly states in its preamble that *"Prostitution and the accompanying evil of the traffic in persons for the purpose of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person."*

The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) asks States Parties to *"take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women"*.

Further, prostitution is incompatible with articles 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which state that *"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights", "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status", "Everyone has the right to life,*

*liberty and security of person” and that “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.*

## **OUR ABOLITIONIST OBJECTIVES**

Joining CAP International means to actively advocating for the adoption and implementation of abolitionist legislation and public policies at the national, continental and international levels. To achieve this objective, CAP International implements two priorities for action:

- To reinforce the capacity of all its members in their respective actions.
- To coordinate joint advocacy actions aimed at increasing the collective impact of its members.

CAP International and its members advocate for the adoption of public policies based on the following five principles:

- The decriminalization of prostituted persons;
- Protection, support and alternatives for all prostituted persons;
- The end of impunity for traffickers, pimps, sex buyers, procurers, facilitators and brothel owners;
- Criminalizing the purchase of sexual acts;
- Training of professionals, and preventive measures for the youth.

## **PRINCIPLES OF ACTION**

CAP International anchors its abolitionist commitment in a broader struggle for equality between women and men in all areas of life. To be involved in CAP International means to be part of a movement that advocates for a society in which gender, class and race relations of domination are also abolished.

As members of a coalition of associations united around a common goal, CAP International members act in a spirit of solidarity, support and respect towards each other, working towards strengthening each other and fostering the Coalition’s reputation, legitimacy and achievements.

Engaging in CAP International means having a discourse and activist practice in accordance with the values of non-discrimination and respect for everyone in their diversity, in particular by accepting and applying the terms of the Anti-Discrimination and Safe Workplace Policies implemented within the Coalition.

The Coalition and its members are committed to non-proselyte<sup>1</sup> and non-partisan activism. In this sense, no form of partisan or religious proselytism is accepted.

Within the Coalition, decision-making processes are democratic, collective and inclusive, within the framework of the governance mechanisms set out in the statutes. As such, Coalition members must be involved and actively participate in the decision-making processes in which they are expected to contribute.

The Coalition's action is carried out in a spirit of transparency and accountability towards its members, beneficiaries, partners, donors and teams. This is reflected in particular regarding the rules of governance in force, and in notably through a free access to the Coalition's annual and financial reports.

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<sup>1</sup> Note to members: non-proselyte means that CAP International member associations do not encourage or discourage the practice of religion or adhesion to a political party in their actions.

## OUR ETHICAL GUARANTEES

This Charter is part of a Governance Package that defines the internal and external operational rules of CAP International. This Governance Package is made of the Statutes, the Membership Agreement, the Anti-Discrimination Policy, the Anti-Corruption Policy, the Sake Workplace Policy, and therefore the Ethics Charter itself.

The respect and application of this Governance Package is monitored by the Ethics Committee of CAP International, which is an independent committee composed of individuals external to the Coalition.

Date:

Signatory (Name and Organization):

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