

All India Network of NGOs and Individuals working with National and State Human Rights Institutions (AiNNI)

NATIONAL SECRETARIATE

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To, Dr. Girija Vaidyanathan IAS Chief Secretary Government of Tamil Nadu Secretariat, Fort St. Geroge, Chennai – 600 009.

Email: cs@tn.gov.in

Respected Madam,

Subject: AiNNI: Memorandum – Appointment to present vacancies in State Comission for Women – Compliance to UN Principles regarding human rights institutions (Paris Principles) - Regarding

We are writing to you on behalf of the All India Network of NGOs and Individuals working with National and State Human Rights Institutions [AiNNI]. AiNNI is a national forum of individuals and organisations from across the country, to monitor and strengthen the functioning of human rights institutions in their full compliance to the UN Paris Principles, th0eir founding law and to activate them to better equip themselves for the protection and promotion of human rights. AiNNI is also a member of the Asian Network of NGOs working with National Human Rights Institutions [ANNI] and ANNI is known to work in close collaboration with the Asian Pacific Forum of NHRIs [APF] of which the NHRC in India is a founding member since 1998.

At the onset AiNNI welcomes the notification invitating applications for the appointment of the post of Chairperson and three Members in the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women (TN-SWC). We express our appreciation for the call for application to fill up the vacancies in Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women through a public advertisement ensuring transparency in the process of appointment.

In this regard, we would like to bring to your attention about 'Principles relating to status of Human Rights Institutions' commonly known as 'Paris Principles' which was adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly in the year 1993. The Paris Principles sets out the minimum international standards for human rights institutions.

The Paris Principles emphasises on plurality in composition in human rights institutions and also on the independence of such institutions. The Paris Principles states that:

"The composition of the national institution and the appointment of its members, whether by means of an election or otherwise, shall be established in accordance with a procedure which affords all necessary guarantees to ensure

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the pluralist representation of the social forces (of civilian society) involved in the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly by powers which will enable effective cooperation to be established with, or through the presence of, representatives of:

- (a) Non-governmental organisations responsible for human rights and efforts to combat racial discrimination, trade unions, concerned social and professional organizations, for example, associations of lawyers, doctors, journalists and eminent scientists:
- (b) Trends in philosophical or religious thought;
- (c) Universities and qualified experts;
- (d) Parliament:
- (e) Government departments (if these are included, their representatives should participate in the deliberations only in an advisory capacity)."

AiNNI proposes the following for the upcoming appointments in TN-SWC -

- The appointing committee of the TN-SWC should be composed independently from civil society members having proven record in the protection and promotion of women rights and human rights.
- The independent appointment committee should take into consideration the contributions to human rights made by each of the eligible applicants for appointment as the Chairperson and Members of the TN-SWC.
- The independent appointment committee should evolve definite criteria to be put in place to evaluate each of these eligible candidates which then forms the basis of selection by the appointing committee.
- The independent appointment committee should share these criteria and the assessment procedure through newspapers and appropriate websites, hence making the process transparent and independent.
- It is also pertinent that 'inclusiveness' component is given the required attention to ensure that women from marginalised sections of the society also have due representation in the TN-SWC.

Complete adherence to the UN Paris Principles is much needed to ensure independence and autonomy of the institution. AiNNI sincerely hopes that your goodself will ensure complete adherence to Paris Principles in the upcoming appointments to TN-SWC.

Yours sincerely,

(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary