
**SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

A force for freedom



**MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ
POUR LES DROITS
DES FEMMES AFRICAINES**

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SOAWR MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

1. Introduction

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) is a Coalition of over 70 civil society organizations based in 33 African countries. Established in 2004, SOAWR ensures that the rights of girls and women, as articulated in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa ("the Maputo Protocol"), are prioritized by policymakers on the African continent. The SOAWR Coalition is also composed of a Steering Committee, SOAWR Steering Committee advisors, Secretariat, Communications Secretariat, and seven Regional Clusters, namely: Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Africa, Central Africa, Anglophone West Africa, Francophone West Africa and Continental.

SOAWR welcomes new members to join the Coalition to grow and strengthen the collective potential and power to ensure that African women and girls in all their diversities fully enjoy their rights as articulated in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa ("the Maputo Protocol") and that these rights are prioritized by policymakers and decision-makers on the African continent.

Joining SOAWR gives registered members access to various channels and platforms for deeper engagement, capacity enhancement, visibility through SOAWR platforms, and cooperation with other partners and allies working on similar themes or sharing similar challenges. It also ensures the power of solidarity benefits all the members as the shared agenda is accomplished.

2. Membership Categories

Members may be assigned full member or a friend of SOAWR status, depending on the criteria below.

a. Member NGOs

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A member NGO is a non-profit, mission-driven organization that operates independently from government control. An organization seeking membership in SOAWR as a member must:

- I. Be an African-Led organisation, meaning that it was founded, governed, and managed by individuals from Africa or the African diaspora, in at least one African country and works on the continent.
- II. Submit evidence of registration or operation as a Non-Governmental Organization for three years, such as past financial accounts, annual reports, or comprehensive project activity logs.
- III. Be capable of working or contributing to the protection of women and girls' rights as enshrined in the Maputo Protocol and other human rights instruments at the local, national, or international level.
- IV. Be willing to work on promoting the Maputo Protocol, specifically its ratification, domestication, and implementation by AU member states.
- V. Be willing to be profiled and certified by credible individuals or institutions.
- VI. Be willing to contribute annual membership fees to be considered for membership benefits
- VII. Demonstrate commitment to dedicate time and resources to the work of SOAWR.

b. *Friends of SOAWR*

In addition to member NGOs, SOAWR is also building a network of friends of the Coalition. Friends of SOAWR are organizations, networks, or individuals with an existing connection to the Coalition and its mission and who are committed to using their skills, resources, and connections to promote the Maputo Protocol and strengthen the impact of the work on it.

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Individuals are welcome to join the Friends of SOAWR category. Interested individuals, organizations, and institutions must meet the following criteria:

- Knowledge and acceptance of the SOAWR mission, vision, common principles and values.
- Evidence of contribution to a community and a record of affirming or supporting women's rights.
- Involvement in local, national, regional, and international networks dealing with women's rights.
- Demonstrated commitment to dedicate time and resources to the work of SOAWR.

Friends of SOAWR will have access to some of the benefits of a full member, however, they will not hold any decision-making positions.

3. How to become a member or Friend of SOAWR

Organizations and individuals are admitted into the Coalition on the basis of the membership criteria adopted by the SOAWR Steering Committee members. Potential new members can be recommended by any existing member in good standing with the Coalition. Potential new members, including those who are recommended by existing members, will be required to formally submit an application for membership following the steps below:

Membership applications

- An organization seeking to join the SOAWR Coalition will be required to complete a membership form, which is available on the [SOAWR website](#).
- The complete membership form will be submitted to the SOAWR secretariat via info@soawr.org together with a copy of the organization's registration form and other supporting documentation.
- The application will then be reviewed and vetted by the SOAWR Steering Committee.
- The Secretariat may reach out to the applicant seeking further information to support the application.
- Once a decision is made by the SOAWR Steering Committee, the applicant will be informed of the decision by the SOAWR Secretariat.



4. Membership Responsibilities:

To retain the status of 'Member' (this does not apply to Friends of SOAWR), an individual or organization must commit itself to and undertake the following responsibilities:

- Uphold the vision and mission of the SOAWR Coalition
- Attend and participate in at least 60% of the Cluster and Coalition virtual meetings.
- Contribute to the advancement of the Maputo Protocol at national, regional, and/or global levels and maintain an organizational focus on the protection of women's rights
- Pay the prescribed SOAWR membership fees.
- Contribute to the visibility of the SOAWR Coalition through social media and traditional media platforms and other communication mechanisms.
- Respond to requests for relevant information and support from the Secretariat and the communication secretariat.
- Update the Secretariat on activities undertaken to advance the Maputo Protocol, including annual reports on activities.
- Inform the Secretariat of any updates in the organization's profiles.
- Apply a feminist lens, human rights, and evidence-based approach to their ways of working.
- Work in a manner that respects and protects the reputation of SOAWR and its members.
- Utilize funding meant for SOAWR-related activities for its agreed-upon purposes and ensure transparent reporting.
- Integrate the Maputo Protocol and its messaging in the organizational programmes as a means of sustained attention, for domestication and/or implementation.
- Have the SOAWR logo visible in all materials concerning activities that promote the Maputo Protocol.

5. Membership Benefits

The following and any additional benefits shall accrue to fully paid-up SOAWR members:-

- Participation in SOAWR meetings, convenings, and other SOAWR activities.



- Eligibility for election to the Steering Committee or other structures of the Coalition after every 4 years.
- Voting rights for the election of Cluster leads to represent the respective cluster in the Steering Committee.
- Receive priority consideration for training and capacity building opportunities available to SOAWR.
- Eligibility for grants and sub-grants that are raised through the Coalition.
- Receive SOAWR communications, resource materials, and opportunities.
- Subject to approval of the Steering Committee, members may be requested to represent the Coalition in meetings, subject to relevance and availability of resources.
- Recognition and amplification of members' work on the SOAWR website, social media platforms, and other materials, e.g., press statements, the SOAWR Annual Journal, and opportunities to feature in the SOAWR podcast.

6. Friends of SOAWR Benefits

- Participate in SOAWR meetings, convenings, and other SOAWR activities.
- Receive consideration for training and capacity building opportunities.
- Receive SOAWR communications, resource materials, and opportunities.
- Following approval from the Steering Committee, a Friend of SOAWR may be requested to represent the Coalition in meetings, subject to relevance and availability of resources.
- Recognition and amplification of members' work on the SOAWR website, social media platforms, and other materials, e.g., press statements, the SOAWR Annual Journal, and opportunities to feature in the SOAWR Podcast.

7. Membership Fees

Every member organisation of the SOAWR Coalition will be expected to pay membership fees at the beginning of every year. Friends of SOAWR will not be required to pay membership fees.

The membership fees category is as follows:

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1. Organizations based continentally - USD 150 (once a year)
2. Organizations based regionally - USD 100 (once a year)
3. Organizations based nationally - USD 50 (once a year)

The Secretariat shall confirm the applicable category to the member as determined by the Steering Committee.

7. Breaches and Penalties

Failure of a SOAWR Member organization or individual to discharge any or all the responsibilities in paragraph 4 above will attract appropriate penalties, as determined by the Steering Committee, in accordance with the level of breach or clear provisions as provided below.

- Suspension pending the determination of the extent and impact of the breach
- Loss of membership status and rights or expulsion from the Coalition.
- Refund and public declarations where the breach involves funding breaches or reputational matters.

8. Cessation of Membership

An organization or individual shall cease to be a member or Friend of SOAWR through voluntary withdrawal or expulsion.

a) *Withdrawal:*

An organization or individual may, on their own accord, withdraw from the SOAWR Coalition, subject to abiding by all due diligence procedures.

Members who wish to leave the Coalition shall:



1. Notify the Secretariat through a letter via email of the intention to withdraw from the Coalition. The notice should be given within 2 weeks prior to the withdrawal and should include the reasons for membership withdrawal.
2. Following receipt of the notice to withdraw, the Secretariat shall notify the Steering Committee.
3. Upon approval and discharge of any mutual obligations, a formal disengagement notice shall be issued by the Secretariat of the Coalition.

b) *Expulsion*

Without a justifiable cause or force majeure, conflict, or winding down, a member organization may be expelled from the Coalition where:

- They have been inactive for a period of one year, i.e:
 - by not participating in the activities of the Coalition
 - not responding to communication from the Secretariat, Cluster lead, or Steering Committee.
 - not participating in cluster meetings
- They go contrary to the vision and mission of the Coalition.
- They fail to fulfill their obligations.
- The Steering Committee unanimously agrees that an organization should be expelled in the interest of the Coalition.

c) *Change in leadership*

If an organisation is no longer African-led, it will lose its SOAWR Membership status and can be considered, by the Steering Committee, to transition to the Friend of SOAWR.