GENDER POLICY
March 2016
I. Introduction

Indigenous women have always been critical players in the day-to-day lives of their communities despite what may seem as rudimentary productive and reproductive roles. They are the embodiment of nature and the sacred, keepers of wisdom and knowledge and bearers of peace among others. To take indigenous women for granted, therefore, is unspeakable and a violation of their rights as indigenous peoples, as women and as citizens of a nation/state.

Unfortunately, this is what is happening today. Indigenous peoples’ history of colonization and discrimination has entrenched the discrimination, marginalization and vulnerability of indigenous women. While this is so, we cannot deny that patriarchy exists in indigenous cultures, traditions and practices.

II. Objective and Scope

This policy aims to ensure that the principles of women’s empowerment and gender equality and justice will ethically and politically guide the Tebtebba in its governance, programmes, implementation mechanisms and its general work culture. To facilitate such, it is biased on the empowerment of indigenous women as part of their communities. This policy applies to all initiatives undertaken by the Tebtebba, including with its partner organizations.
III. Strategies

1. Tebtebba has a specific Indigenous Women’s Programme that looks into the mainstreaming and strengthening of indigenous women’s concerns and perspectives in its overall work.

2. Tebtebba respects the different roles, responsibilities, obligations, knowledge and skills of men and women involved in or affected by its programmes and projects. A culturally sensitive approach is applied in addressing gender issues specifically the needs and circumstances of indigenous women that affect their full and effective participation.

3. A gender perspective is applied in all stages of programme and project development processes i.e.:
   - Applying a gender analysis in the project cycle from planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment and benefit sharing including participation of indigenous women in project development;
   - Ensuring sex disaggregation in all data collection/management and reporting;
   - Formulation of measurable gender indicators and targets while assessing opportunities to enhance empowerment of indigenous women while reducing gender inequities/inequalities;
   - Special measures should be made to provide women spaces and opportunities to articulate themselves and be heard directly in all the different activities and programmes;

4. Gender sensitivity and gender balance are factors in staff hiring.

5. Integral to its work, Tebtebba looks into the national, regional and global laws, policies, programmes and institutions significant to indigenous women and/or their impact on gender equality/equity while exploring possibilities to use these towards the advancement and well-being of indigenous women and their communities.

6. Tebtebba has, since its inception, been serving as the Secretariat to the Asian Indigenous Women’s Network. A loose network, the AIWN has
taken it upon itself to engender indigenous peoples’ organizations and communities and support indigenous women’s empowerment in the region.

7. Strengthen the Indigenous Women’s Programme as well as the Asia Indigenous Women’s Network to facilitate empowerment of indigenous women as part of their organizations and communities through capacity building, advocacy and project implementation (where appropriate).

8. Institutionalize advocacy for the respect, protection and fulfillment of indigenous women’s rights

9. Inculcate and cultivate gender awareness and sensitivity among partner organizations in various capacity building activities to recognize and address the particular situations of indigenous women. Conduct specific trainings for women when necessary.

10. Ensure involvement of men in gender and women’s rights activities.

IV. Operational Guidelines

1. The Board of Trustees
   - Approves and endorses Tebtebba’s policies for implementation;

2. The Management Committee
   - Ensure gender balance among Tebtebba’s staff, activities and coordination mechanisms.
   - Ensure that the overall work culture of Tebtebba is based on mutual respect, civility guided by the principles of gender equality, good governance, accountability and transparency. To this effect, the Management Committee makes sure that all staff and Partner Organizations are aware of this Gender Policy and the need for respect in work and management styles to prevent gender discriminatory practices including sexual stereotyping and harassment.
• Guarantee zero tolerance of all forms of violence against women within and among its partner organizations. Sanctions and due reparations shall be imposed by the MC to cases of this nature, subject to due process. Depending on the severity of the case, sanctions shall include but not limited to suspension until case is resolved and/or termination of contract.
• Formulate further guidelines, where appropriate, for the implementation of this Gender Policy.

3. The Ad-Hoc Investigative Committee

• Upon occurrence and report of any case of gender violence, an Ad-Hoc Committee shall be created to investigate and decide on sanctions and due reparations. The Committee shall be composed of a member of the Board of Trustees and members of the Management Committee.

4. Indigenous Women’s Programme

• Engender the conduct of planning, monitoring, assessment and evaluation of Tebtebba programme and activities.
• Promote and implement gender balance and sensitivity in programme and other activities; address specific concerns of indigenous women to facilitate their active participation including reserving the right to prioritize resources and support for indigenous women’s participation and representation in Tebtebba activities, where appropriate.
• Ensure data disaggregation and inclusion of women’s perspectives in all activity and programme reports.
• Work closely with Tebtebba’s partners to ensure indigenous women’s empowerment through appropriate information, full and effective engagement and linkages, among others, towards the implementation of this policy.
• Develop gender-sensitive approaches and methods of work.
  » Provide advice on programme development and implementation taking into account the needs and priorities of indigenous women and this Gender Policy;
» Make recommendations on how to improve the implementation of this policy.
• Provide specific trainings/orientation on gender and indigenous women’s rights when and where needed.