

What is the CEDAW?



Known as the International Bill of Rights of Women, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children.

CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations in 1979 and took effect on September 3, 1981. As of February 2015, it has [188 State Parties](#) that agreed to implement the provisions of the treaty most importantly taking appropriate measures against all forms of discrimination and exploitation of women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

The Convention defines discrimination against women as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field.

CEDAW also establishes a framework that draws on three over-arching principles: equality in opportunity, equality in access and equality in results. The Convention advocates the "substantive" kind of equality both in law (de jure) and in practice (de facto).

Summary of articles and provisions

Article 1: Definition of Discrimination - Defines discrimination against women to cover all facets of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 2: Country duties - Countries must eliminate discriminatory laws, policies, and practices in the national legal framework.

Article 3: Equality - Women are fundamentally equal with men in all spheres of life. Countries must take measures to uphold women's equality in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields.

Article 4: Temporary special measures - Countries may implement temporary special measures to accelerate women's equality.

Article 5: Prejudice - Countries agree to modify or eliminate practices based on assumptions about the inferiority or superiority of either sex.

Article 6: Trafficking - Countries agree to take steps to suppress the exploitation of prostitution and trafficking in women.

Article 7: Political and public life - Women have an equal right to vote, hold public office, and participate in civil society.

Article 8: International work - Women have the right to work at the international level without discrimination.

Article 9: Nationality - Women have equal rights with men to acquire, change, or retain their nationality and that of their children.

Article 10: Education - Women have equal rights with men in education, including equal access to schools, vocational training, and scholarship opportunities.

Article 11: Employment - Women have equal rights in employment, including without discrimination on the basis of marital status or maternity.

Article 12: Health - Women have equal rights to affordable health care services.

Article 13: Economic and social life - Women have equal rights to family benefits, financial credit, and participation in recreational activities.

Article 14: Rural women - Rural women have the right to adequate living conditions, participation in development planning, and access to health care and education.

Article 15: Equality before the law - Women and men are equal before the law. Women have the legal right to enter contracts, own property, and choose their place of residence.

Article 16: Marriage and family - Women have equal rights with men in matters related to marriage and family relations.

Articles 17-24: The Committee on CEDAW and reporting procedures.

Articles 25-30: Administration of the Convention.

State obligations

Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years; on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations (See also CEDAW Reporting).

The Philippines, as a signatory to the treaty (States Party), bears a State obligation to pursue, with all appropriate means and without delay, a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and to this end, undertake to:

Embody the principle of equality in constitution and laws;

Ensure practical realization of the principle of equality;

Prohibit discrimination against women;

Refrain from discrimination;

Eliminate discrimination by any person, organization or enterprise;

Modify or abolish laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination; and

Repeal discriminatory penal provisions.