



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

[Text of the Convention](#) / [States parties](#) / [Reservations](#) / [Country Reports](#)

[Link to other UN Conventions on Women](#)

The Convention

- [Text](#)
- [States Parties](#)
- [Reservations](#)
- [Country Reports](#)

Meeting of States Parties

- [12th](#)
- [11th](#)

The Committee

- [Members](#)
- [Rules of Procedure](#)

Reporting

- [Guidelines](#)
- [General Recommendations](#)
- [Country Reports](#)

Optional Protocol

- [Text](#)
- [Ratifications & Signatures](#)
- [Rules of Procedure \(Part 3\)](#)

Sessions

- [31st](#)
- [30th](#)
- [29th](#)
- [28th](#)
- [Exceptional](#)
- [27th](#)
- [26th](#)
- [25th](#)
- [24th](#)
- [23rd](#)
- [22nd](#)
- [21st](#)
- [20th](#)
- [19th](#)
- [18th](#)
- [17th](#)

The [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for 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."

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:

- to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life --

The Arusha Declaration of Commitments on Role of the Domestic Judge on the Application of International Human Rights Law at the Domestic Level adopted on 11 September 2003

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ratified the Optional Protocol on 17 October 2003, bringing the total number of ratifications to 57

San Marino signed the Convention (CEDAW) on 26 September 2003, bringing the total number of signatures to 98

CEDAW 29th session (30 June - 18 July 2003)

Pre-session work group for the 30th session (21 to 25 July 2003)

- including the right to vote and to stand for election -- as well as education, health and employment. States parties agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- [16th](#)
- [15th](#)
- [14th](#)
- [13th](#)

The Convention 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. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women.

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.

[Home](#) | [About DAW](#) | [News](#) | [CEDAW](#) | [CSW](#) | [Country info](#) | [Meetings and Documentation](#) | [Publication](#) | [Beijing +5](#) | [Calendar](#)

United Nations
Division for the Advancement of Women
Comments and suggestions: daw@un.org