

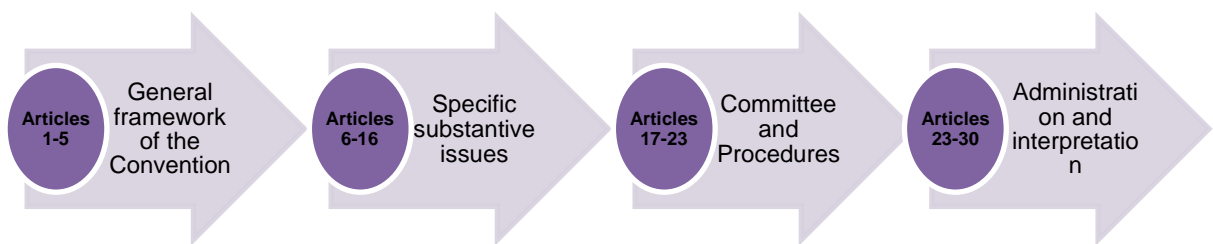
CEDAW at a Glance

The United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. It has often been described as the international bill of rights for women and sets out a comprehensive set of rights for women in civil, political, economic, social and cultural fields. It also provides a definition of discrimination against women.

CEDAW Definition of Discrimination

"...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." (Article 1)

CEDAW has a preamble (introduction) and 30 Articles (clauses).



Summary: Articles 1-16

| Article | Summary |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Definition of discrimination | Discrimination against women includes any distinction, exclusion or restriction that affects women's enjoyment of political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other rights on an equal basis with men. |
| 2. Policy measures | States must make laws and regulations, implement policies and change practices to eliminate discrimination against women. |
| 3. Equality | Women are fundamentally equal with men in all spheres of life. States should take action to ensure women can enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. |
| 4. Temporary special measures | Affirmative action or temporary special measures should and can be used (e.g. quotas or women-only services) to accelerate women's equality. |
| 5. Sex roles and stereotyping | The Convention recognises the influence of culture and tradition in restricting women's enjoyment of rights. States must modify or abolish |

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| | discriminatory cultural practices and take appropriate measures to eliminate sex role stereotyping and prejudice stemming from the idea of the inferiority or superiority of one sex over the other. |
| 6. Trafficking and prostitution | States Parties must take all measures, including legislation to stop all forms of trafficking and exploitation of women for prostitution. |
| 7. Political and public life | Women have equal rights to vote, hold public office and participate in civil society. |
| 8. Participation at the international level | Women should be able to represent their country internationally and work with international organisations on an equal basis with men. |
| 9. Nationality | Women have equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality and that of their children. |
| 10. Equal rights in education | Women have equal rights to education including vocational training and guidance, continuing education, sport and scholarships. The content of the curriculum should prevent the repetition of negative stereotypes and sexual health education should be available. |
| 11. Employment | Women have the right to work, employment opportunities, equal remuneration, free choice of profession and employment, social security, and protection of health. Discrimination on the grounds of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childcare is prohibited. |
| 12. Healthcare and family planning | Women have equal rights to access health care including sexual health, family planning services and pre and post-natal care. |
| 13. Economic and social benefits | Women have equal rights to family benefits, financial credit and to participate in recreational activities, sports and cultural life. |
| 14. Rural women | Rural women have the right to adequate living conditions, participation in development planning, and access to education, healthcare, transport and financial services. |
| 15. Equality before the law | Women are to be treated as equal before the law. Women have the legal right to enter contracts, own property and to choose where to live. |
| 16. Marriage and family | Women have equal rights with men within marriage including family planning, property ownership and occupation. |

CEDAW's Optional Protocol

An optional protocol is a treaty that adds to or complements an existing treaty¹. The Optional Protocol to CEDAW enables the CEDAW Committee to consider complaints by individual women or groups of women (via the communications procedure) concerning the violation of rights protected by the Convention and/or to conduct inquiries into grave or systematic abuses of women's rights (via the inquiry procedure). This will only apply if the Optional Protocol has been ratified by the State.

¹ International Womens' Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP), OP CEDAW Overview, 2016, Available at: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/op-cedaw/what-is-op-cedaw/op-cedaw-overview/>