

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Articles

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and came into force in 1981.

CEDAW is commonly referred to as the international bill of rights for women. It defines what constitutes discrimination against women and girls and sets out a comprehensive framework for tackling gender inequality.

The Articles

Article 1 – Definition of ‘discrimination against women’

Discrimination against women includes any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex that has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying women’s enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. This is irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women.

Article 2 – Duty of States

States agree to pursue by all appropriate means a policy of eliminating discrimination against women, undertaking to take concrete steps to eliminate discriminatory laws, policies and practices in the national legal framework.

Article 3 – Equality

States shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development and advancement of women so as to guarantee them the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. This is in all fields but in particular the political, social, economic and cultural fields.

Article 4 – Special measures

States are allowed to adopt temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality for women until the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved. States are allowed to adopt special measures aimed at protecting maternity.

Article 5 – Stereotyping and cultural prejudices

States shall take appropriate measures to eliminate stereotyping, prejudices and discriminatory cultural practices. States shall also ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the roles of men and women in the upbringing of their children.

Article 6 – Trafficking and prostitution

States shall take all measures to stop all forms of trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution of women.

Article 7 – Political and public life

States shall ensure that women have equal rights with men to vote, hold public office and participate in civil society.

Article 8 – Participation at the international level

States shall ensure that women are allowed to represent their governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations.

Article 9 – Nationality

States shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality and also equal rights in respect of their children's nationality.

Article 10 – Education

States shall ensure that women have equal rights with men in education, including equal access to schools, vocational training, curricula and educational resources. States shall eliminate stereotypes of the roles of women and men through revising school materials and teaching methods.

Article 11 – Employment

States shall ensure that women the same opportunities as men in employment, promotion, training, equal remuneration, social security and safe working conditions. Women must also be protected in respect of pregnancy, maternity and marital status.

Article 12 – Health

States shall ensure that women have equal rights with men to access to health care services, including reproductive health services.

Article 13 – Economic and social benefits

States shall ensure that women have equal rights with men to family benefits, bank loans and other forms of financial credit. Women must also be allowed to participate equally in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

Article 14 – Rural women

States shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas so that they can participate in and benefit from health care, education, social security, development planning etc equally with men.

Article 15 – Equality before the law

States shall ensure that women and men are treated equally before the law. Women have the same legal right to enter contracts, own property and choose their place of residence.

Article 16 – Marriage and family life

States shall ensure that women have equal rights with men in relation to marriage and as parents, as well as in respect of other aspects of family life.

Articles 17 – 24 - These articles describe the composition and procedures of the CEDAW Committee, the relationship between CEDAW and national and international legislation and the obligation of States to take all steps necessary to implement CEDAW in full.

Articles 25 - 30 – Administration of CEDAW

These articles describe the general administrative procedures concerning enforcement of CEDAW, ratification and entering reservations.