

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women



Introduction

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is a legally binding international agreement by countries to protect women and girls from discrimination. CEDAW explains the rights of all girls and women and the responsibilities of governments.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and CEDAW are connected, and implementing them together enhances the rights of girls. When girls and women are empowered by their rights it benefits boys and men, as it advances the future for their families, communities and nations.

CEDAW has an optional protocol, which is another international agreement that is connected to the Convention and allows:

- Girls and women to make a complaint to the CEDAW Committee if their rights have been violated
- CEDAW Committee to investigate serious situations and widespread violations of the rights of girls and women





Definition

Discrimination against girls and women means treating them different from boys and men in ways that prevent them from attaining their rights.



ARTICLE
02

Policies

Governments must prohibit discrimination against girls and women. All national laws and policies must be based on equality of both genders.





Human Rights

Governments must take actions to ensure basic human rights and freedoms to girls and women in all fields – political, social, economic and cultural.





Special Measures

Governments must take special steps to end discrimination against girls and women until equality is achieved. These special measures can help speed up equality and are not a way of discriminating against boys and men.





Stereotyping

Governments must work to change gender stereotyping, especially if these roles are based on boys and men being considered better than girls and women.





Trafficking & Prostitution

Governments must take action and formulate laws to bring an end to trafficking and prostitution of girls and women.





Political & Public Life

Governments must make sure women have equal rights to vote, participate in public life and be elected to government positions. Girls and women also have the right to participate in decisions made by the Government.





International Representation

Governments must ensure that girls and women are not discriminated against in representing their country internationally or in participating in the work of international organizations.





Nationality

Governments must ensure the right for girls and women to have a nationality, change it if they want, and to pass their nationality to their children.





Education

Governments must ensure that girls and women are not discriminated against in education, including, examinations, sports, trainings, teaching staff and equipment as well as opportunities for career guidance, scholarships or grants.





Employment

Governments must ensure women have equal opportunities to find work, and not be discriminated against, in getting pay, promotions, training or having access to safe working conditions, regardless of their family responsibilities.





Health

Governments must ensure that girls and women are not discriminated against in healthcare and that women have the right to services related to family planning and pregnancy.



ARTICLE
13

Economic & Social Life

Governments must ensure girls and women have equal rights as boys and men in every area of economic and social life including family benefits, bank loans and participation in sports and cultural life.





Rural Girls & Women

Governments must support girls and women living in rural areas to benefit from rural development, health care, loans, education, and improved living conditions and enable them to contribute to their families and communities.





Law

Governments must ensure that men and women are equal before the law, and that they have the same legal capacity, including the right to sign contracts, buy or sell properties.



ARTICLE
16

Marriage & Family life

Governments must ensure the rights of women to marriage and family life. All marriages must be officially registered and to end child marriage, governments must also set a lowest age for marriage.

In Maldives, it is illegal for children below the age of 18 to get married. Maldives also has a reservation to some components of this Article, as Islamic Shariah has specific rules on marriage and its dissolution and matters of guardianship.





CEDAW Committee

These articles set up the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the CEDAW Committee) and explains how the Committee works to review progress being made by countries to end discrimination against girls and women.

Governments are required to submit reports once every 4 years, to which the Committee sends recommendations.





Administration of the Convention

These articles explain how the United Nations and governments should work together to protect the rights of girls and women and to settle disagreements about their rights.



