



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Convention on the
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CEDAW

**BPW East Los Angeles -
Montebello
California
May 26,2021**

**PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT
Elizabeth Benham 2008-2011
IFBPW UN Representative 1998-2018**

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Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

On 18 December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

The Convention was the culmination of more than thirty years of work by the **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women**, a body established in 1946 to monitor the situation of women and to promote women's rights. The Commission's work has been instrumental in bringing to light all the areas in which women are denied equality with men. These efforts for the advancement of women have resulted in several declarations and conventions, of which the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** is the central and most comprehensive document.

In 1980, President Carter signed CEDAW however, it was not made law by Congress.



CEDAW The Treaty

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention outlawed discrimination against women but **did not** include any mechanism by which this prohibition could be legally enforced.

On October 6, 1990 at the General Assembly the **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (OP-CEDAW)** also an international treaty which establishes complaint and inquiry mechanisms for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted without a vote and became effective In December 2000.

Parties to the Protocol allow the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to hear complaints from individuals or inquire into "grave or systematic violations" of the Convention.



CEDAW The Treaty

The **United Nations Membership** grew from the original 51 **Member States** in 1945 to the current 193 **Member States**.

CEDAW has been **ratified** or acceded to by 189 States Parties. The United States is the only **country** to **have signed** but **not ratified** the Convention. Other governments that **have not ratified** the treaty include **Iran, Palau, Somalia, Sudan, and Tonga**.

What is Ratification?

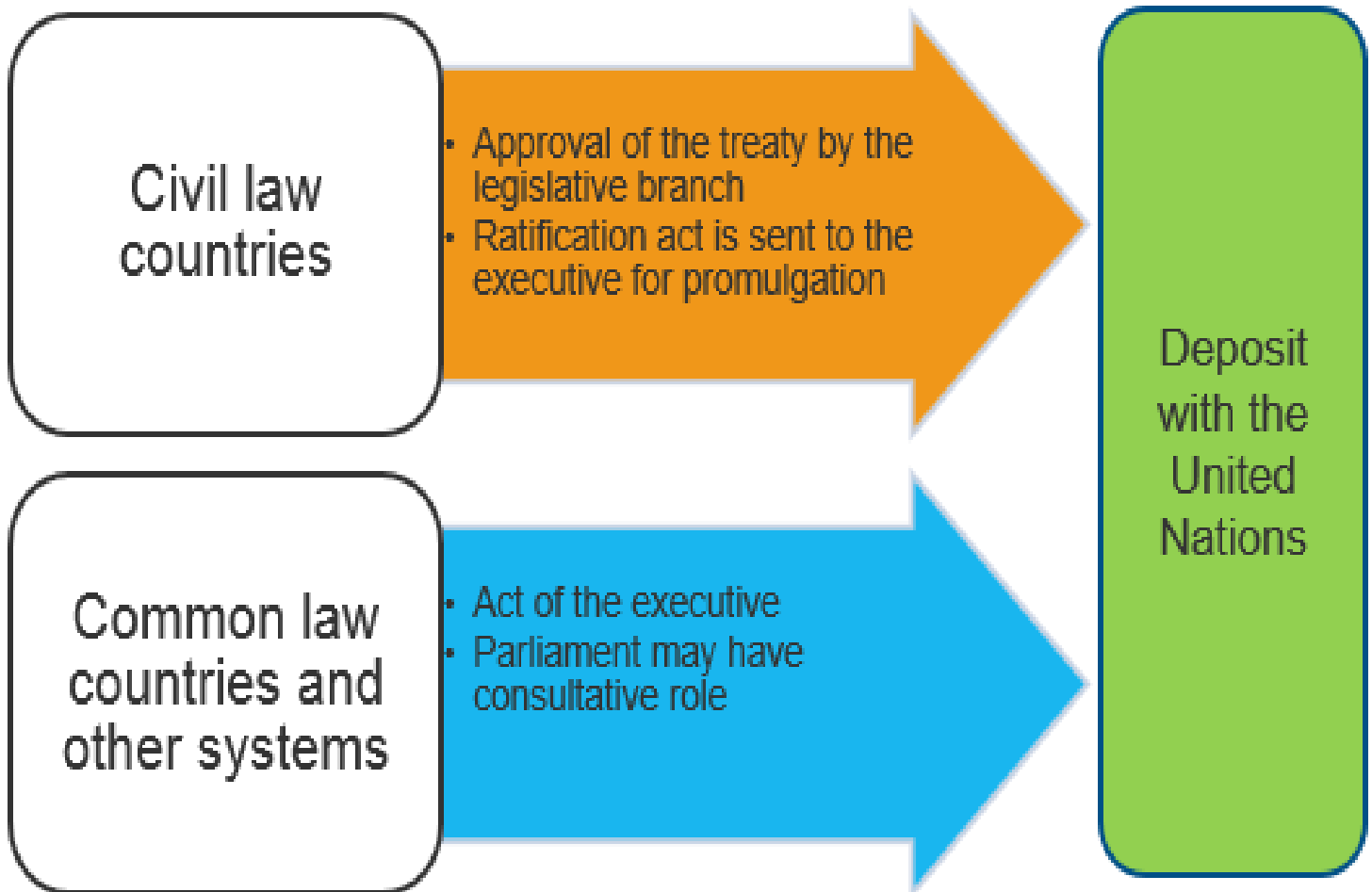
Ratification is an act through which a State expresses its consent to be bound by the Convention. It usually involves:

- ✓ National acceptance of the Convention
- ✓ International acceptance of the Convention



CEDAW The Treaty

Steps for National Ratification





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CEDAW The Treaty

Options for International Ratification

WHO	OPTIONS	STEPS REQUIRED	OUTCOMES
States and regional integration organizations	SIGNATURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature of the Convention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of the Convention
States	RATIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior signature required (two-step process) • Deposit of the instrument of ratification with the depositary of the Convention (United Nations Secretary-General) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent to be bound by the Convention
Regional integration organizations	CONFIRMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior signature required (two-step process) • Act of formal confirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent to be bound by the Convention
States and regional integration organizations	ACCESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prior signature required • Deposit of the instrument of accession with the depositary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent to be bound by the Convention



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CEDAW The Treaty

Regional Integration is a process in which neighboring countries enter into an agreement in order to upgrade cooperation through common institutions and rules. The objectives of the agreement could range from political to environmental to economic (trade for commercial interests or for achieving broader socio-political and security objectives, as defined by national governments

EXAMPLES ARE:

- [African Union](#)
- [Arab League](#)
- [ASEAN](#)
- [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation](#)
- [Association of Caribbean States](#)
- [Caribbean Community](#)
- [Organization of American States](#)



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CEDAW The Treaty

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 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.



CEDAW

The committee

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women i
under article 17 of the Convention became effective under the
Optional Protocol in December 2000.

It is composed of 23 experts who are elected by secret ballot by States parties. The Committee is tasked with the review of the reports of States parties submitted in accordance with article 18 of the Convention.

The officers of the Committee

consist of a Chairperson,
three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur.
Office-bearers serve for two-year terms and are eligible for re-election

The Optional Protocol to the Convention, which entered into force in December 2000, empowers the Committee to consider communications submitted by individuals or groups of individuals alleging violations of the Convention in States parties to the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

The Optional Protocol also entitles the Committee of its own motion to inquire into grave or systematic violations of the Convention in those States parties where this procedure is applicable, in accordance with articles 8 and 10.

Committee members serve in their personal capacities, and not as representatives of the States parties which present their candidature.

The CEDAW Committee adjourned its 78th session 25 February 2021



CEDAW
The committee

**COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

On 18 March 2019, **the COMMITTEE and UNWOMEN** co-organized a **side event** to celebrate the **40th anniversary of the Convention** in the margins of the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. Entitled **“Women’s rights and the 2030 Agenda: 40 Years of Empowering Women with a View of Sustainable Development”**

The event was supported by the Permanent Mission of France, OHCHR and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.



English > Human Rights Bodies > CEDAW

The Committee

[Introduction](#)

[Mandate](#)

[Membership](#)

[Meetings of State parties/Elections](#)

[Upcoming elections for all treaty bodies](#)

Basic documents

[Convention](#)

[Optional Protocol](#)

[Rules of procedure](#)

[Proposed amendment to art. 20\(1\)](#)

[Working methods](#)

[Annual reports](#)

The work of the Committee

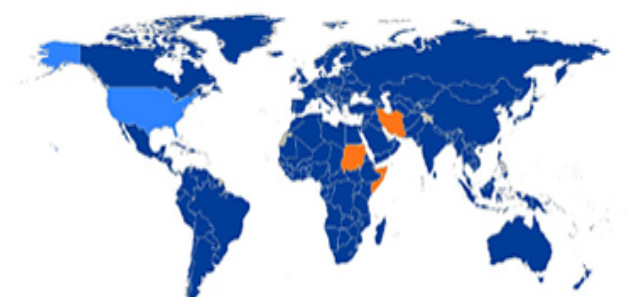
COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the body of [independent experts](#) that monitors implementation of the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#).

CEDAW Committee consists of [23 experts](#) on women's rights from around the world.

More about the [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women...](#)

Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women



Country-specific information

Select a country

Meetings and deadlines

[Sessions](#)

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Useful links

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx>



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CEDAW

The treaty

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The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the depositary of more than 560 multilateral treaties.

Announcements

The Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs reminds States and international organizations that, since March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it processes all instruments submitted for deposit with the Secretary-General and all treaties submitted for registration with the Secretariat on the basis of the electronic submissions. Copies of instruments and other relevant notifications for deposit with the Secretary-General should be sent to: treatysection@un.org. Arrangements will be individually made with concerned submitters to obtain original instruments. To sign a treaty, please contact the Treaty Section at the same address. Signings take place under strict sanitary measures. Submissions for registration with the Secretariat should be sent to: treatyregistration@un.org.

[Automated Subscription Services](#)

Depositary of Treaties

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the depositary of more than 560 multilateral treaties which cover a broad range of subject matters such as human rights, disarmament and protection of the environment.



- > **Status of Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General**
- > Depositary Notifications
- > Certified True Copies
- > Photos of Treaty Ceremonies
- > Model Instruments for Deposit

Recent Developments

Latest Depositary Notifications

- > CN.152.2021 - 24/05/2021 - Greece - Ratification - IX-4-a
- > CN.151.2021 - 21/05/2021 - Togo - Notification - IV-4

Registration and Publication of Treaties

"Every treaty and every international agreement entered into by any Member of the United Nations ... shall as soon as possible be registered with the Secretariat and published by it." (Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations).



- > **United Nations Treaty Series**
- > Monthly Statements
- > Cumulative Index
- > League of Nations Treaty Series
- > Checklists - Registration / Publication

Recent Developments

Latest Registered Treaties

- > I-56455 - Spain and South Africa - Security Agreement between...
- > A-5425 - Multilateral - Modification of Article 5 of the Sta...

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CHAPTER IV HUMAN RIGHTS

Photos of Treaty Ceremonies

8. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

New York, 18 December 1979 ¹

Model Instruments

Titles of Treaties

League of Nations Treaties

Status of treaties (1959-2009)

Automated Subscription Services

Entry into force : 3 September 1981, in accordance with article 27(1).

Registration : 3 September 1981, No. 20378

Status : Signatories : 99. Parties : 189

Text : [Certified true copy](#)
United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, p. 13.

Note : The Convention was opened for signature at the United Nations Headquarters on 1 March 1980.

Participant	Signature	Ratification, Accession(a), Succession(d)
Afghanistan	14 Aug 1980	5 Mar 2003
Albania		11 May 1994 a
Algeria ²		22 May 1996 a
Andorra		15 Jan 1997 a
Angola		17 Sep 1986 a
Antigua and Barbuda		1 Aug 1989 a

United States of America **17 Jul 1980**

https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&clang=en



CEDAW

The treaty

How can we (CIVIL SOCIETY) support Ratification?

Civil society:

- ✓ Form a coalition to support ratification
- ✓ Contact international civil society organizations
- ✓ Set out a timeline and lobbying strategy
- ✓ Launch a media awareness campaign
- ✓ Hold a national conference
- ✓ Develop and seek funding for a programme on ratification
- ✓ Meet representatives of parliament, line ministries, the national human rights institution, etc.
- ✓ Raise ratification with the donor community
- ✓ Ask what the United Nations is doing
- ✓ More?



Cities for CEDAW

San Francisco **The vision of Cities for CEDAW**

In 1998, San Francisco – with a strong and effective women’s community – passed a CEDAW ordinance into city and county governance establishing the Department on the Status of Women.

A few of years later, Los Angeles did the same. In both cities, CEDAW has made a measurable difference in public safety, budgetary allocations and employment.



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Cities for CEDAW

CITIES FOR CEDAW

Cities for CEDAW has become a nationwide, grassroots effort to encourage local governments to become more gender equitable. Research shows that inadvertent discrimination is common without a proactive review of city activities.

CEDAW ordinances require cities to evaluate their programs and budgets and ensure they affect men and women equitably. It is a process, a fairer way of operating, not a separate program. If there is no discrimination, great! But where it is found, these laws help cities make changes to become more equitable

The campaign provides tools and leadership to empower local women's organizations and municipalities and effectively initiate CEDAW within their city, county or state.

The civil society campaign was initially led by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York and also includes the Women's Intercultural Network in partnership with The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights/The Leadership Conference Education Fund

We need CEDAW in our cities now because it will help end violence against women, close the wage gap, and release women's full potential at all levels!

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CITIES FOR CEDAW INITIATIVE BY THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS AND SUPPORT OF INDIVIDUAL CITIES PASSING RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES TO IMPLEMENT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

WHEREAS, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979, became an international treaty as of September 3, 1981, and 186 UN member nations, have agreed to be bound by CEDAW’s provisions; and

WHEREAS, CEDAW provides a comprehensive framework for governments to examine their policies and practices in relation to women and girls and to rectify discrimination based on sex against half the world’s population; and

WHEREAS, Although women have made major gains in the struggle for equality in most fields, much more needs to be accomplished to fully eradicate discrimination based on sex and to achieve one of the most basic human rights, equality; and

WHEREAS, The United States is the only industrialized nation to not yet ratify CEDAW; and

WHEREAS, It has been almost 40 years since the first UN World Conference on Women and almost 20 years since the historic Beijing Platform for Action at the fourth UN World Conference on Women; and

WHEREAS, CEDAW has proven effective in many nations as a mechanism to advance gender equality, and

WHEREAS, many Communities and States have called for the ratification by the United States Congress, and

WHEREAS, San Francisco became the first city in the world to adopt an ordinance reflecting the principles of CEDAW in 1998; and Los Angeles followed in 2006 and

WHEREAS, Cities for CEDAW was launched at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2014; and

WHEREAS, A local CEDAW ordinance seeks three standards; a gender analysis of city departments and commissions, an oversight body to ensure that appropriate and timely actions are taken, funding to support the implementation of the principles of CEDAW; and

WHEREAS, City and County governments have an appropriate and legitimate role in affirming the importance of international law in communities as universal norms and to serve as guides for public policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the United States Conference of Mayors urges cities across the United States to join San Francisco and Los Angeles and participate in the Cities for CEDAW initiative and pass local ordinances reflecting the principles of CEDAW



Cities for CEDAW

<https://sfgov.org/dosw/cedaw-ordinance>

CITIES FOR CEDAW – RESOURCES

- [Cities for CEDAW: Status of Local Activities](#)
- [Toolkit – Cities for CEDAW: A Campaign to Make the Global Local](#)
- [Cities for CEDAW Fact Sheet](#)
- [Implementing CEDAW as a Local Ordinance](#)
- [Nuts and Bolts City Action](#)
- [Tips on Talking to an Official about Cities for CEDAW](#)
- [Making Rights Real – A Workbook on the Local Implementation of Human Rights](#)
- [CEDAW Summary: Two pager on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#)
- [Introduction to the General Recommendations issued by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#)
- [Book Chapter, “Cities for CEDAW: Notes on the Road to Effective Intervention” in *Power and Territories* \(Flaminia Saccà ed.\) \(Forthcoming 2018\)](#)
- [2018 IAOHRA Gender Equity Toolkit for State and Local Agencies \(developed by IAOHRA and the Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute\)](#)

Model Ordinance

- [CEDAW Ordinance Template for your city](#)



**DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL, AND
LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL OF WOMEN SINCE 1919**

Thank You!