



Commission to End Discrimination Against Women Key Features

Countries must have commitment to gender equality and take-action to eliminate discrimination against women in all forms, whether in public or private life, and to promote equality between men and women.

Areas of Focus: CEDAW covers a broad range of issues, including:

- Political rights (e.g., the right to vote, run for office, and participate in decision-making processes).
- Economic rights (e.g., equal pay for equal work, access to employment and education).
- Health and family rights (e.g., access to healthcare, protection from violence, and rights within marriage and family life).
- Violence against women (e.g., addressing domestic violence, sexual violence, and trafficking).

CEDAW also advises countries on how to implement changes and monitor how successful these have been.

1. Political and Civil Rights

- Right to Vote and Participate in Elections: Women should have the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to hold public office on equal terms with men (Article 7).
- Right to Participate in Public Life: Women should be able to participate equally in political and public life, including at the national and local levels, and to represent their countries in international forums (Article 7).
- Access to Justice: Women must have equal access to the legal system, including the right to seek legal remedies for violations of their rights (Article 8).

2. Economic Rights

- Right to Work: Women have the right to work in any field or occupation and should not face discrimination in employment, including in recruitment, hiring, and pay (Article 11).
- Equal Pay for Equal Work: Women should receive equal pay for equal work and enjoy equal opportunities in the workforce (Article 11).
- Right to Social Security and Benefits: Women have the right to social services, including maternity leave, unemployment benefits, and equal access to pensions (Article 11).
- Right to Own Property: Women should have the same rights as men to own, manage, and inherit property (Article 15).

3. Education and Training

- Equal Access to Education: Women and girls must have equal access to education and training at all levels, including primary, secondary, and higher education (Article 10).
- Elimination of Stereotypes: Efforts should be made to eliminate gender stereotypes from educational materials and practices, ensuring that women and girls can pursue careers and fields of study freely without discrimination (Article 10).

4. Health and Family Life

- Access to Healthcare: Women have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including reproductive health services and healthcare during pregnancy and childbirth (Article 12).
- Protection of Family Life: Women must have the right to freely choose a spouse, the ability to freely consent to marriage, and the right to equal rights in marriage, including the right to be free from violence and coercion (Article 16).
- Maternity Rights: Women should receive special protection during maternity, including paid leave and health services during and after pregnancy (Article 11).

5. Protection from Violence and Abuse

- Elimination of Gender-Based Violence: States are required to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, and harmful traditional practices (Articles 2, 5, and 6).
- Protection from Trafficking and Exploitation: Women and girls must be protected from trafficking, exploitation, and any form of sexual exploitation (Article 6).

6. Equality Before the Law

- Right to Legal Protection: Women must have equal rights in family law, such as in divorce, custody, and inheritance. They must be able to make legal decisions and have access to courts (Article 15).
- Elimination of Discriminatory Laws: States must take action to eliminate laws, policies, and practices that discriminate against women and ensure that new laws are designed to promote gender equality (Article 2).

7. Stereotypes and Cultural Practices

- Elimination of Gender Stereotypes: States are required to take measures to eliminate gender-based stereotypes, particularly in media, education, and advertising, to ensure that women are not confined to traditional roles (Article 5).
- Protection from Harmful Cultural Practices: CEDAW calls for the elimination of harmful practices like female genital mutilation, child marriage, and other cultural or traditional practices that discriminate against women (Article 5).