

# CEDAW

The Bahamas ratified the CEDAW on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1993.

The Bahamas ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1991.

CEDAW Website:

[www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/CEDAWIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/CEDAWIndex.aspx)

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CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION  
OF ALL FORMS OF  
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

## ***WHAT IS THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN?***

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty that is part of the United Nations human rights system. Sometimes referred to as the Women's Convention or the Women's Bill of Rights, CEDAW aims to improve the status of women.

## ***WHAT ARE WOMEN'S RIGHTS?***

Women's rights are human rights and establish the same social, economic, cultural, civil and political status for women as for men. They guarantee that women won't face discrimination on the basis of their sex.

## ***HOW DOES CEDAW PROTECT WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS?***

CEDAW gives a legal basis to women's human rights claims and promotes women's equality in all areas of life. By accepting the Convention, states (countries) commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end all forms of discrimination against women, protect women and promote equality. State parties (Governments) agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Countries that have ratified or acceded (agreed) to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice, except where they have placed Reservations (when countries cannot agree to implement a certain part of the Convention).

## ***WHO MONITORS COUNTRIES IN THE CONVENTION?***

The CEDAW Committee monitors the national measures taken by Countries to comply with CEDAW and reviews their performance in implementing the Convention.

## ***DO YOU KNOW THAT THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC) AND CEDAW ARE INTERCONNECTED?***

Children's rights and women's rights are connected. Women who have had a good education are much better at supporting the education of their children. Protecting the rights of girls helps to ensure that their rights will be protected when they grow up and become women.

Using the CRC and CEDAW together works better for the rights of girls and women at all stages of their lives. Both CRC and CEDAW highlight that.

- ◆ Girls have a right to education, health and nationality.
- ◆ All forms of violence against girls and women, such as trafficking and prostitution, must end.
- ◆ Discrimination and being treated unfairly because of being a girl must end.
- ◆ Both parents are responsible for raising their children.
- ◆ Government must do all they can to make sure girls' rights are protected.

## **WHY SHOULD BOYS AND MEN CARE ABOUT CEDAW?**

When girls and women exercise their rights, it benefits everyone, including boys and men. Educated, healthy and skilled girls and women, and also boys and men, come together to build a better future for themselves, their families, communities and nations.

Boys and men can support girls and women in realising their rights in many ways. In their homes, schools and communities, boys and men can change attitudes and behaviour towards girls and women. Boys and men can also make girls and women feel safe and support them to assert their rights.

## **WHY CARE ABOUT CEDAW?**

CEDAW helps girls and women of every age to claim their rights even though CEDAW mainly refers to 'women' and not 'girls', CEDAW helps girls to claim their rights at all stages of their lives: from birth to little girls, adolescents, grown-up women and through old age.

If a girl learns how to claim her rights while she is still a child, she is more likely to be able to enjoy her rights as a woman.

CEDAW protects girls and women from discrimination in areas such as education, health, work, marriage and family life.

## **HISTORY OF CEDAW**

**1946** The United Nations asks a group of experts belonging to various governments to recommend ways to improve the lives of women. This group is known as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The CSW works for women.

**1949-1962** The CSW develops a number of agreements that protect women's right to their nationality, and also their rights in politics and marriage.

**1965-1967** The CSW starts to prepare an international agreement called the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. This document talks about the equal rights of women and men. Although governments agree to the Declaration, this does not require them to take on a legal duty.

**1975** This year is made the UN International Women's Year. A World Conference is held where it is agreed that a convention on the elimination of discrimination against women should be written. A convention is different from a declaration because it sets up a legal duty for governments.

**1976-1985** The United Nations agrees that it needs a Convention, it also makes these ten years the United Nations Decade for Women.

**18<sup>th</sup> December 1979** The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is agreed by the United Nations General Assembly.

## ***CEDAW AT A GLANCE***

**Article 1: Definition of Discrimination** - Discrimination against Women is: "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 of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

**Article 2: Policy Measures to be Taken** - Governments condemn discrimination against women in all its forms and will work to end it. This includes abolishing all existing laws, customs and regulations that are discriminatory.

**Article 3: Guarantee of Basic Human Rights** - Governments will take all appropriate actions to ensure the advancement of women and to protect their rights on a basis of equality with men.

**Article 4: Temporary Special Measures** - Governments may institute affirmative action programmes to ensure women's advancement. This will not be considered discriminatory.

**Article 5: Sex Roles and Stereotyping** - Governments will strive to eliminate cultural and traditional practices that perpetuate discrimination and gender stereotyping of women.

**Article 6: Trafficking and Prostitution** - Governments will work to eliminate trafficking in women and the exploitation of the prostitution of women.

**Article 7: Political and Public Life** - Governments will work to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and will ensure women the right to vote, hold office and actively participate in political parties, lobby groups and NGOs.

**Article 8: Participation at the International Level** - Governments will take action to ensure women the opportunity to represent their government at the international level and participate in international organizations.

**Article 9: Nationality** - Governments will grant women equal rights to change or retain their nationality and that of their children.

**Article 10: Equal Rights in Education** - Governments will act to eliminate discrimination against women in education. This includes giving women and men equal access to education and vocational guidance; the same curricula, examinations, standards for teaching, and equipment; and equal access to scholarships and grants.

**Article 11: Employment** - Governments will eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace. Women will have the same employment rights as men as well as maternity leave and special protection against harmful work during pregnancy.

**Article 12: Health Care and Family Planning** - Governments will eliminate discrimination against women in health care and provide them with equal access to health care services, including family planning.

**Article 13: Economic Life, Sport and Culture** - Governments will act to eliminate discrimination against women in the economic and social arenas. Women will have equal access to family benefits, loans and credit, and an equal right to participate in recreational activities, sports and cultural life.

**Article 14: Rural Women** - Governments will ensure that the particular needs of rural women are met in relation to access to services, training and employment opportunities and social equity schemes, and act to eliminate discrimination against them.

**Article 15: Equality Before the Law** - Governments will give women equality with men before the law, including rights to enter contracts, administer property, appear in court or before tribunals, and to choose residence and domicile.

**Article 16: Marriage and Law** - Governments will ensure that women and men have equal rights to choose a spouse and to marry; the same rights and responsibilities within marriage and on divorce, and equal rights in all matters relating to the birth, adoption and raising of children.

**Article 17-22:** Detail the establishment and function of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

**Article 23-30:** Detail the administration of the Convention.