

Appendix A – Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (in brief)

Article 1 – Definition of discrimination against women

The term "discrimination against women" means any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which limits fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Article 2 – Policy measures

Governments must not allow discrimination against women. There must be laws and policies to protect them from any discrimination and to adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women. They must refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation.

Article 3 – Guarantee of basic human rights and freedoms

Governments must take action in all fields – political, social, economic, and cultural – for the purpose of guaranteeing women the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

Article 4 – Special measures

Governments should take special measures or special actions to end discrimination against women. These specific measures should last until equality between women and men is achieved.

Article 5 – Roles based on stereotypes

To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes.

Governments must also ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children.

Article 6 – Trafficking and prostitution

Governments must take action, including making new laws, to end trafficking and prostitution of women.

Article 7 – Political and public life

Women have the same right to vote and be elected to government positions. Women have the right to take part in the decisions a government makes and the way it carries them out and participate in non-governmental organisations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Article 8 – Participation at the international level

Women have the right to represent their country at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations.

Article 9 – Nationality

Women have the right to have a nationality, and to change it if they want. A woman's nationality must not be changed automatically just because she got married, or because her husband changed his nationality. Women shall have equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

Article 10 – Education

Governments must end discrimination against women in education. Women should have access to career guidance and professional training at all levels; to studies and schools; to examinations, teaching staff, school buildings, scholarships and equipment.

Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning needs to be provided.

They must also address female student drop-out rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely.

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Article 11 – Employment

Women have a right to work and should be able to join a profession of their choice. Women must have the same chances to find work, get equal pay, promotions, superannuation and training and have access to healthy and safe working conditions.

In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, governments will prohibit dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status. Maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances should be provided.

Article 12 – Health

Governments must make sure that women are not discriminated against in health care. In particular, women have the right to services related to family planning and pregnancy.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

Women are provided equal access in all areas of economic and social spheres, including receiving family benefits, the right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit and taking part in sports and cultural life.

Article 14 – Rural women

Governments must focus on the particular problems of women who live in rural areas and help them look after and contribute to their families and communities. This includes access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes. Women should enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

Article 15 – Law

Women are equal before the law, including laws about freedom to go where they choose, choosing where to live, signing contracts and buying and selling properties. Governments shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

Article 16 – Marriage and family life

Governments shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. Women will have the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution. The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount. The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights.