

INTRODUCING THE CITIES FOR CEDAW CAMPAIGN



By 2050, nearly 70% of women and girls will live in cities. Urban areas are where inequalities and opportunities converge. Cities are on the frontlines of equality.

They can be places of safety, opportunity, and inclusion—or spaces where discrimination persists.

Your city/region has to make a choice.



WHAT IS CEDAW?

The [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and ratified by States.

The treaty sets out international standards for benchmarking women's rights. It defines discrimination, sets obligations for States to eliminate it (e.g. legislative measures, temporary special measures) and requests States to act in specific areas (political and public life, right to nationality, education, employment, health, technology, economic and social life, marriage and family relations, etc.). CEDAW also creates an international monitoring system, whereby States submit periodic reports on actions they have taken to comply with the treaty and ensure effective implementation of their treaty obligations within and across their jurisdiction.

While CEDAW is ratified by States, local and regional governments (LRGs) are critical to creating the necessary ecosystem for its implementation. They can use CEDAW as a roadmap to protect and realize the human rights of all women and girls.

CITIES RESPECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women and girls are unequally affected by violence and conflicts, climate change, technology innovations, the housing crisis, violation of labour standards, restrictions on sexual and reproductive health care, income inequalities, unsafe public spaces, etc. They have less influence in policy making, political leadership and decision making.

Yet, local and regional governments can contribute to change that! LRGs have significant influence when it comes to addressing the above-mentioned issues, protecting women and girls' rights and fostering an inclusive and diverse society that accelerates growth.

WHY CITIES FOR CEDAW?

Several cities and regions have already embedded CEDAW in local laws and policies. By joining the Cities for CEDAW campaign, you can:

- send a powerful message about the importance of supporting women' and girls' agency, enabling them to thrive in your communities and contribute to accelerating growth;
- expand equality and inclusion by changing attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls in your communities;
- integrate gender equality into local policies, regulations, laws, the provision of goods and services, and the investment landscape, including within your own administration;
- exchange good practices and cooperate with other cities and regions on ending discrimination against women and girls;
- be recognized as a global leader and positive force in advancing women's rights, expanding human capital base and productivity potentials;
- be part of a global movement and connect with the international human rights system that can support you in your efforts to realize gender equality.

HOW CAN MY CITY/REGION ENGAGE?

Joining the Cities for CEDAW Campaign is more than a political commitment of your local/regional government. It is about instilling a culture of gender equality and addressing numerous issues to realize women and girl's rights. It is about taking several steps to make CEDAW a local reality:

ASSESS

- Undertake an **assessment, through a gender lens, of your own local/regional administration** in relation to its:
 - **Workforce:** Are our employment practices gender-sensitive? Do we have gender parity in the various departments?

- **Leadership:** Should we implement gender parity in city/region boards and leadership positions? Should we appoint gender equality focal points?
- **Strategy and action plans:** Are our action plans and strategies gender-sensitives? Do they include women’s rights and gender-equality objectives?
- **Public services:** Are our public services accessible to all women and girls? Do they respond to their specific needs?
- **Procurement policies:** Can we integrate gender-responsive criteria in our procurement policies?
- **Budgeting and funding:** Is our budgeting process gender-sensitive and inclusive of all residents? Do we assess gender equality when it comes to allocating funding to various local stakeholders?
- Undertake an **assessment of your own territory to understand the manifestations of inequalities, discrimination and gender-based violence.** That can be done through studies, surveys, digital mapping¹ and other related tools for specific topics and issues (e.g. health, education, employment, violence and crime, etc.).

ACT

- **Enact local legislation** (ordinances, resolutions, local edicts) that reflect CEDAW’s principles, thereby embedding gender equality into the legal and policy frameworks.
- **Establish a CEDAW taskforce** to oversee the implementation of CEDAW principles and initiatives and ensure financial support for its activities, especially related to public information, education and outreach. The taskforce may include people outside of your administration, including, for instance, NGOs or experts working on women’s rights.

¹ Like the Red Dot Foundation Safetycity which collects anonymous reports about sexual and gender-based harassment and abuse. See <https://reddotfoundation.in/index>.

- **Mobilize appropriate resources** to fund efforts to implement gender equality at local level, including through public-private partnerships. Enacting legislation might help allocate adequate resources to address gender discrimination.

BUILD CAPACITY

- **Conduct training on CEDAW for city/regional administration staff** to ensure informed and effective implementation at local level as well as institutional alignment with CEDAW.
- **Conduct training on CEDAW for critical local stakeholders** (private enterprises, civil society, NGOs, educational institutions, etc.) to build a local culture of gender equality and care about women's and girls' rights.

ADVANCE

- **Prioritize key sectors, issues or themes** to start reflecting about how to apply a gender lens on these at local level.
- **Initiate innovative projects:** Develop and implement projects aimed at transforming lives, aligning them with CEDAW and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and indicators, along with a surveillance component for monitoring and reporting.
- **Designate** specific areas (sectorial and/or territorial) to serve as pilot for implementing CEDAW initiatives.

CONNECT

- **With your central administration** to understand how they position themselves vis-à-vis CEDAW, what measures and indicators they rely on at the national level to implement the treaty. Also, seek ways and means to contribute to periodic national reports on CEDAW, if your State is a party to CEDAW.
- **With other cities and regions worldwide** who have already adopted CEDAW at local level in order to facilitate knowledge exchange, replicate relevant projects and collaborate to advance gender equity.

- **With the international human rights system** ([UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women](#), [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), [UN Women](#), etc.) to leverage expertise, resources and seek opportunities for technical assistance or capacity building.

MONITOR, EVALUATE, REPORT

- Develop outcome indicators, disaggregated by gender, to measure the progress and changes resulting from your local initiative.
- Collect baseline data.
- Analyze the trends of the indicators to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement, and develop recommendations for policy or project adjustment.
- Submit contributions to your national State periodic report on the fulfilment of CEDAW obligations to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women at scheduled sessions.
- Present progress and milestone achievements at other international fora, e.g. the [Commission on the Status of Women](#).

WHAT ISSUES CAN CITIES ADDRESS UNDER CEDAW?

Cities that have already joined the Cities for CEDAW movement have worked on the following issues:

- **Harassment (CEDAW, Art. 5):** put in place online tools to facilitate reporting of abuse and foster accountability of perpetrators.
- **Gender-based violence (CEDAW, Art.5):** provide relevant information (incl. on prevention) and put in place a local system to support women and girls victims of gender-based violence.
- **Trafficking (CEDAW, Art. 6):** provide relevant information (incl. on prevention) and put in place a local system to support women and girls at risk or victims of trafficking. Consider adopting regulatory measures in relation to prostitution (incl. licensing of entertainment of hospitality industry to ensure a certain control).

- **Homelessness:** apply a gender lens to policies seeking to prevent and address homelessness. Address the gender dimensions of the phenomenon, including the gender-based health consequences and the vulnerability to gender-based violence, as well as its drivers.
- **Sports (CEDAW, Art. 10):** invest in gender-friendly sports, ensure safe spaces for sports, recruit women coaches (for instance through temporary special measures), encourage girls to practice sports.
- **Local politics (CEDAW, Art. 7):** encourage the active political participation of women and young women.
- **Private businesses (CEDAW, Art. 4, 11 and 13):** design procurement policies for city-led projects that favour women-owned businesses, introduce a certification and licensing system for key businesses with the city, favour the introduction of a minimum wage and of measures to ensure salary equity.
- **Justice system (CEDAW, Art 15):** ensure access to justice to women and girls and respond to their specific needs and challenges, including safety and security.
- **Police & Firefighting (CEDAW, Art. 10 and 11):** encourage women to consider careers in these traditionally male-dominated areas.
- **Economic Asset Holding (CEDAW, Art. 13):** facilitate women's ownership of economic assets, especially related to housing, transport, energy, manufacturing and industry, to reduce gender differentials in ownership.

OUTCOME

Adopting CEDAW locally means:

- More inclusive cities with safer spaces and services.
- Economies strengthened by full and equal participation.
- Cities recognized globally as champions of equality.
- A future where women and men, girls and boys thrive equally.

Join the Cities for CEDAW Coalition.
Together, we can build cities for all.
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