



# A TRANSFORMATIVE GOAL IN THE REGION FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

UN Women  
Regional Office, The Americas and Caribbean  
UN House, Ciudad del Saber, Building 128  
Panama City, Panama  
Email: [acro@unwomen.org](mailto:acro@unwomen.org)

[www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)  
[www.facebook.com/unwomen](https://www.facebook.com/unwomen)  
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## FOREWORD

In July 2010, a few days before the XI Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, was born as a result of the United Nations reform. The aim was to provide system-wide coherence with the mandate to support countries and the UN System to advance with greater efficiency and effectiveness in pursuing the goals of gender equality, women's empowerment and the defense of women's rights.

These three goals represent the "minimum standards" that must be incorporated into public policy in order to be consistent with related international commitments on gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women. These minimum standards are the elimination of violence against women and girls, the achievement of gender equality in capacities and resources; and the achievement of gender equality in decision-making in public and private institutions.

Within the framework of the XI Conference, the governments of the participating States received with enthusiasm the decision that created UN Women and requested the Secretary General of the United Nations "to incorporate into the management of the new entity the substantive and political agreements adopted in the successive regional conferences (...), which constitute the roadmap to guide the regional gender agenda and the strategies for governments, organs and organizations of the United Nations and civil society."

UN Women's universal mandate and its role in articulating international norms and the inter-governmental commitments with regional, sub-regional and national processes and their application in public policies, together with its programmatic presence at country level and the construction of strategic alliances with all sectors and actors, allows for the necessary synergies to advance with the agenda of gender equality and the human rights of women in our region.

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UN Women advocates for the empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their rights as a central element of the post 2015 agenda.

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We are currently living in a crucial time as the international community, together with governments, is defining the post 2015 development framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. UN Women advocates for the empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their rights as a central element of the post 2015 agenda. The entity promotes the adoption of a stand-alone goal that guarantees gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women, as well as the effective mainstreaming of gender equality perspectives across all goals of the new development framework.

The decision adopted by Member States during the 57th CSW to carry out a review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, on the occasion of the 20 years of its endorsement, shows the renewed political will to comply with the commitments of the Fourth World Conference on Women. UN Women will support this initiative through national and regional reviews, the mobilization of interested parties, support to the normative intergovernmental process and coordination.

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean constitutes the ideal forum to forge the synergies called for within this global momentum. I am certain that the governments gathered in Santo Domingo, and represented by their highest authorities on gender equality and women's human rights of our region, will endorse commitments that, together with civil society, the international community and the United Nations, will contribute to the construction of the future that we all want.

Moni Pizani  
UN Women's Regional Director for the Americas  
and the Caribbean

## UN Women

According to UN General Assembly resolution 64/289 (paragraph 57 (b)), which established UN Women, the organization is governed by a multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure as follows:

“(a) ... the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women shall constitute the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the normative support functions and shall provide normative policy guidance to the Entity;

“(b) ... the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Board of the Entity shall constitute the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the operational activities and shall provide operational policy guidance to the Entity.”

The main functions of UN Women are: to support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms; to help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society; and to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

Members of the UN Women’s Executive Board are elected for a period of three years according to guidelines established by the General Assembly in the founding resolution of UN Women, A/RES/64/289.

The Board also engages with the Executive Boards of other United Nations entities in an effort to harmonize approaches to operational activities. These engagements provide opportunities for sharing experiences and coordinating programme work on gender equality and gender mainstreaming across the UN system. The work of the Executive Board is guided by its Rules of Procedure.

### UN Women Governing Documents:

- UN General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289). Paragraphs 49–90 relate to the establishment of UN Women.
- UN General Assembly resolution 63/311 on system-wide coherence (A/RES/63/311)
- Comprehensive proposal for the composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/588)

UN Women acts on two fronts. It supports international political negotiations to formulate globally agreed standards for gender equality and it assists UN Member States to implement those standards by providing expertise and financial support. UN Women also assists other parts of the UN system in their efforts to advance gender equality across a broad spectrum of issues related to human rights and human development.

UN Women’s Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2013, developed pursuant to paragraph 77 of Resolution 64/289, was the first such plan created by UN-Women. The plan, assessed and revised in 2013 for the period 2014-2017 in order to align it with the planning cycles of other United Nations agencies, lays out the priorities of the organization for achieving these goals up to 2017.

**The strategic plan goals:**

- a) to increase women’s leadership and participation;
- b) to increase women’s access to economic empowerment and opportunities;
- c) to prevent violence against women and girls and expand access to services;
- d) to increase women’s leadership in peace, security and humanitarian response;
- e) to strengthen the responsiveness of plans and budgets to gender equality at all levels;
- f) a comprehensive set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women’s empowerment is in place that is dynamic, responds to new and emerging issues, challenges and opportunities and provides a firm basis for action by Governments and other stakeholders at all levels.

## Normative processes related to gender equality and women’s empowerment

### CHRONOLOGY

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| <p><b>1979</b> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)</p> <hr/> <p><b>1994</b> International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action</p> <hr/> <p><b>1994</b> The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará)</p> <hr/> <p><b>1995</b> UN IV World Conference on Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action</p> <hr/> <p><b>2000</b> Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)</p> <hr/> <p><b>2000</b> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security</p> <hr/> <p><b>2007</b> X Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Quito</p> <hr/> <p><b>2010</b> XI Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Brasilia</p> <hr/> <p><b>2010</b> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is established by GA Resolution 64/289</p> <hr/> <p><b>2012</b> United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Río + 20); Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</p> | <p><b>2013</b> 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) agreed conclusions on actions to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls</p> <hr/> <p><b>2013</b> Montevideo Consensus at Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean</p> <hr/> <p><b>2013</b> 68th UN General Assembly – High-level event “MDG Success: Accelerating Action and Partnering for Impact”</p> <hr/> <p><b>2013</b> XII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean Santo Domingo</p> <hr/> <p><b>2014</b> 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) priority theme: challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls</p> <hr/> <p><b>2014</b> 69th UNGA Special Session to assess the status of implementation of the ICPD</p> <hr/> <p><b>2015</b> MDG revisión and SDG</p> <hr/> <p><b>2015</b> Beijing +20</p> |
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## Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and came into force in 1981. Nowadays, more than 185 states have ratified the Convention. It is considered an international bill of rights for women, defining discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The States that have ratified the Convention are legally bound to implement its provisions. They must submit national reports at least every four years on the measures adopted to comply with the obligations of the Convention.

Article 1 of the Convention defines discrimination against women as “...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, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

### Guiding Principles of the Convention

1. Substantive equality: equality of opportunities, equality to access of opportunity and equality of results
2. Non discrimination
3. States’ obligation to adopt all necessary measures aimed at achieving the full realization of the rights recognized in the Convention (Article 24).

### Obligations of the States Parties: Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 16

- To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation;
- To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures prohibiting all discrimination against women;
- To ensure through competent national tribunals the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;
- To prohibit and eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or Enterprise;
- To modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

- To ensure the full development and advancement of women , for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men;
- To adopt temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women;
- 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 or on stereotyped roles for men and women;
- To 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;
- To eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations;
- To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

### Women’s rights guaranteed by CEDAW:

#### Civil and political rights guaranteed by CEDAW

- The right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government, and to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country (Article 7).
- The right to represent their Governments at the international level (Article 8).
- The right to acquire, change or retain their nationality (Article 9).
- The right to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals. (Article 15).

### Social, cultural and economic rights guaranteed by CEDAW:

- The right to education (Article 10).
- The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings (Article 11).
- The right to health care and to access health care services (Article 12).
- The right to family benefits; bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit; to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life (Article 13).
- The right of women in rural areas to enjoy all the provisions of the Convention (Article 14).

### States' obligation to submit national reports (Article 18).

States Parties undertake to submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a report on the measures which they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention within one year after the entry into force of the Convention for the State concerned, and thereafter at least every four years.

### General recommendations of the CEDAW committee

- No. 1.** Initial and periodic reports (1986)
- No. 2.** Report guidelines, content and dates (1987)
- No. 3.** Education and public information to eliminate prejudices and practices that hinder the principle of equality (1987)
- No. 4.** Reservations to the Convention (1987)
- No. 5.** Temporary special measures (1988)
- No. 6.** Effective national machinery and publicity (1988)
- No. 7.** To ensure adequate resources and services to the Committee (1988)
- No. 8.** Implementation of article 8 of the Convention (1988)
- No. 9.** Statistical data concerning the situation of women (1989)
- No. 10.** Tenth anniversary of the adoption of the CEDAW (1989)
- No. 11.** Technical advisory services for reporting obligations (1989)
- No. 12.** Violence against women (1989)
- No. 13.** Equal remuneration for work of equal value (1989)
- No. 16.** Unpaid women workers in rural and urban family enterprises (1991)
- No. 17.** Measurement and quantification of the unremunerated domestic activities of women and their recognition in the gross national product (1991)
- No. 18.** Disabled women (1992)
- No. 19.** Violence against women (1992)
- No. 21.** Equality in marriage and family relations (1994)
- No. 22.** Amending article 10 of the Convention (Committee's meetings) (1995)
- No. 23.** Women in political and public life (1997)
- No. 24.** Women and health (1999)
- No. 25.** Temporary special measures (2004)
- No. 26.** Women migrant workers (2008)
- No. 27.** Older women and protection of their human rights (2010)
- No. 28.** Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention (2010)
- No. 29.** Economics of marriage, family and dissolution (2013)



## The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Declaration and Platform for Action were the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women that took place in Beijing in 1995. World leaders from 189 countries committed to adopting measures in twelve critical areas of concern, to be implemented in cooperation with the UN system, regional and international financial institutions, other relevant regional and international institutions, non-governmental organizations, and women and men at large.

The following are the 12 areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action:

1. The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women
2. Inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, education and training
3. Inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, health care and related services
4. Violence against women
5. The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation
6. Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources
7. Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels
8. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women
9. Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women
10. Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media
11. Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment
12. Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child

The Platform for Action reaffirms the fundamental principle established in the World Conference of Human Rights, celebrated in Vienna in 1993, that women rights are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

## The Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. It is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946.

In 1996, ECOSOC in resolution 1996/6 expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take

(Beijing+5), as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up.

UN Women supports all aspects of the Commission's work and facilitates the participation of civil society

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