

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (the CEDAW Convention) is an international human rights treaty for women. The UN General Assembly adopted the CEDAW Convention on 19th December 1979. Malaysia ratified the convention in 1995.

This means Malaysia is required to take concrete steps to uphold and advance the rights of women.

The Convention defines discrimination against women in the following terms:

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.

CEDAW requires governments to guarantee women's rights in these areas:

Article 5	Elimination of sex roles and stereotyping
Article 6	Trafficking and exploitation
Article 7	Political and public life
Article 8	Participation at the international level
Article 9	Nationality
Article 10	Education
Article 11	Employment
Article 12	Healthcare and family planning
Article 13	Economic and social benefits
Article 14	Rights of rural women
Article 16	Marriage and family law

Reporting Procedures and the Shadow Report

Each country is required to report on their progress to the CEDAW committee which consists of experts nominated by UN member states. Reporting takes place every four years.

At the same time NGOs can submit their report, called a Shadow report. This report is intended to highlight issues or gaps in the country's official report, providing a more complete picture of the situation on the ground for women.

Malaysia submitted its first and second periodic report in 2006. Malaysian NGOs submitted a shadow report as well.

Malaysia is due for reporting in 2011, and NGOs are currently compiling another shadow report. AWAM is working with other NGOs towards documenting cases of discrimination on the basis of sexuality for this purpose. If you have any information on this issue in Malaysia, please email us at advocacy-programs@awam.org.my.

For more information on CEDAW and a copy of the Malaysian Shadow Report, log on to: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org>