

Human Rights of Women (I)

According to Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (BPfA) 1995¹, the human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings and their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of governments.

Every person should be entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy cultural, economic, political and social development. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights² stipulates that human rights apply to all people equally without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language or any status. However, in many cases women and girls suffer discrimination in the allocation of economic and social resources. This directly violates their economic, social and cultural rights.

In order to protect the human rights of women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)³ was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, and it entered into force as an international treaty in 1981. Among international human rights treaties, the CEDAW assumes an important position, bringing women into the focus of human rights concern. It defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. In so doing, the Convention establishes not only an international bill of rights for women, but also an agenda for action by countries to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights.

In addressing the enjoyment of human rights, governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively. In order to address these problems, the following strategic objectives were set and agreed to be implemented by the national governments.

The strategic objectives

- I.1 Promote and protect the human rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- I.2 Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice
- I.3 Achieve legal literacy

Indicators

The adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁴ in 1979 guarantees women's rights within political cultural, economic, social and family spheres. At the EU level, the CEDAW has been ratified by all EU Member States, who are therefore committed to report regularly on the measures they have implemented to comply with their treaty obligations. However, no indicators have so far been developed specially to cover the human rights of women in the EU.

More information

Policy documents

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>).

Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Beijing + 15: A review of progress', Brussels, 10 November 2009 (<http://>



register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st15/st15487-ad01.en09.pdf).

The European Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010--2015 (COM(2010) 491 final of 21 September 2010) (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0491:EN:PDF>).

European Commission, Communication from the Commission 'Europe 2020 — A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', Brussels, 3 March 2010 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>).

European Commission, Communication from the Commission 'A Strengthened Commitment to Equality between Women and Men — A Women's Charter', Brussels, 5 March 2010 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0078:FIN:EN:PDF>).

Reports

No reports are currently available in this domain (pending future submission).

Notes

1. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995, p. 89 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>).
2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>).
3. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cedaw.htm>).
4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>).