



A MANUAL FOR SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS
ON
CEDAW

THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Between their stories and our realities...

DEVELOPED BY
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ENGLISH VERSION
BETSY KONEFAL

THE MANUAL IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DRAMATIC VIDEO SERIES

Women Hold Up The Sky

EIGHT SHORT FILMS -TRAINING VIDEOS- ON CEDAW'S ARTICLES FOR WOMEN, MEN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CEDAW

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
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THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS LEARNING

This guide is designed to accompany eight videos illustrating different types of discrimination and human rights violations against women around the world. The idea is to facilitate a process of learning about human rights and CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and to facilitate discussion of it at all levels of society.

The proposed training manual aims to further the goals of the Decade of Human Rights Education, 1994-2004, proclaimed by the United Nations. It seeks to introduce training in human rights from a gender perspective and to facilitate the dissemination of the Women's Convention throughout civil society.

It is an educational tool intended to generate *significant learning*.

We believe that meaningful understanding of human rights can be built through the sharing of peoples experiences. By drawing on personal narratives, it is possible to develop new attitudes and respect for others, and to construct an effective system to protect the human rights of all women, men, youth and children alike.

Why Women's and Girls' Human Rights?

Women and girls, besides suffering racial, economic, and other forms of discrimination like men, experience specific forms of discrimination and human rights violations just because they are women. Inequality at different levels and in all walks of life affects women and girls all over the world. For example:

- Of the 1.3 billion poor people in the world, approximately 70% are women.
- Between 75 and 80% of the 27 million refugees in the world are women and children.
- Women hold only 10.5% of the seats in the world's parliaments.
- Two-thirds of the world's 1 billion illiterate adults are women.
- Girls make up two-thirds of the 130 million children who don't attend school.
- On average, women make only 75% of men's wages for the same work.
- In most countries, women do twice as much unpaid work as men.
- Women living in rural areas produce 55% of all the food produced in "developing" countries.
- Globally, the value of the unpaid work done by women in their communities and homes equals between 10 and 35% of gross national products. This equaled an estimated 11 trillion dollars in 1993.
- Every year 585,000 women (more than 1,600 per day) die of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.
- Every year approximately 20 million abortions are performed under dangerous conditions, and 70,000 women die as a result.
- Every year more than 15 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 become mothers.
- Every year 2 million girls are subjected to female genital mutilation.
- In the world, between 20 and 50% of women experience some form of domestic violence during their marriage.
- The main victims of armed conflicts are women and children.

(Selected from various sources published by the United Nations, December 1996.)

To Whom is This Manual Dedicated?

It is dedicated to people, groups, non-governmental and governmental organizations that:

- Develop strategies to increase sensitivity to and build capacity to address different types of discrimination suffered by women and girls; and
- Are interested in reflecting profoundly, personally, and communally on discrimination and human rights violations against women.

This is not a manual by and for women and girls only. Changing relationships of injustice is a responsibility that should be shared by all members of our societies.

This training manual is designed to guide the process of learning about and discussing women's human rights. It accompanies a series of eight dramatic videos entitled ***Women Hold Up the Sky***. Together these resources seek to illustrate and give life to the Women's Convention (CEDAW), and to demonstrate that human rights are universal and indivisible.

- ***Universal*** because they can be claimed in any part of the world by any individual or group;
- ***Indivisible*** because none of the rights can be enjoyed in isolation, separated from other rights. This implies a holistic vision of human rights. No woman will be able to enjoy a life free of discrimination based on her sex, for example, if she is barred from enjoying other human rights, like access to basic resources, health care, food, education, work, or housing.

What is Our Methodology?

We understand that human rights violations take place within particular geographical and historical contexts and histories. The manual and videos aim to provide food for thought, and to help us analyze our diverse realities to find new solutions to our problems.

This is not a recipe, then, but a guide. The manual and videos can serve as resources that groups can adapt to their own interests and needs. The videos and manual provide a glimpse of the experiences of other women. Along with the Women's Convention, they may be used to promote reflection and debate. It will be necessary for workshop coordinators to adapt the manual to each group of participants, relating it to their local experiences, knowledge, capacities and limitations, opinions and emotions. Without grounding these materials in shared experiences, neither the videos or manual, nor the Women's Convention itself, will achieve its objective -- sensitization and capacitation for empowerment.

We believe that all learning processes should be based on the interaction between new things learned and knowledge that people already possess. Hence, true learning is "significant." The term "significant" does not mean that material is merely interesting, but that a person is able to make connections between what she or he already knows and what she or he is learning.¹ Significant learning involves revision, modification and enrichment, and the establishment of new connections and relations. Learning is functional when someone can use it effectively and concretely to solve a problem.

¹Ausubel, Theory of Significant Learning.

We propose the use of **participatory workshops** as a method of training. The workshop is a place where participation and learning come together. It provides a way to overcome the separation between theory and practice.

In a workshop, coordinators and participants take part in a new style of learning. It opens doors toward self-learning, decision-making, and the development of creative potential by combining individual and group work. The workshops should permit thinking, expression, writing, reading, imagination and invention, proposals and experimentation, to facilitate people's participation in a personal way, giving what is learned a real significance.

Finally, we would like this training guide and the videos to be analyzed, discussed, criticized and enriched with the contributions of people who, like us, seek to combine knowledge of human rights with efforts to create more equitable relationships between women and men.

The Authors
Rosario, January 1999

HOW IS THE MANUAL ORGANIZED?

This manual includes the following parts:

I. Introduction

II. Overview of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, or Women's Convention)

III. Training Units

Chapter 1 -- to accompany the video *Another Look*, filmed in Rosario, Argentina. It relates primarily to with Article 14 of CEDAW, setting out the human rights specific to rural women.

Chapter 2 -- to accompany the video *Daily Life*, filmed in Rosario, Argentina. It addresses mainly with Articles 11 and 12 of CEDAW, guaranteeing women access to employment opportunities and health care.

Chapter 3 -- to accompany the video *Five Pesos*, filmed in Rosario, Argentina. It deals mainly with Articles 5 and 10 of CEDAW, which relate to social and cultural customs and education.

Chapter 4 -- to accompany the video *Safari -- The Journey*, filmed in Zanzibar, Tanzania. It mainly relates to Articles 6 and 9 of CEDAW, which address sexual trafficking, prostitution, and the right to a nationality.

Chapter 5 -- to accompany the video *Yaliyo -- The Way It Is*, filmed in Tanzania. It addresses Article 16 of CEDAW, dealing with equality within marriage and in the family.

Chapter 6 -- to accompany the video *Daily Heroism*, filmed in Senegal. It is related to Articles 7 and 8 of CEDAW, which guarantee women's right to political participation.

Chapter 7 -- to accompany the video *Women Hold Up the Sky*, filmed in New York, USA. It relates to Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, and 13 of CEDAW, covering general discrimination and economic human rights.

Chapter 8 -- to accompany the video *Fire Code*, filmed in New York, USA. It relates to Article 15 of CEDAW, which guarantees women full equality before the law.

Appendix A -- Glossary: definitions of concepts and specific terminology necessary to gain a full understanding of the materials.

Appendix B -- A summary and the full text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; General Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee; and a list of the countries that have ratified the treaty.

Appendix C -- Workshop evaluation form.

I. INTRODUCTION, by Susana Chiarotti

In this introduction we will briefly present the history of women's participation in the development and articulation of human rights. Then, we will look at some of the challenges raised by women in relation to human rights discourse. Finally, we will discuss the process of creating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and summarize its provisions.

The origin of the concept of human rights protections dates from the "Great Letter" of England, the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man in France. Following the Second World War, the national focus of human rights became international. After the horrors of the Holocaust, governments around the world recognized that to maintain world peace, human rights must be respected and must be the concern of the international community. In 1946, the United Nations was formed.

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed by UN Member States. It is considered to be this century's document of ethics and a general guide for governments in terms of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Beginning with the Universal Declaration, a number of international treaties were created to define human rights, along with mechanisms to ensure the effective protection of these rights. In 1956, for example, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was approved. Efforts to eliminate racial discrimination served as a basis to sanction discrimination based on sex as well. In both cases, repression of a particular group of people based on biological characteristics and birth (race and sex) was prohibited.²

Women's Participation in Human Rights History

How did the connection between the women's movement and the human rights movement occur? Initially, efforts to tie women's rights and human rights focused on including women in already defined human rights categories. The first time that women organized themselves as a collective subject and raised the human rights flag in the name of women was at the Women's Club of Paris, in the early 1790s. Etta Palm, Theroigne de Mericourt, Pauline León, Claire Lacombe, and Olympe de Gouges dared to demand equality of rights.

In September 1791, Olympe wrote a Declaration of Women's and Citizens' Rights, which demanded women's right to vote, education, equality in marriage, divorce rights and the right to enlist in the army.

Women participated actively in the revolutionary efforts of that time. French revolutionaries, including the Jacobins, however, supported women's re-integration into domestic life.³ In November 1793, an ordinance was dictated which prohibited Women's Clubs. Olympe de Gouges

²Isabel Plata Marai, María Yanuzova, Human Rights and CEDAW. Bogota, 1993. (Spanish).

³Duby and Perrot, History of Women. Book VII, page 47. The leftist revolutionary Chaumette, who praised the charms of a woman at home, criticized the women's political clubs, saying, "Since when is it stylish that a woman abandons her kind devotion to the home, the cradle of her children, to turn up at public places ...?"

was prosecuted and convicted to the guillotine for "betrayal of the duties of her sex." "So many struggles, so many hopes," said de Gouges, "only to end up, after all, with the mere displacement of tyranny rather than its elimination." Olympe demonstrated the false universality of proclaimed rights and showed that while "human rights" supposedly applied to all of humanity, they really applied only to men. She paid for these efforts with her life, while other supporters were sent to prison or exile.

The women's movement was brought to a halt for several years. In 1801, a member of the Club of the Equal, Sylvain Marechal, presented a proposal to prohibit women from learning how to read. In this way, he said, it could be possible definitively to seal the terms of a peace treaty between the sexes.⁴

In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft of England wrote "Recovery of Women's Rights," in which she made a statement against political exclusion of women during the French Revolution. Years later, in England and the United States, many women who initiated a debate about women's rights also participated in the campaign for the abolition of slavery. In 1840, London hosted the International Convention Against Slavery. None of the female delegates was allowed to speak at the Convention; they were forced to sit on a balcony, behind a curtain. Elisabeth Cady Stanton and other North Americans had made the long trip across the ocean to attend the Convention. Many of these women, including Lucretia Mott, had already confronted authorities and their own families over giving refuge to slaves. Exchanges among women delegates were very fruitful. They agreed to start working to guarantee their civil rights and to improve women's living conditions.

In 1848, Elisabeth Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized a Women's Conference in Seneca Falls, New York. Several men also attended the meeting, sympathizing with the women's claims and supporting them in their struggle. At this moment, Stanton read a Declaration of Feelings, based on the Declaration of Independence, where it was claimed that women and men should be treated equally. It also demanded the right to vote, gained finally in 1920 in the United States, and years later in other regions of the world.

In 1948 government delegates met at the United Nations to study the draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Eleanor Roosevelt worked actively with the group. One of her contributions was to change the document's title, which would have had only "man" in the title. Eleanor argued that it would be better to call it a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, since the term human is more inclusive of the whole of humanity.

Thus, in the beginning of the women's human rights movement, women demanded the right to civil and political freedoms, to be able to vote, possess goods, etc., just as men did. They did not, however, question the content of those rights.

Conceptual Changes

Many women have since argued that the existing human rights discourse is masculine, does not reflect women's experiences, and should be questioned. This process began at the end of the 1970s and reached a culminating point at the International Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, in 1993. Hundreds of women from all regions of the world participated in the Vienna conference, and achieved important goals toward an equitable human rights discourse.

⁴Celia Amoroso, *Equality and Identity*, in *Concept of Equality*, Editorial Pablo Iglesias, Madrid, 1994.

At the conference delegates proclaimed that women's and girls' human rights are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.⁵ This is both an advance toward increased visibility of a wide spectrum of women's human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, for example, and a step toward the revision of all human rights from a gender perspective.

In Vienna another crucial change took place within human rights theory. Due to women's initiatives, it was recognized that human rights are to be enjoyed in private environments as much as in public ones, and therefore their violation in both environments must be addressed. It was also recognized that violence against women represents a human rights violation. This is a revolutionary change, since before this time the human rights system was based on violations made only by governments, and exclusively in public spaces. Since the Vienna conference, for the first time individual events -- including domestic violence -- occurring in private spaces can be considered human rights violations, and governments can be held responsible for failing to prevent or address them. Moreover, ethnic cleansing, forced pregnancies and systematic sexual violations of women in situations of armed conflict were condemned as human rights violations.

Two years later, these ideas were supported and reinforced at the Fourth International Women's Conference in Beijing, China. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, prepared and approved by delegates of all the governments present at the conference, is the most complete document produced by a United Nations Conference in relations to women's rights. It reinforces and builds upon what was achieved in previous conferences like Vienna, and treaties like the Universal Declaration and CEDAW.

The Beijing Platform for Action describes and seeks to improve the situation of women around the world. It outlines and analyses twelve principal areas of concern: poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment, problems specific to girls, and the issue of women in power and decision-making.

It outlines a series of measures that governments, civil societies, and international organizations should take in order to eliminate causes of discrimination against women in all societies, and to progress toward equality.

This is only a brief history. Human rights struggles and demands for women's dignity have taken place in all parts of the world, and have been led by women from many different countries and cultures, at times, with men. In Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific, thousands of women have dared to challenge the limits imposed on them. They have demanded equality of rights and treatment with dignity. These struggles have been diverse, often expressed as resistance movements, reflecting the needs and desires of women all over the world.

This manual would, and should, be enriched by the sharing of workshop experiences and efforts and struggles for equality between women and men. Tell us your stories. Contact us by e-mail: pdhre@igc.org.

Questions to begin the discussion:

- Do you know of people or groups who work for equality in your community?
- Who are they and what do they do?

⁵See the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, Part I, para. 18.

II. THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

The Women's Convention was the result of many years of work on the part of the Commission on the Status of Women, created in 1946 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In 1974, the commission began to prepare the Convention's text, basing its efforts on the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the United Nations in 1967.

The Women's Convention was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 18, 1979. By December 1998, 163 member states of the UN had ratified it. However, many of them did so with reservations,⁶ specifying that some parts or concepts of the Convention would not be obligatory for them. States have made more reservations to CEDAW than to any other human rights treaty.

Convention Overview

In the **first part** of the CEDAW Convention, which consists of 16 articles, discrimination is defined, and there is a list of situations or environments in which women may be discriminated against, including in politics, the economy, labor, education and health.

The Convention's content, more than simply defining women's human rights, stresses two concepts: **equality** between the sexes as a basic objective, and the necessity of eliminating **discrimination** as an ultimate goal.

Over time, the concept of equality has evolved. For the theorists of the French Revolution, equality involved two main ideas: a) equality of all citizens before the law; and b) abolition of all privileges gained from birth, religion, or race. Now it is conceived that equality before the law, or **formal equality**, is a means to reach equality of rights, opportunities and responsibilities, or **real, de facto, equality**. The objective is to go beyond mere legal equality, seeking social change and transformation of cultural and social norms. This means that law is not everything, but rather a means to reach an end. It is, however, a very important means, because it legitimizes women's aspirations and serves as a lever or catalyst for social change.

The Convention demands that States adopt appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women within all spheres of life, public or private. Following the Convention, States must:

- Abolish discriminatory norms.
- Modify laws that are not in line with the Convention.
- Dictate new laws and take concrete actions that will promote equality.

Article 1 defines what is understood as discrimination, clarifying that it includes:

"... 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 ... of human rights and fundamental freedoms...."

⁶A reservation is a unilateral declaration made by a state when signing, ratifying, or approving a treaty, which may exclude or modify some of the legal requirements of the treaty in this state.

Two types of discrimination are recognized:

- Acts that purposely discriminate against women.
- Acts that, although they may not have that intent, nonetheless result in some kind of discrimination.

Article 2 defines measures that States should take to eliminate discrimination against women, including reforms at the constitutional, political and legal levels, as well as monitoring and sanctioning to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise. Along with laws and regulations, states must modify practices and customs that put women in discriminatory positions. Rather than just dictate laws, states need to promote equality plans, initiate campaigns in the media, change educational programs, etc.

Article 3 requires that governments take all necessary measures, including legislative, to guarantee the development and advancement of women. States must revoke laws and practices that negatively affect women, even if they seem to be "gender neutral."

Article 4 encourages states to adopt "positive measures," special measures of a temporary nature to accelerate de facto equality between women and men. It clarifies that affirmative action measures should not be considered discriminatory.

Article 5 demands that States take all appropriate measures to modify cultural models, social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, and practices, prejudices and customs which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes. It also demands that family education must clarify the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and education of their children. The Convention doesn't specify what behavioral patterns it is referring to, nor does it explain the necessary measures to eradicate them. Good guides to consult are the Nairobi "Forward Looking Strategies" and the Beijing Platform for Action.

Article 6 aims to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women in prostitution.

Article 7 guarantees equality of political participation of women and men. **Article 8** demands women's participation in positions of government representation at the international level. **Article 9** grants to women equal rights with men in regard to nationality. In particular, it clarifies that a woman's nationality should not automatically be changed by marriage or a change in her husband's nationality.

Economic, social, and cultural rights are guaranteed in **Articles 10** (education), **11** (employment), **12** (health and family planning), **13** (family benefits, credit, and cultural life), and **14** (equality in the rural environment).

Article 15 reaffirms the recognition of equality before the law between women and men, especially in the fields related to the legal capacity of women, freedom of movement, and choice of residence.

Article 16 outlines the need to eliminate discrimination in all matters relating to the family and marriage. Human rights protections, until then tied to the public environment, are introduced in the private environment. This is very important because it proves that laws written to guarantee equality are incomplete if they don't address the discrimination women face in their own homes. Division of tasks and responsibilities within the home which puts on women's shoulders the almost exclusive responsibilities of children's upbringing and housework overloads women so that they are restricted from full and free participation in social and political life. If this problem is not

resolved, despite other legal reforms, improvements in conditions for women will be delayed indefinitely.

The **second part** of the Convention explains the mechanisms created to monitor States Parties' adherence to the Convention. These include **reports** that each government that signed the Convention must present to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. The first report is to be submitted a year after ratification of the Convention. Subsequent reports are to be presented every four years. In each report, States should specify what kind of measures have been taken to eliminate discrimination against women, in each area addressed in the Convention.

Non-governmental organizations may present their own alternative reports, called **Shadow Reports**, in which they outline their views on the situation of women and on measures taken -- or not taken -- by their governments. These Shadow Reports are sent to members of the CEDAW Committee, who take them into account and formulate questions for or request explanations from the government delegations. Unfortunately there are no sanctions -- except for political pressure -- for countries that fail to present their reports.

The CEDAW Committee is made up of 23 experts from different countries. Each member serves for four years. Committee members are nominated by their governments and elected during a special meeting convened by the UN Secretary General every two years in New York.

The CEDAW Committee has pointed out that existing international mechanisms for the implementation of the Women's Convention are insufficient and weak. The UN system does not include procedures which allow individuals or groups to make complaints about women's human rights violations. A recommendation was made in 1991 to the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) to create an Optional Protocol to the Convention which would allow individuals to make complaints to the Committee, and the Protocol is presently under discussion.

Activities to Promote CEDAW and Women's Human Rights

1. Activities at the local or national level:

- Publicize CEDAW using all possible means: formal education (schools, universities), media, workshops and popular education, using videos, pamphlets, posters or any materials available to a group or community.
- Require your government's effective implementation of laws and measures it agreed to by signing and ratifying the Convention. If your government has not ratified CEDAW, pressure it to do so.
- Gather members of women's and human rights organizations to carry out a diagnosis of the situation of women in your community or region.
- Refer to the CEDAW Convention when making legal demands before local, state, and federal courts.
- Teach judges and civil servants to use and apply the Women's Convention.

2. Combined Activities (National-International)

- Prepare a Shadow Report and send it to the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination

Against Women. You can send it to committee members through the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), headquartered in New York.

Write to: Angela King
 Division for the Advancement of Women
 UN Plaza II, 12th floor
 New York, NY 10017
 USA

- Get your government's commitment in support of the Convention's Optional Protocol, so that individuals and women's groups can denounce violations of CEDAW.
- Support the working group that is currently preparing the draft Optional Protocol. To do so, contact DAW at the address above.

These and many other activities can be carried out in every community, in every country. Remember that many governments sign the Convention to build a positive image internationally, but are not sufficiently dedicated to it to publicize it inside their countries or implement its provisions fully.

The Convention, opened for signature in March 1980, first went into effect on September 3, 1981. As of December 1998, 163 countries had ratified or acceded to it. A list of these countries is included in Appendix B. The full text and a summary of the Convention are also included so that it can be analyzed, consulted, and used in claims for women's human rights.

III. TRAINING UNITS

The situations presented in the eight videos are based on true stories. They recount violations of women's and girls' human rights that actually happened and are still happening in different parts of the world. As such, the stories portray a real account of human rights violations suffered by women.

A chapter has been developed for each video. We have divided each chapter into four sections, related to four types of activities: raising awareness and sensitivity; analysis and in-depth study of certain concepts; elaboration of strategies for change; and evaluation. In each section several proposals are offered to create a number of training options. Each coordinator will be able to select activities that she or he considers most useful or appropriate, modify them, or plan other activities.

A. Raising Awareness and Sensitivity

Activities in this section are designed to facilitate personal reflections and responses to the videos. By discussing feelings triggered by certain images and dialogue in the videos, it is possible to establish relationships between characters in the video and the participants, grounding the stories in personal experiences of discrimination.

B. Analysis and Comprehension

These activities facilitate a deeper understanding of the video's content and introduce concepts like HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER, DISCRIMINATION, WORK, EDUCATION, HEALTH, VIOLENCE, POVERTY, DEVELOPMENT and CITIZENSHIP. They allow time to think about human rights and the provisions of the Women's Convention.

C. Strategies for Change

These activities are designed to help participants develop and explore possible proposals to change situations of discrimination, and to use community resources to defend their human rights.

D. Evaluation

These activities facilitate participants' evaluation of the workshop, videos, and Convention. An evaluation form is included in Appendix C of this manual.

CHAPTER 1: *ANOTHER LOOK*

The video *Another Look* tells the story of Adela, a rural woman's, daily life, and that of her eldest daughter and two younger children. Adela is married to an authoritarian and abusive husband. She, like many rural women, not only works long days doing housework and caring for the children, but also works on the farm and produces homemade foods that she sells in a nearby village. Nonetheless, her work is not registered in national records, which only consider the formal work of men as the head of a household. Her contribution remains invisible. She is also semi-literate and does not have proper access to health services. The scenario unfolds from her sister's perspective, a single woman who lives in the city.

Approximate duration: 15 minutes.

How is the story of *Another Look* related to the Women's Convention?

Another Look outlines many of the general problems and human rights issues addressed in the Women's Convention. In particular, it relates to **Article 14** and the rights of rural women, **Article 5** dealing with stereotypical division of roles based on sex, and **Articles 10, 12, and 16** dealing with education, health and family life and marriage, respectively.

A. RAISING AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Possible activities:

Discussing Emotions

Participants can express, in turn, the first emotion they felt when they met Adela and María, the two main characters of the video. These can be listed on two posters, which will allow for the visualization of different feelings and contradictions.

The coordinator can read the group's responses and initiate a discussion. Participants can share opinions, analysis, interpretations, and anything else believed to be pertinent to the video.

Circle of Appreciation

The coordinator can ask participants to form a circle, and she or he can provide various triggering phrases. In response to each phrase, a participant can say the first word that comes to mind. Then the circle can continue until everyone has had a turn.

Some examples of possible triggering phrases:

- Adela's life ...
- A day in Adela's life ...
- Options in Adela's life and opportunities ...
- Adela's husband ...
- The rural reality presented in the video ...
- Adela's daughter, today and tomorrow ...
- Adela's other children ...
- María's perspective ...
- The Marías and Adelas of our communities ...

Comparing the Video with Participants' Communities

The coordinator can divide the group into five teams. Then a character is assigned to each team:

- Team 1 -- Adela
- Team 2 -- María
- Team 3 -- Oscar
- Team 4 -- the eldest daughter
- Team 5 -- the other children

In each group, the character's main characteristics can be debated and analyzed. Then a discussion can be opened to consider the similarities and differences between the characters in the video and the realities of the participants' communities.

B. ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSION

Possible activities:

"Discrimination against women" includes any distinction, exclusion, or restriction based on sex...."

Have the group identify discriminatory attitudes toward women that are observed in the video. Compare them with those present in the participants' communities.

Read **Article 1** of the Women's Convention and comment on its content.

Re-write the article, using everyday language.

Rural Women and Access to Resources

The UN Declaration on the Right to Development (1986) states that "the human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development.... States have the duty to take steps, individually and collectively, to formulate international development policies with a view to facilitating the full realization of the right to development." (**Articles 2 and 4.**)

Read the second part of **Article 14** of the Women's Convention.

Identify scenes or dialogue from the video where violations of these rights appear, and discuss factors that impede enjoyment of these rights. Compare these situations with the experiences of the participants, or with those of people close to the participants.

Discuss opportunities of women and men living in rural areas, regarding access to resources.

Write down the group's conclusions about the relationships between access to resources and the ability to enjoy human rights.

Work (Invisible, domestic, informal, and/or rural)

In our societies, an entire category of work is often forgotten. It doesn't appear in national statistics and it is done without pay or other remuneration. This is domestic work -- tasks related

to reproduction and care of the household, which are mainly done by women.

To explore the concept of "invisible work" and the sexual division of labor:

Divide the group into manageable teams.

Each team can prepare a list of all the activities that Adela does everyday, how long they take, who helps her, and the salary she should receive for the work.

Then read the first part of **Article 14** of the Women's Convention.

Analyze the work that Adela does. What about her daughter's work?

Think about the scene where the government officials are taking a survey, particularly when one of them writes on the questionnaire: "Inactive -- Housewife." Why do statistics describe women as inactive?

Poverty and Gender

A lack of economic resources leads to more domestic work for women. Working days become longer as women try to find ways to make ends meet. The combination of long working hours, a lack of resources, and poverty creates a double inequality for many women based on **Gender** and **Social Class**.

The coordinator can present the following statistic:

Of the 1.3 billion poor people in the world, approximately 70% are women.

The following questions can be debated by the group:

What are possible reasons for such discrepancies between women and men? How does poverty affect women and men differently?

Are there differences between rural and urban poverty? What are they?

Read **Article 14**, paragraphs a, c, e, and g, and **Article 13** of the Women's Convention. Does double discrimination exist in the case of a poor rural woman? In what ways are poor rural women doubly discriminated against?

Health and Violence

Women and children suffer more than men from many types of violence. Violence is a product of historically unequal power relationships between men and women, which have led to domination and subordination. Abusive behavior on the part of some men and submission on the part of some women reinforce the cycle of violence. There are serious consequences at both the personal and social levels. **Violence against women has been recognized to be an obstacle to development.**

The coordinator can divide the group into teams, and have the teams:

Identify scenes and images from the video that show violence against Adela. (Include all types of violence: physical, psychological, emotional, social, economic, etc.)

Each team can draw a picture of Adela's body, using posters and markers.

Then each participant can mark on the drawing the different parts of Adela's body that suffer violence. Also determine what or who causes the violence.

Each team can present its poster and discuss the subject with the entire group.

Finally, the coordinator can open a discussion about causes and consequences of these acts of violence that Adela and some women in the participants' communities may endure daily.

Education

Access to education is fundamental to achieving equality of opportunities. However, equality will not be achieved only with a simple incorporation of women into schools, colleges, or universities. It is also necessary to adapt educational programs, texts and rules so that all women and men may develop to their fullest potential. This will help to correct some of the stereotypes that are reinforced by traditional methods of education, stereotypes which limit the opportunities open to many girls and women.

The coordinator can divide the group into teams.

Each team can act out common situations that Adela might experience being illiterate, poor, and a woman. Possible examples:

- Adela requesting a loan.
- Adela going to a hospital.
- Adela denouncing a violation of her rights.

Then each group can recreate the same scenario, using an Adela able to read and write.

After the scenarios are presented, the coordinator can open a discussion of the obstacles, limitations and strengths of both Adelas (illiterate and educated).

NOTE: If there are illiterate people among the participants it might be interesting to consider their experiences and solicit their contributions to the discussion.

Maternity and Paternity

Women's biological functions of reproduction and breastfeeding have been used as a logical and natural explanation for assigning to mothers other tasks like infant and childcare and housework. This somewhat logical delegation of duties, however, is historically based and varies according to culture, class, religion, etc.

Participants can be divided into groups of 4 or 5 people.

Each group can define how Adela and María would describe the role of a mother. How are they similar? How do they differ?

In small groups debate the role of a mother and her responsibilities that is generally accepted in the participants' communities. Identify advantages and disadvantages to this conceptualization of maternal roles, and discuss contradictions between the concepts of motherhood and daily experiences.

Debate the father's role and how the concepts of maternity and paternity differ.

Identify women among or known to the participants who are not mothers. Analyze their personal situations and the attitudes of different sectors of society toward these women.

Discuss these two questions:

- Are there models of Adela who live in urban areas?
- Are there models of María who live in rural areas?

Upbringing

The family is the first environment where children learn about their "roles" and form attitudes about what they can and cannot be when they grow up. Revising some of the messages that we transmit as parents is an important step toward reversing some of the stereotypes and inequalities based on gender.

The coordinator can ask participants to think about the image of childhood that is introduced in the video. How are the roles of the boys and the elder girl in the story different?

The group can be divided into two teams. Poster board, markers, construction paper, magazines, newspapers and glue or tape can be divided between the teams to create a collage.

Each group can prepare a collage based on the ideas and images in the video about how children live their childhoods. Have the teams divide the collage into two parts, one for the girl and one for the boys. In the collages participants should include images from the video, the words of the song heard during breakfast, etc.

Each team can present its collage, giving it a significant title.

A discussion about discrimination between boys and girls should be introduced at this point. To open the debate, the coordinator may introduce the following question:

How does Adela act with respect to the list of tasks she demands of her daughter? How does Oscar act?

C. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Possible activities:

Beginning at the Grassroots

If one of the intentions of the training is to formulate proposals to change situations of inequality, it will be very useful to begin by approaching problems close at hand, those that the participants experience everyday.

The coordinator can give paper and a pencil to each participant.

Each participant can describe some situations of discrimination that she or he suffers. Then the participant can prioritize these problems and select two of the most important.

Finally, the participant can list realistic solutions to the problems. These ideas can be discussed and evaluated by the group, with particular attention to the feasibility of the proposed solutions.

Resource Maps of Our Communities

It is critical that participants know about and use resources available in their communities. Developing ideas, identifying obstacles and analyzing areas that should be strengthened are the first steps toward eliminating discrimination against women.

Divide the group into teams of 5 to 10 people, giving poster board to each team.

Each team can draw a map of its community (city, neighborhood, village), including on the map all the institutions, services, resources, community centers, etc., that people can use to work against women's discrimination.

Each team can analyze its map, looking for strong and weak areas.

Each map can be presented to the entire group, and information will be exchanged, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of each community.

Our Government's Responsibility

Having discussed the responsibility of our governments and their commitments to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, the group can use articles of the Women's Convention and other documents, along with the community maps, to write a letter to their government officials. In the letter the group can ask questions, and make proposals and demands for the modification of laws and changes in spending priorities. The group can set out its views about what is necessary and urgent to improve the lives of women, and why.

Read **Articles 2 and 3** of the Women's Convention, focusing on our government's responsibility to work toward eliminating discrimination against women.

In teams or with the whole group, discuss the government's actions regarding women's discrimination. Summarize the discussion in a letter to the government, and include propositions for improvement.

Discuss how to ensure that the letter arrives at its destination. Set dates to carry out specific steps.

Strengthen the letter by gaining the commitment and signatures of members of the community.

D. EVALUATION

Living Sculpture

It would be interesting for the group to build a representation of women's discrimination, reflecting what they experienced in the workshop.

Divide the group into teams.

Each team can prepare a "living sculpture," using their bodies collectively and symbolically, to represent rural women's discrimination.

Each team can create a title for its sculpture and present and explain it in front of the group. The group can then discuss the sculptures and evaluate the workshop.



CHAPTER 2: DAILY LIFE

The Video *Daily Life* presents the lives of two women, Roxana and Laura.

Roxana works in a supermarket. She is a cashier and suffers many humiliations every day. She is forced to hide her pregnancy, as she fears being fired for it. Eventually she is fired unfairly when she does resist the company's abusive and discriminatory policies.

Laura works as a secretary in a private school. During her free time she also teaches adults to read. She is a lesbian and is fired from her job because of her sexual orientation.

Daily Life outlines difficulties and conflicts in the workplace, including employees' exploitation and various types of gender discrimination.

Approximate duration: 15 minutes.

How is the story of *Daily Life* related to the Women's Convention?

This video focuses especially on **Article 11**, where the right to work is set out as an inalienable right of all human beings. The article requires that governments which have ratified the Convention take all necessary measures (laws, action plans) to eliminate all discrimination against women in the field of employment, and particularly to end labor discrimination on the grounds of marriage or maternity.

Daily Life is also related to **Article 12**, which addresses health and discrimination, and to **Article 5**, which deals with stereotypes and cultural norms that limit the opportunities of women in the working world.

A. RAISING AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Possible Activities:

Word Association

The coordinator can propose a circle exchange to share emotions triggered by watching *Daily Life*.

The coordinator may present words that represent different emotions, for example: sadness, hate, impotence, hope, pain, joy, anxiety. She or he can then encourage participants to choose from these and other emotions to create sentences that represent their feelings about what they saw in the video.

Participants may then share some of their own experiences related to the stories in the video.

Reconstructing the Story

The coordinator can invite the group to reconstruct each story in the video. She or he can present the following guidelines:

Divide the group into two teams.

Each team will receive one of the following cards:

CARD 1
Roxana's working life Roxana's personal life Roxana's social life

CARD 2
Laura's working life Laura's personal life Laura's social life

Both groups can try to reconstruct the stories of their character. The objective is to gain an understanding of both experiences represented in the video.

Within the groups, each story can be discussed, focusing on the feelings that each story produced in the participants. Then each participant can share any personal experience related to labor discrimination. This way the participants can create a connection to the video's characters.

Finally, the group can share their work and conclusions.

B. ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSION

Possible Activities:

Discrimination and Work

Discrimination against women is common in the workplace. Women often do not receive the same pay as men for doing work of equal value. They often do not have access to the same opportunities for promotion and training, and are discouraged from taking up certain professions or responsibilities. At a certain age, it becomes difficult for many women to find work because employers consider them likely to become mothers. In many instances, a woman is considered less capable if she has children, with a greater tendency to be absent from work.

The coordinator can divide the group into two teams, giving CEDAW **Article 11** to each team. One group can work with the first part of the article while the other group works with the second.

Participants can assume the role of movie script writers. The following cards can be passed out to each group:

Objective: Create a script to raise awareness in different sectors of society about discrimination that women suffer in the workplace, basing your script on violations of rights set out in Article 11 of the Women's Convention (first or second part).

Resources: Stories, testimonies and actual examples coming from women in your community who are suffering or suffered violations of their labor rights.
--

The groups can draft a script which includes case studies and real experiences of discrimination, as well as dialogue for the video project.

Each group can present its production.

Double Workload

Although biological reproduction is linked to a woman's specific functions (gestation, childbirth, nursing), many societies automatically assign to women the tasks of child care and many domestic household responsibilities related to the maintenance of the family. These tasks, unpaid and undervalued, have been classified as feminine in nature.

Any analysis of women's employment must consider these domestic responsibilities because they affect the participation of women in the labor force, requiring women to complete two (or more) jobs at the same time.

UNICEF uses the expression "invisible adjustment" to explain the situation. When governments make cuts in social assistance programs, the gap is most often filled by women, who increase both their paid work and unpaid workload. (IDB 1990).

To focus on women's double workload, the coordinator can invite the group to:

Imagine some of the tasks Roxana will have to do when, after leaving her new job, she returns home to take care of her baby.

Discuss the chores that participants normally do at the end of their workday.

The group can then discuss the following statistic:

The value of unpaid work done by women in their communities and their homes equals between 10% and 35% of a country's production, or gross national product. The value of this unpaid work equaled \$11 trillion in 1993.

Double Discrimination

Even though women, as a group, suffer from discrimination based on their sex, this discrimination acquires specific characteristics according to social class, ethnicity, religion, age, physical characteristics, sexual orientation, etc. Discrimination is complicated and influenced by diverse factors. People may be discriminated against for several characteristics, doubling or tripling discrimination based on their societal position. In the specific case of women we can present some examples: woman and poor; woman, lesbian, and overweight; woman, old, atheist, and black. Combinations are easily multiplied, becoming more and more complex every time.

The coordinator can propose to the participants the following:

Reflect on Laura's and Felisa's lives, focusing on the following question: Besides being women, what other personal characteristics or social situations cause them to be discriminated against?

As the discussion goes on, the coordinator can introduce the concept of Double Discrimination, which particularly affects women. For example, women are discriminated against because of both gender and poverty, gender and race or ethnicity, or gender and sexual orientation.

After the discussion, the coordinator can distribute magazines, pamphlets, or catalogs that are available in the participants' communities and that contain different images of women. Images from television may also be used. Instructions are to:

Consider the model of the "ideal woman" in our culture and portrayed in the media. Discuss the consequences or problems that this model may bring to women. What kind of statement does this model make? Compare the model with the experiences and the lives of the participants.

To conclude, this cultural model may be related to the concept of Double Discrimination.

Discriminatory Stereotypes

When women enter the labor force, they tend to get jobs in service industries, working for cleaning services, or as secretaries, receptionists, in sales, etc. Those employed in professional fields often have jobs that are undervalued social and economically, for example teaching. Women are discriminated against in terms of hiring, schedules, training, promotion, and family demands, especially if their children are very young. Men's work schedules are rarely affected by changes in family responsibilities.

The coordinator can present two posters with the following titles:

Female Workers in the Video and in the Participants' Communities	Male Workers in the Video and in the Participants' Communities
---	---

The participants can list general characteristics under each title regarding pay, positions, training, promotion, dedication, stability, unemployment, and other relevant issues.

This may be followed by discussion and debate among the participants. The coordinator may facilitate the debate by asking the following questions: Why did participants choose the characteristics that they did? What are the messages we send to our children and the games and toys that we encourage girls and boys to play with? Think about the messages sent in different environments -- family, school, and society. How does education affect our choice of employment and our performance at work?

NOTE: It would be interesting to incorporate **Article 5** of the Women's Convention into the debate, so that participants can analyze it.

Maternity

There is a widespread belief among employers that women are a more expensive and less productive workforce than men due to maternity leave, nursing, child care, and absenteeism due to family responsibilities.

The coordinator can present on a large sheet of paper a summary of the second part of **Article 11** and **Article 12** of the Women's Convention. Then the articles can be analyzed.

The coordinator can ask participants to think about the video and the main attitudes of Roxana's employers regarding pregnancy. Possible consequences of these attitudes should also be identified, keeping in mind Roxana's life and the life of her unborn child.

The group can then be divided into two teams. One group can present the arguments of the employers NOT TO HIRE, or to fire, a pregnant or married woman.

The other group can defend the pregnant woman's labor rights, trying to respond directly to the first group's arguments.

The idea is to present and analyze the two positions, using tools and concepts learned in the workshop.

Health

All human beings are entitled to adequate health care. Unfortunately, in many societies this right is not exercised equally by men and women. Women are prevented from enjoying their rights to health because of many factors: scarce or poor health services, violence against women, government health policies, inadequate sexual education, and cultural factors that violate the right to health in all its dimensions (physical, mental, emotional, and social).

The coordinator can present the following statistics on a large sheet of paper:

Every year 20 million abortions are performed under unsafe conditions, and 70,000 women per year die as a result.

Every year 585,000 women, more than 1,600 per day, die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

Between 20% and 50% of women experience some kind of domestic violence (physical, psychological, or economic) during marriage.

The coordinator can then present the following definition:

*Health is not only the absence of illness;
it is a state of physical, mental, emotional and social well-being....*

The coordinator can divide the group into teams and present the following instructions:

Within each group, participants can talk about their personal situations and times when they enjoyed complete health and well-being.

Think about the health of the main characters of the video and try to answer the following questions:

- In what ways had Roxana's right to complete health been violated?
- Who is responsible for these violations and in what ways are they shown in the video?
- In what ways had Laura's right to complete health been violated? Who is responsible for these violations and in what ways are they shown in the video?
- What are some of the common violations of the right to health in participants' communities?

NOTE: Participants should always keep in mind all dimensions of the terms health and well-being: physical, mental, emotional and social. Finally, each group can summarize their thoughts and conclusions.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a type of violence, mainly exercised against women, born out of relationships of power. Especially in the workplace, women run the risk of being harassed sexually by other employees and superiors. Sexual harassment is much more common than statistics suggest because women often do not report it.

The coordinator can read the definition of "sexual harassment" in the glossary of this manual. Then, dividing the participants into pairs, she or he can propose the following:

Each pair of participants can describe an instance of sexual harassment they or someone they know has experienced personally. Describe expressions, attitudes, looks, or words that constituted sexual harassment, as well as the response of the victim. The experience can then be described to the group.

NOTE: The coordinator may introduce a newspaper or other article that describes a specific case of sexual harassment in the workplace. An example of a case from Cordoba, Argentina, is included below.

Cordoba, Argentina, July 9, 1998

In the city of Cordoba, in a Wal-Mart department store, cashiers were forced to take off their clothes in front of the store's security personnel when \$700 was found missing from one of the cash registers. This case was made public because of the courageous denunciation made by two of the victims. The personnel also mentioned that they were forced to sing the company's anthem, and were forbidden from talking during working hours. Some men were required to dress up as women as punishment for coming to work a few minutes late.
(Perfil 1/7/98)

C. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Possible Activities:

What could happen if ...

Many factors contribute to violations of workers' -- especially women's -- labor rights. Difficulties can arise at the time of getting or keeping a job, workers might not know about their rights, there may be a lack of advice and counseling, fear or social pressure. How can workers' right be assured?

The coordinator can divide the group into two teams. Participants can organize protests or resistance, or make formal complaints in response to the situations shown in the video (one for each team):

- When the head of personnel orders the cashiers to undress.
- When the legal representative of the school fires Laura.

The teams can present the new scenes to the group. The group can then discuss the possible consequences of these responses, keeping in mind the relative strengths and positions of the employees and the managers.

Monitoring the Application of the Women's Convention

Monitoring the commitments made by our governments to human rights is a vital part of our role as citizens. It is important to understand how the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women works, and to develop the skills needed to monitor the Convention. Ensuring that all women, men, youth and children enjoy their human rights is the responsibility of the whole society. We must know our human rights, defend them, and claim them.

The coordinator can propose a round table to explain what a CEDAW Shadow Report is, why it is written, and who can submit one and how.

Then in small teams participants can choose a theme of the workshop and prepare a list of questions and answers to put into a CEDAW report. Some possible questions to incorporate:

- How does gender discrimination affect your daily life?
- Which rights are violated when this type of discrimination is exercised against women and why?
- What are women doing to prevent this form of discrimination and what have they accomplished?
- How did your country progress in terms of preventing and punishing discrimination against women in the last three years?
- What are the main obstacles and problems that should be eliminated to improve the situation? How could they be eliminated?

These reports can be presented in front of the group. Together the group can thoroughly answer each question, starting with a diagnosis of the community. Send the document to government representatives. Monitor future government actions regarding discrimination against women generally, and the Women's Convention in particular.

D. EVALUATION

Possible Activities:

Systematizing What Has Been Learned

The coordinator can propose that the group identify a central problem related to women's discrimination that has been discussed in the workshop. Write the problem in the center of a large sheet of paper.

Under the problem, write all the causes related to it. Above the problem, write all possible consequences.

To conclude, each participant can think of a way to use what was learned in the workshop in her or his personal life and community.

CHAPTER 3: FIVE PESOS

Five Pesos tells the story of an eleven-year-old girl named Marcela. She is the daughter of a poor woman living in a slum. She has two younger brothers, and their father is unknown. Marcela works in the street opening taxi doors, and doesn't go to school. Her mother works long hours as a maid.

Every day to help her mom, Marcela must bring home five pesos (the equivalent of \$5). One day her own "co-workers" steal her money. As she is crying, a maintenance worker at the bus station offers to give her the money. She follows him to get it, but he sexually abuses her. Then he gives her the five pesos.

Five Pesos addresses problems of poverty, child labor, and some of the risks that girls working in the street may encounter. It also portrays the cruelty of sexual abuse.

Approximate duration: 15 minutes.

How is the story of *Five Pesos* related to the Women's Convention?

This video sets out violations of the right to development and to a life of dignity, which millions of people suffer daily due to poverty. It also shows how class, gender and age inequalities together make for a tough reality for young girls working in the street.

Article 5 of the Convention deals with the social and cultural construction of stereotypes defining the roles of women and men. **Article 10** sets out the right to education. The theme of sexual abuse is also presented.

A. RAISING AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Possible Activities:

The coordinator can have participants form pairs to open a personal and intimate dialogue about emotions felt during the video.

Each pair can talk about the video and choose one feeling about it that they'd like to communicate with the group.

Before each presentation, each pair can list issues in the video which would be interesting to analyze as a group.

Each pair's ideas will be shared or presented, and the issues chosen can be addressed in the rest of the workshop.

Expressing Emotions

The coordinator can propose the following guidelines:

In groups of 4 or 5 people, participants can discuss Marcela's story and relate their initial feelings about her life.

Each group can then choose the scene of the video which moved them the most, the scene which caused the strongest reaction.

Finally, each group can explain to the others which scene they chose and why.

B. ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSION

Possible Activities:

The Construction of Stereotypes Based on Gender

Biological differences between women and men are the foundations on which every culture defines what women and men should do. But the roles society shapes go beyond physical differences. They are cultural constructions -- a society's culture shapes its concept of gender. Nonetheless, gender roles become so strong that they are often considered natural.

The coordinator can ask the group to think about the scene where Marcela wakes up and receives "orders" from her mom about what she must do that day.

The group can then consider the following question: *if Marcela were a boy, would she have received the same order from her mother?* Don't ask the group to answer the question right away, but instead to think about the messages that they received as children regarding:

- What boys should do or be?
- What girls should do or be?

Then the groups can think about the present. What are the messages that we transmit to children as mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, teachers, and friends regarding:

- What boys should do or be?
- What girls should do or be?

NOTE: Have the group think about not only explicit and verbal messages, but also ideas and values transmitted through certain games, toys, behaviors permitted and reprimanded, etc.

The group may want to list these ideas on a large sheet of paper. It can be done following this model:

In the PAST	Girls should do or be ...	Boys should do or be ...
Messages		
Games and Toys		
Behavior permitted and not permitted		

In the PRESENT	Girls should do or be ...	Boys should do or be ...
Messages		
Games and Toys		
Behavior permitted and not permitted		

Both sheets of paper can be presented side by side and participants can think about them for a few minutes. The coordinator can ask again the following question: *if Marcela were a boy, would she have received the same order or message from her mother?*

The groups can then answer the question, and discuss others such as:

- In our own communities and families, are there practices and messages we send based on the idea of male superiority?

Article 5 of the Women's Convention can then be read, especially focusing on part a.

Child Labor

According to a report from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in some Latin American countries more than 25% of children work, and they are some of the most exploited workers in the world. In most cases, work signifies exploitation. Poverty is the principal cause of child labor. Street workers in particular are among the most marginalized and exploited of child workers. They are in a continual struggle to survive. Many are pulled into petty crime and prostitution.

The coordinator can divide the group into two teams, giving each group paper, magazines, newspapers, glue, and markers to make a mural.

Instructions:

- One team should depict the lives of children who live with their families, go to school and enjoy most of their rights.
- The other team should depict the lives of children working in the streets.

NOTE: Each mural is to show how the children live, what they do, who they are with, their problems and needs, desires, opportunities and futures.

The coordinator can remind each team of the images in the video:

- The life of Marcela, working and playing in the streets.
- The life of the girl where Marcela's mom cleans, playing with Barbies.

Each group can then show its mural, and the coordinator can lead a discussion of the ideas that appear in the murals.

Sexual Abuse

Both boys and girls can become victims of sexual abuse, but statistics show that from the age of five, the proportion of girls suffering from sexual abuse begins to grow. In all, 76% of sexual abuse cases involve girls. (UNICEF 1994).

The coordinator can describe the scene where the taxi drivers exchange the following dialogue:

Taxi Driver 1: *"Two more years and Marcela won't need to beg ..."*

Taxi Driver 2: *"Why?"*

Taxi Driver 1: *"Don't you see how she is developing?"*

Then the coordinator can raise the following questions to start a debate:

- What do ideas like that mean for a girl in Marcela's situation?
- Who is responsible for child abuse and child prostitution?

The coordinator can recall the scene in the video where Marcela suffers sexual abuse to get her five pesos, and ask:

- Who is responsible for the abuse, and why?
- Could Marcela, a girl of eleven, have refused? How, or why not?
- What are some of the causes and consequences of sexual abuse in her life?

NOTE: The coordinator can inform the group that the story of Marcela is a true story of a girl from Tucuman, Argentina. Every time she needs to bring five pesos to her mom, she turns to the same man, who offers her money in exchange for sex. The debate can turn to the problem of girls' prostitution. The coordinator can present the following statistic:

*Each year, one million girls in the world fall into prostitution.
In Asia, more than a million girls and boys are involved in prostitution.
In the US, the number is 100,000.*

Article 6 of the Women's Convention can then be read and analyzed, as well as the **General Recommendation No. 19: Violence Against Women**, and related to the problems discussed.

Female Heads of Households

"Invisible Adjustment" is the name given to the efforts of women, especially poor women, to survive, manage growing domestic responsibilities, and to avoid sudden falls in their quality of life when social spending is cut back. Cuts in government investments in health services, education and other needs mean that women shoulder increasing burdens and household costs (UNICEF 1989). This increase in work affects women of all ages -- mothers, girls, older sisters, and grandmothers.

The coordinator can present the following:

*In one of every four households of the world a women is head of the family.
Poverty affects women differently than men, as women bear most of the costs of invisible adjustment (UNICEF 1989).*

Divide the group into two teams and have them:

- Identify the woman in the video who is head of a family and think about her life.
- Discuss some characteristics of women heads of families in participants' communities.
- Create a **Drama** "*A Day in the Life of a Female Head of Household*," focusing on her responsibilities.

Each team can present its work in front of the group.

The coordinator can then ask the following question:

When a woman is the head of a family, it means that the man is absent. When a man is head of a family, it doesn't mean that the woman is absent. Why?

The teams can meet again and discuss the question, and prepare another **Drama**, "*A Day in the Life of a Male Head of Household*," focusing on his responsibilities.

The Dramas can then be presented and a debate initiated about gender inequalities in heading a family.

C. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Possible Activities:

Changing Stereotypes

By not questioning gender stereotypes, we give different and unequal opportunities to people based on sex. But if we can change our gender-based notions about what is possible, we can open up opportunities for all -- girls, boys, women and men. We can begin by sending new messages to our kids, both in the family and in school.

Read and discuss **Article 10**, part c, and **Article 5**, part b of the Women's Convention.

Propose **new messages, games, toys and educational materials** (books, stories, etc.) that we can offer our children, with the objective of developing greater possibilities for the future.

	Girls should do or be ...	Boys should do or be ...
Messages		
Games and Toys		
Educational Materials		

Planning a Project

Discrimination is very complex and takes place at many levels. Effective solutions to end discrimination must begin at a very basic level. The following exercise is designed to help participants develop basic tools and concrete proposals to work toward eliminating discrimination against girls and women.

The coordinator can divide the group into teams of at least eight people.

Each team can define a problem of discrimination shared or recognized by everyone.

Read an article of the Women's Convention related to the problem.

Then the group can address its problem, perhaps using the following format:

What do we want to do?

Description of the Problem

The problem we want to address. It can be explained using a case study, a description of the situation in participants' communities, personal experiences, etc.

Why?

Reasons for the Project

Why did we choose this problem? What rights of the Women's Convention are violated? The idea is to explain why the project is important, and why it is important to eliminate or improve this situation of discrimination.

What Objectives?

General and Specific Objectives

What do we want to achieve with this project? It is important to list a GENERAL objective and two or three SPECIFIC objectives.

Who Will Benefit?

Beneficiaries

With whom will we work on the project? For whom?

How?

Action Plan and Activities

The specific steps of the project, what will be done.

When? For How Long?

Chronology

Time needed to complete each activity.

With What?

Budget and Resources

Propose a budget for the project. It is very important to understand what resources will be needed and available to complete the project.

Finally, each team can present its project summary to the rest of the group. It is important to have a discussion and debate about the feasibility of each project in the participants' communities. If the group can agree on one as most important, collective efforts can be put toward that one, with the others to follow.

A World Turned Upside-Down

The coordinator can present the following song, written on a poster:

*There was a time
Of a good little wolf
That was mistreated
By all the little sheep.*

*And there was a time
Of a bad prince
A beautiful witch
And an honest pirate.*

*All these things
Existed once
When I dreamt
About a world turned upside-down*

The group can be divided into teams of 4 or 5 people. Have the teams build on the song, thinking about a different world for girls who live like Marcela and for women who live like her mom. Each team can then present its song.

D. EVALUATION

Universality and Indivisibility of Human Rights

On a large piece of paper, each participant can list a human right or a situation of discrimination that was addressed in the workshop.

Participants, in turn, can add words that are related to the ones already written, and explain the relation.

When all participants have written something on the paper, the group can continue the exercise, adding more relations between the words already written, and/or adding new words. The finished product can be discussed in detail in order to understand the ideas of universality and indivisibility of human rights.

CHAPTER 4: SAFARI -- THE JOURNEY

In Zanzibar, a woman working as a prostitute is found unconscious on the street. She is picked up and brought to a hospital where she is diagnosed as having AIDS. Her pimp takes her back to her village, since he committed himself to bringing her back alive.

As the girl is handed over to her family, the pimp negotiates a price for a new girl to replace her.

During the return trip, the other prostitutes think about the life of their friend, about their own futures, the discrimination they face every day, and their violated rights.

Approximate duration: 15 minutes.

How is the story of the video *Safari -- The Journey* related to the Women's Convention?

Safari is primarily related to **Article 6** of the Convention which deals with prostitution and trafficking in women. Other relevant articles include **Article 12** on the right to health and **Article 9** on the right to a nationality.

A. RAISING AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Possible Activities:

Sharing Emotions

Participants can sit in a circle. The coordinator can present some phrases to start discussion about emotions that were felt while watching the video. Ideas:

- The image of the prostitute unconscious on the street.
- The trip in the minibus.
- The prostitutes accompanying their friend to her village.
- The scene where the men are exchanging money.
- The little girl in the minibus.
- The light at the end of the tunnel, at the end of the video.

A volunteer can write some of the groups' reactions on a large sheet of paper. The group can think about other issues as well, like "*What experience does a prostitute live? How do you feel about it?*"

Wearing a Mask

This activity asks participants to put themselves in the place of another. Individually or in groups of two, participants can make **MASKS** that symbolize the images they have about women in situations of prostitution, remembering images in the video and images in their own communities.

The coordinator can pass out cardboard, paper, paint, glue, and scissors. It would be interesting to add adornment or clothing to accompany the masks, like necklaces, scarves, dresses, shoes, purses, etc. Have participants make masks, at least one for every two people.

When the masks have been made, the group can be divided into two teams:

One team will put the masks on their faces, and walk around the room trying to act like prostitutes -- or like they think prostitutes act. At the same time, the other half of the group without masks will walk around and react like they believe people do when they face prostitutes.

Next, roles will be exchanged: those who acted like prostitutes will take off their masks, while the other half will put them on.

To conclude, participants can think about what they felt. How did it feel to be discriminated against by the rest of the group? What kind of stereotypes or prejudices do we hold against prostitutes?

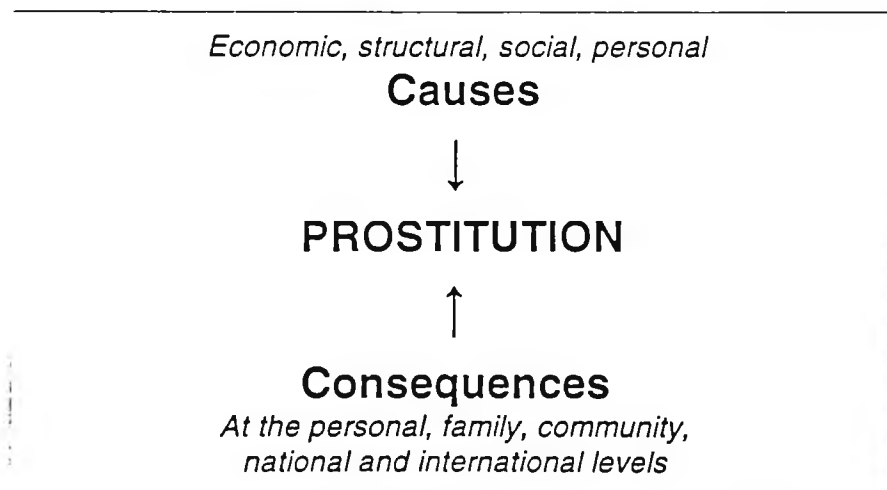
In the video, what differences existed between women who were prostituting themselves and the women living in the village?

B. ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSION

Possible Activities:

Prostitution

We cannot keep talking about prostitutes or prostitution while referring to only one part of the problem. We must incorporate and visualize the others who are supporting this situation. We are referring to the demand for prostitutes, the clients.



On a large piece of paper, participants can list **causes** of prostitution (ex: poverty, cultural norms, etc.). Then the same can be done for **consequences** of prostitution (ex: exploitation, violence, etc.).

Participants can think about their own communities. Are there specific causes and consequences of local prostitution?

NOTE: The coordinator can propose other ideas to think about: *How do the causes and consequences affect each person or institution involved in prostitution?*

- Clients: men who demand and pay for sex.
- Pimp: person who lives and benefits from the prostitution of other people.
- Women practicing prostitution.
- Families, communities, societies.

Women's Trafficking

Poverty and unemployment increase chances of women's trafficking. Along with established forms of sexual exploitation, new forms are arising: sexual tourism, contracting domestic workers from poorer countries to work in "developed" countries, marriages arranged between women from "developing" countries and foreigners. These practices violate women's rights and dignity, and put women in risky situations of violence and ill-treatment. See **Article 6** of the Women's Convention and **Recommendation No. 19**.

The coordinator can begin a discussion of possible forms of trafficking in women. Questions for discussion can include:

- What happens in your community in terms of women's trafficking?
- What are some of the jobs that migrant women hold?

Then the following question can be posed:

Why in our societies is there not trafficking in young men so that women of all ages and social classes may use them sexually?

The question is absurd and is meant to provoke participants, to start a discussion about some of the **SUPPOSITIONS** that lie behind prostitution and trafficking in women. A **PRICE** is put on a woman's body, she is **EXPLOITED** sexually, **DECISIONS** about women's bodies are made by others. The group may want to discuss and debate about the **POWER** relationships between women and men.

Sexual Stereotypes

Most of the powers that men hold in political, religious, social and economic areas they also hold sexually. Men desire; women, generally, are considered the objects of men's desires.

The coordinator can make a set of cards with the following statements and popular myths (and/or others):

- Men have a strong and unstoppable desire for sex.
- There are good women and bad women. The first are wives and mothers, and the second want to prostitute themselves.
- Prostitution involves only perverts. Decent people and the fathers in our families are not involved.
- Women of ... are the sexiest and the best lovers. (The group can fill in the blank.)

Also, blank cards can be provided so that participants can write some of the popular sexual conceptions that are passed on within their community or culture.

The group can be divided into teams of 4 or 5 people. Each team can choose one card, or make up one. Then the team can find some way to express, with a sketch or drawing, the content of the card.

Then teams can invent a new myth or idea that contradicts the popular myth they chose. They can also prepare a sketch based on the new idea. Each team can then present its new idea.

Health and AIDS

The coordinator can read the following notice that circulated on the Internet on January 5, 1999:

We Condemn the Murder of GUGU DLAMINI, South African AIDS Activist, Woman Living with HIV

The New York Times recently reported the death of Gugu Dlamini in South Africa. A 36-year-old mother of a son, Gugu died last December 22 as a result of the beating she received by neighbors in her own home. They had accused her of having brought shame to their community (Kwamashu, in the outskirts of Durban) after she openly revealed on December 1 -- World AIDS Day -- that she was infected with HIV.

Gugu worked as a volunteer for the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (NAPWA) of South Africa. According to the United Nations, three million people in South Africa have the infection. In KwaZulu-Natal, the province most affected by the illness, and where Gugu lived, up to 30% of the adult population lives with HIV/AIDS.

On Monday, December 21, Gugu was physically attacked by a man who ordered her to keep silent, like other people living with HIV/AIDS. Although she requested help from the police, they didn't do anything, according to reports made by her friends to the local newspaper. That same night, a group tore down her house and Gugu was brutally stoned and hit with sticks. She died the following day.

In spite of the scourge of the epidemic in South Africa, people living with HIV/AIDS are afraid to reveal their condition due to the hostility they know they will have to face.

The murder of Gugu Dlamini not only shows the profound discrimination that people living with HIV/AIDS suffer in many countries. It is also a reflection of the flagrant violence that primarily affects women around the world, both inside and outside their homes, without assistance from authorities when this is requested.

Information received thanks to the solidarity that created the electronic forum VelHache.

After reading the text, the group can compare discrimination that the ill woman in the video and Gugu Dlamini suffered. How does AIDS affect the participants' communities?

The coordinator can write on a large sheet of paper **Article 12**, part 1 of the Women's Convention, and **Recommendation 15**, parts a, b, c, and d, so they can be read by all the participants.

Think about these articles. What are the violations of the rights of the ill woman in the video and Gugu?

Nationality and Marriage

When a woman marries a man from a different nationality, in some countries she automatically loses her own nationality and takes on the nationality of her husband, or lives without one. Without her own citizenship rights, a woman may become completely dependent on her partner.

Read **Article 9** of the Women's Convention.

The coordinator can explain the problem of the foreign prostitute in the video (the one wearing pants), taking into account the following details:

She is a foreign woman who moved to Zanzibar when she got married to a Tanzanian man. In doing so she lost her nationality, but did not receive Tanzanian citizenship, while her children received it. After some years of marriage, her husband abandoned her and the children. Without citizenship, she could not find work legally. She did not have access to a family network, and she could not go back to her own country because she lost her nationality when she got married. She began to prostitute herself so she and her family could survive.

The group can sit down in a circle and take a few minutes to put themselves in her shoes. How must she feel? What kind of fears, feelings, must she have? What kind of life and opportunities can she hope for? How would you feel if you were in her place? What discriminations must she face every day?

To conclude, feelings can be shared and the group can discuss the importance of **NATIONALITY**. The coordinator can raise the following question: *Would this character be able to find other opportunities besides prostitution? Which ones?*

C. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Possible Activities:

Our Children, Our Future, Our Promises

Remember the scene of the video where the little girl asks the driver about the sick woman's destiny, when the camera, looking through the little girl's eyes, shows a street, a dark tunnel, and a light ...

The coordinator can write on a poster the following text:

Women, as well as men, have the right to fully enjoy sexual health and all aspects of their sexuality. This means that they should have access to all necessary information, to sexual pleasure, to the exercise of their sexuality, to the power of decision about with whom, when and how they will enjoy sexuality, with all respect to physical, psychological, and moral integrity of the other.

-- Cladem, Latin American and Caribbean Committee
for the Defense of Women's Rights

On another poster, the following question can be raised: *What changes should we bring about so that our children will not enter into prostitution?*

Then divide the group into two or three teams. Each team, after thinking about both texts, can establish a set of **promises** to their children. Example: If information and education is valued, the group could agree on this promise: *"We will inform ourselves so we can inform and talk to our children about everything related to the experience of healthy sexuality."*

In a group, all promises can be read and written on a poster headed by the following question: *What changes should be initiated so that our children won't enter into prostitution?*

Once all promises are listed, they can be copied and given to each participant, or displayed in a public place.

Revising Our Legislation

Legislative reforms that punish people who benefit from prostitution are necessary. Women's groups are asking that the police stop detaining and harassing women practicing prostitution, and that authorities bring to court pimps, clients, and other culprits that are exploiting women working in the sex industry.

The coordinator can prepare a series of photocopies including municipal laws, moral codes of conduct, penal codes and other legislation that deals with prostitution.

Then the group can do some research in its community, region or country about laws against prostitution.

Divide the group into different teams. Each team can take on a different level of legislation: municipal, state, national.

Read all applicable laws and analyze them. The following questions may facilitate the process:

- Who is protected with these laws?
- What are the effects of these laws?
- Who is involved? Who is invisible?
- Are these laws attacking prostitution or women engaged in prostitution?

Read **Article 6** of the Women's Convention and **General Recommendation No. 19** , Violence Against Women, especially points 11 through 18.

Using what has been read and discussed, think about:

- What changes or legal reforms are necessary?
- What other alternatives or services may help to solve the problem?
- Are there public policies in your communities or region that deal with prostitution? What are they?

It would be possible to organize the information and present it as a letter or a shadow report to the government, or participants can think about some project to reform the law.

D. EVALUATION

Evaluating, One Line at a Time.

Participants can sit in a circle. At the top of a sheet of paper, the coordinator can write the following phrase:

In this workshop ...

One person can write a response on the bottom line of the sheet of paper, then fold the paper in order to hide her or his response, and pass it to the next participant. This can continue until everyone has written a response. To conclude, the coordinator can unfold the paper and read all the participants' comments.

CHAPTER 5: YALIYO: THE WAY IT IS

This video tells the story of the death of Mwanajuma, a woman born in a small village in Tanzania, in Africa.

Mwanajuma married a friend in the city where she was studying at the university. For choosing her husband and living outside of the cultural norms and values dictated by her ancestors, she is discriminated against by the men in her village, even after her death in a car accident. She dies and leaves two children behind. Her husband, following her wishes, brings her body back to her village. Her uncles and some older men of the village discuss the possibility of burying her in the village and of requiring payment of her dowry (in this village dowry was to be paid by her husband-to-be) after her death, because it wasn't paid at the time of marriage.

The principal issue raised in the video revolves around the punishments that men impose on women for not following the customs of society (marrying someone chosen by her parents in exchange for dowry, living in the village like the rest of the women).

Approximate duration: 15 minutes.

How is the story of *Yaliyo: The Way It Is* related to the Women's Convention?

The video shows many types of discrimination against women related to marriage that are prohibited by the Convention. See especially **Article 16**, parts a, b, c, and h. It also shows socio-cultural patterns based on the idea that women are inferior, prohibited by **Article 5**, part a.

The video also highlights some of the difficulties that women face every day in exercising and enjoying their human rights and fundamental freedoms, on the same level as men. See **Article 3**. More specifically, it deals with the freedom to choose, participate, express opinions, and make decisions.

The story also allows for reflection about the idea of dowry, where women are used as objects of negotiation.

A. RAISING AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Possible Activities:

Few Destinies

The coordinator can write the title of the video, *The Way It Is*, on a large sheet of paper. Then she or he can suggest that participants think about the title and the story in the video. Participants can try to determine the meaning of the title.

Then each participant can tell the group about her or his ideas.

When We Switch Roles

The coordinator can divide the group into teams, and pass to each a card with the first article of the Women's Convention:

*"... the term **discrimination against women** shall mean 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, civil or any other field."*

The coordinator can distribute dictionaries so that they can be consulted if necessary.

Have the teams:

- Read, analyze and debate the content of the article.
- Identify all discrimination that Mwanajuma suffered, taking into account the definition in **Article 1** -- any distinction, exclusion or restriction.... Discuss the ways in which her right to live a life free from discrimination was violated, along with the rights of the other women living in the village.

Then each team can put itself in the shoes of a character in the story, expressing how they would feel being:

- Mwanajuma.
- A family member or friend of the dead woman.

Conclude with a presentation of each team's conclusions.

B. ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSION

Possible Activities:

Universality of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity

Respect for cultural diversity is a necessary right if we want to conserve the differences and particularities of distinct social groups. At the same time, there are some rights that are shared by **ALL of HUMANITY**; they must be respected in spite of specific cultural characteristics.

The coordinator can present the following situation to begin a debate among the participants:

We know that different cultures exist in the world. People in Tanzania or Bolivia, Canada or India define their own practices, norms, customs, relations, and cultural ideas. As a result, people's values are different. Now, if we recognize these differences, are there rights that we may call universal? Why? Which ones?

The coordinator can act as a moderator and record the conclusions of the debate.

Then these instructions can be presented to the group, divided into teams:

- Identify the practices, norms, customs, values and ideas that shape the culture of the community in the video.
- Identify the practices, norms, customs, values and ideas that shape the culture of the participants' communities.
- List the ways in which the culture presented in the video and the culture of the participants harm women. Debate about who is responsible for maintaining certain cultural traditions, and who benefits from them.

To conclude, each team can present its thoughts to the other. Afterwards, the coordinator can read and lead a discussion of **Article 5** of the Women's Convention.

Marriage

Marriage is a legal or religious relation between two people, where each one brings her or his knowledge and aptitudes to form a union. Roles inside marriage are often very specific: men work outside the home, while women work inside the home. These discriminations based on sex prevent women and men from fully developing their capacities.

The coordinator can invite the group to imagine the life of Mwanajuma before her accident. What did she do to prompt the discriminatory remarks on the part of her community? Read **Article 16**, part c and relate it to her situation.

Read the rest of **Article 16** aloud and discuss it.

The coordinator can then ask each participant to think about one or two things that they like or that make them feel valued in their marriage or their relationship with their partner. They can use a drawing or an object to symbolize it.

Participants can do the same thing regarding things that constitute discrimination against them in the same relationship.

Each one can present and explain her or his symbol. Positive symbols can be grouped together, and negative symbols can be grouped together.

Finally participants can think about the two sets of symbols. Which symbols appear together? Are there symbols that appear in both places? Why?

Identity

A woman's identity is often related to her reproductive functions (wife, mother), to the maintenance of the home, to her father's identity and then her husband's identity. But the women's movement and the creation of a new feminine identity have changed many norms around the world.

The coordinator can present the words to the song heard in the video, which represents the idealistic vision of Mwanajuma's father and his desire for a happy and peaceful life for his daughter:

*Oh! Child travel safely
Have good health
Your mother and I
We pray the Almighty God*

*You the obedient child
Your absence leaves us a void
All good we wish you
We know your habits.*

*The things we tell you.
Important to consider.
Our one and only child
To look after us
To know our need.*

*Rejoice with,
With maturity
To the husband go
Abide by the duty.*

*We wish you all the best
Wherever you go.
We brought you up
All to Him belongs.*

*Go, we wish you best of luck
Devastated we are
Strangeness you are not
accustomed to.*

*Go and Practice
Good care we gave you
Whom we rely on
When troubles befall us
To assist us in old age.*

*Worldly goods
Comes marriage
Live in harmony
Of which the responsibility you hold.*

After reading the song, the participants can write on a poster all the song's lyrics that keep women from developing their own identities.

In participants' communities, are there obstacles that keep women from developing their own identities? Initiate a discussion about demands on women made by our communities, families or governments, without considering women's wishes and needs.

Finally the group can think about identity after death. In the participants' communities:

- How is the identity of a human being considered after death?
- Is there discrimination between the post-mortem treatment of men and women?
- Does discrimination continue after death?

Participation

Fully enjoying one's human rights requires participation in society and politics and the exercise of citizenship.

Participants can divide themselves into two teams. A card with the following text can be given to **Team 1**:

There is a small group of men living in a village. They meet once a week to discuss public and private issues, and to make decisions for the community. Today, they are meeting to discuss a particular case: a young woman in the community is pregnant but doctors have diagnosed a disease in her body. As a result, if she carries her pregnancy through, she will have to be bed-ridden and have weekly check-ups because her life is in danger. The woman, eight weeks pregnant, wishes to terminate her pregnancy, but doctors and her family refuse to support her decision. She brings her case to a community elder, and he brings the case to the meeting.

Team 2 is given tape to cover their mouths, and rope to tie their hands and feet.

Each team can familiarize itself with the materials, and think about some ways to use them. Then both teams can be reunited. The coordinator can ask that each group comment about the respective materials it received and about their utility.

Then:

- **Team 1** will sit in a circle and act as if it were representing the community's men, discussing the pregnant and ill woman's case.
- Each member of **Team 2** can find a place to sit down, outside the men's circle. Each one will sit on a chair with her or his mouth covered with the tape, and feet and hands tied with the ropes. Someone should be nominated to take on the role of the pregnant woman.

The coordinator can listen to the men's discussion and list the group's comments on a large sheet of paper.

Afterward the group can have a round table discussion. The following questions may be presented to open the debate:

- What did participants feel in each role and observing the other team's role?
- If it would be possible to choose, which group would you be part of? In which group would you feel more comfortable? Why?
- What opportunity for participation did each member have?
- What were the comments and decisions that were made by Team 1?
- What were the opinions of the rest of the community? Specifically, what opinion did the young pregnant woman have?

The coordinator may want to return to the story of the video and ask the following questions:

- Who participated in decision-making in the video?
- What opinions would the men in the video have regarding women's right to participation?
- What do you think the women think about participation?

To guide the discussion, the coordinator may put the following statement on a board:

Men discuss and decide over a dead woman's body.

Dowry

There are many ways to violate a woman's rights. Imposing a dowry is one of them. There are different types of dowry. In some cases, a bride's family must pay the future husband and his family with a collection of material goods and money, as happens in India. In other communities, like the one in the video, it is the husband-to-be who must pay the father of the bride for his daughter.

The coordinator can lead a discussion of the following list of questions about the concept of dowry. In this way, a collective definition of dowry can be constructed.

Dowry:

- What is it?
- Who really pays the price? In what ways?
- What rights are violated with the establishment of a dowry?
- Are there differences between the price of a woman and the value of a woman?
- In Western cultures, or other cultures where dowries do not exist, are there other types of prices put on a woman's body?

It would be interesting to remember the video's characters and their respective arguments about the dowry for a dead woman's body. Participants can analyze the position of each character:

- Who is in favor of requiring the dowry?
- Who is against the proposition?
- Who has an opinion?
- Who is not allowed to communicate her or his opinion?

Finally a discussion can be initiated about the following questions: *Are socio-cultural changes essential to end some kinds of discrimination against women? What types of people in your community facilitate socio-cultural change? What types of people slow down such processes?*

C. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Possible Activities:

Each participant can write a letter to:

- Her or his partner or potential partner
- A father
- A mother
- Brothers or sisters
- A friend
- A family member
- A neighbor
- A community representative
- God
- Other

The letter's purpose is to express ways to improve relations with that person and overcome situations based on or resulting in discrimination. Some of the points we can keep in mind:

- In what ways can we value each other?
- What would be some of the attitudes that would guarantee each other's respect?
- How can we share chores, activities, and responsibilities?
- How can we listen and communicate?
- What do we want as a person -- what do we like, what makes us feel good, what don't we like, what hurts us?
- What can we do to construct a harmonious relationship?

These letters will belong to each participant. Only she or he will decide what to do with them.

Using the Media

Women need information to improve our personal and community lives, and to prepare reports to our governments asking them to eliminate discrimination. Communication tools and the media facilitate relations between different organizations and offer access to data bases, literature, magazines -- all necessary in order to face problems, research them, and design projects to alleviate them.

On a large sheet of paper, participants can list all the resources that provide information in their communities: libraries, organizations, networks, groups, etc., which may be used in order to do research on discrimination against women in their communities.

In small teams, participants can write down an act of discrimination against one or many women which is occurring or has occurred in their communities. Then each team can think about ways to publicize the case and find support. The coordinator can supply the following guidelines to facilitate the exercise:

Inside our Communities:

- How can we publicize a human rights violation? Think about resources like posters, community radio stations, organizations, networks, meetings, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, alternative resources, etc.
- What would be the cost?
- What would be some of the strategic places for advocacy?
- When would be the best time to publicize the information?
- How can we organize the information and what should we do to strengthen the case?

At the National Level:

- What means of communication can we use to contact governmental organizations to inform them of the case and ask for collaboration or intervention?
- How can we present the case to women's organizations, citizens' groups, universities, decision-makers and people with political power?
- What else can we do to gain support? Examples: send solidarity chain letters, collect signatures, etc.

At the International Level

- Can we communicate with international organizations and/or networks? How?
- What can we ask of these international contacts?

Each team can then present its conclusions. The following can be discussed:

- What are some of the positive and negative aspects of using communication resources? In what ways do they serve us?
- What problems or difficulties can we expect?

D. EVALUATION

Possible Activity:

Defining My Rights⁷

Participants can answer, as a group or individually, the following questions:

- I accept myself when ... because ...
- The first important decision I made freely for me was ...
- When I did I felt ...
- I wish to be respected in my rights to ...
- For me it is hard to respect ...
- Because ...
- In daily life with my partner the most important rights to respect are ...
- In daily life with my children the most important rights to respect are ...
- In daily life with my neighbors the most important rights to respect are ...
- Women's most important human rights are ...
- In this workshop I have learned ...

⁷Adapted from *Women's Human Rights in Daily Living Together: A Manual for Women's Human Rights Education*, by Veronica Matus, Chilean Commission for Human Rights, 1993, p. 58.

CHAPTER 6: DAILY HEROISM

The video *Daily Heroism* brings us to a small village in Senegal, and tells the story of Assaita, the only woman of the community who holds a political position. She is the rural counsel's vice-president. From that post she tries to change traditions that discriminate against women, but her authority is questioned.

Assaita uses her power to protect an eleven-year-old girl who doesn't want to marry the man who has been chosen for her. Also, she criticizes female genital mutilation and tells the women in the community about their rights.

The village's men, tired of Assaita's decisions, decide to punish all the women by burning their radios and forbidding their access to information. While some women criticize Assaita's actions as well, many others, and her husband, support her.

Approximate duration: 15 minutes.

How is the story of the video *Daily Heroism* related to the Women's Convention?

The video addresses the political rights of women, and their right to participation in the political life of the community and in the government. See **Articles 7 and 8**. It also deals with **Article 16** setting out rights related to marriage and responsibilities of men and women within the family. It also addresses the practice of female genital mutilation, a type of violence against women's bodies (see **General Recommendation No. 14**), and obstacles that we face trying to change cultural stereotypes (see CEDAW **Article 5**). Finally, the video deals with difficulties in women's access to basic resources like water, the rights of rural women (see **Article 14**), and the right to information (see **Articles 10**, part h, and **13**, part c).

A. RAISING AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Possible Activities:

Standing In Her Shoes ...

Participants can sit in a circle and each one can choose the character in the video that she or he identifies with. Then each participant can explain the choice.

The coordinator can point out the characters that have been chosen most and least often, and ask the group to think about the reasons why.

Women and Men ... Heroines and Heroes

The coordinator can write the following titles on two blank posters:

- **Women** in the video
- **Men** in the video

Participants can write characteristics under each title.

When all characteristics have been listed, the group can debate some of the following questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between men and women in the video, and men and women in our communities?
- Who are the ones in the video we could call heroines or heroes? In our communities? What characteristics do they have?

B. ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSION

Possible Activities:

Political Participation

Full citizenship rights do not simply include the right to vote. Enjoying full citizenship means that one can participate in the implementation of governmental policies, participate in government, and in non-governmental organizations or public associations.

The coordinator can read **Articles 7 and 8** of the Women's Convention, then present the following statistic:

Women hold only 10.5% of the seats in the world's parliaments or legislative bodies.

The group can divide itself into three teams. Each one can be given a set of questions to discuss:

- Think about some causes and consequences of the limited political participation of women. Consider both qualitative and quantitative participation.
- Analyze women's participation in the video: Assaita and her contribution to her community, and the difficulties that she encounters in accomplishing her political role; and reactions of the other women, her husband, and the other men toward her activities.
- Analyze the participation of women in politics in participants' communities. Who are the women who take part? What do they do? What obstacles do they face? What are their contributions?

Then each team can present its conclusions.

Finally the coordinator can present the following cartoon:



Well then, Manolito is the Minister of Finance, and I am the Chancellor ... and you? I am President!

Absurd! A woman can't be President!

And why not innovate? After all, we are playing!

Because, even when we are playing, we don't let someone who wants to innovate be President!

Female Genital Mutilation

In some countries, genital mutilation of a woman's clitoris is practiced as soon as a girl reaches puberty. This act, which is a fundamental violence against a woman's body, causes serious infections, physical pain, and profound psychological scars. It seems to be related to the idea that women do not have the right to experience sexual pleasure, or the right to make decisions about their own bodies.

The coordinator can ask participants to express how they felt when they were faced with the words **Genital Mutilation**.

For each emotion, the group can list consequences for the complete health of women (physical, emotional, psychological), taking into account the right to healthy sexuality.

The group can then discuss other methods of **control** over a woman's body that exist in other parts of the world.

Finally the coordinator can pass around magazines, construction paper, paint, markers, glue, etc., so that participants can make a poster which is a **tribute** to a woman's body, as it is **naturally**, without torture, violence, or artificial controls.

Information and Cultural Change

the right to information is fundamental if a woman wants to know her reality, understand it, and change it if necessary. If women have information they can advance in their fight for their rights.

Have the group write on a poster the importance of radios for the women in the video. On another poster, list some of the criticisms that men made about the radios.

Read **Article 1** of the Women's Convention, and relate the words **exclusion, distinction, and restriction** to the importance of radios or any other means of communication. The group may also want to analyze **Articles 10, part h, 13, part c, and 16**.

Then divide the group into teams of 4 or 5 people and ask each one to prepare a newsletter, testimony, interview, or other type of informative text that could be presented on a radio program. This piece of information should address a theme related to the discrimination that women suffer, and violations of their rights.

Each team can present its work to the rest of the group as if they were "on the air."

Finally the coordinator can open a debate about some of the opportunities that communication and information offer in fighting women's discrimination. It would also be interesting to discuss the disadvantages of certain types of media.

Marriage

Concepts of marriage and family vary according to specific cultures, but all should ensure that treatment of women within a marriage, legally and privately, will be based on principles of equality and justice.

The coordinator can read **Article 16** of the Women's Convention.

Next, present the following dialogue from the video, written on small cards:

- a. It is what a spouse should accept from her husband! (Awa's mother)
- b. Since when may women choose their husband? (Awa's grandmother)
- c. You make the decisions in this house.... You don't respect me, nor respect my words! (Keba, Assaita's husband)
- d. My domestic authority, you negate it! (Keba, Assaita's husband)
- e. These are things that bring wrong ideas to women and girls. (Village man, referring to the radios)
- f. She wants no more than three kids. (Village man, referring to Assaita)
- g. Your third wife does not respect you, nor does she respect me. It is she who wears the pants in your house! (Father of Assaita's husband)
- h. All that a woman possesses is the property of her husband. When she is a girl, it is her father's property. (Ibou, village man)
- i. These objects (radios) prevent women from completing their duties, as mothers, and gives them irresponsible ideas about our values and cultures. (Village man)
- j. Keba, ask your woman to choose between you and politics! (Father of Assaita's husband)
- k. Assaita, you cannot sit down higher than men do, sit down on the floor! (Village man)

For each card, participants can think about the rights that have been violated with these words, and explain the discrimination, prejudices, and stereotypes that are behind the expression.

Participants can describe similar expressions that have been heard in their communities. The coordinator can lead the group in making replies to these.

C. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Resolve a Problem

The girl in the video, Awa, wishes to kill herself in the village well because she does not want to marry the man chosen for her.

In groups of 6 to 8 people, try to find some kind of solution to Awa's problem. Think about, for example:

- Where does the problem come from?
- Who can help her?
- Are there opportunities for resistance, or assistance from the people living in her community?
- Are there rules or laws or human rights agreements that could be used to defend the girl's rights, and how could they be used?

Each group can present its conclusions to the rest of the participants.

Participation in Politics

The coordinator can ask the group to imagine that: *In a few months there will be new elections in your community.*

The group can be divided into two or three teams representing diverse political parties. The objective is to elect a new Minister for the Advancement of Women.

Each team, using a sensible evaluation of the community's needs, will prepare a **PLAN OF ACTION**.

- Think about new policies to be implemented.
- Propose some concrete projects that the government could finance.
- Take into account the need to eliminate **all forms** of discrimination against women, and consider some of CEDAW's propositions toward that goal.

To create the Plan of Action, teams can use the Women's Convention and General Recommendations (in Appendix C of this manual), and their propositions for "appropriate measures."

Each group can elect a representative to play the role of the candidate. She or he will present the team's plan as if running for election.

To conclude, the group can debate about the themes included in the different Plans of Action.

NOTE: It would be interesting to compare these Plans with those that actually exist in participants' communities.

D. EVALUATION

Possible Activity:

Power of Words

The coordinator can present the following sentence:

*The most powerful arm of the oppressor
is the mind of the oppressed. -- Steve Biko*

Each participant can then explain what these words mean to her or him, in relation to what has been learned in the workshop.

CHAPTER 7: WOMEN HOLD UP THE SKY

The video *Women Hold Up the Sky* presents the story of an African-American grandmother named Dot, who is responsible for her granddaughter Joy. Both live in the streets of New York.

Dot is a poor woman who does not have access to the necessary resources for survival. She seeks out government support, contacting a social worker to ask for some kind of housing. The government cannot offer her what she needs, but the social worker feels obligated to follow-up on the case of the little girl because the law requires that she must live in suitable housing.

Dot searches for another way out, so that Joy can stay under her care. Because she cannot find any work she registers in a social work program and cleans parks in order to receive some social benefits.

All doors are closed for Dot. She cannot find work, adequate social assistance or housing, or a good counseling service. Her granddaughter is taken away from her.

Approximate duration: 11 minutes

How is the story of *Women Hold Up the Sky* related to the Women's Convention?

The video deals with discrimination against women and girls (**Article 1**), and the responsibilities of states to prevent discrimination (**Articles 2, 3, and 4**). It also shows systematic violations of the social, economic and cultural right of Dot and Joy.

A. RAISING AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Possible Activities:

Our Reactions

The coordinator can prepare cards with the following:

- Dot's desires and opportunities
- Joy's childhood
- Government responsibility
- Social services
- Nancy's feelings
- Poverty
- Vulnerability
- Human rights

Then put the cards in a bag and ask the participants to sit in a circle. One at a time, each participant can take out a card and explain how she or he feels about the phrase.

Goals, Emotions, Desires and Intentions

The coordinator can divide the group into small teams and propose to each one:

- Discuss Dot's goals and why they seem to be unattainable.
- Debate about Nancy's feelings, separating into Nancy/professional and Nancy/personal.
- Imagine Joy's desires.
- Analyze the intentions of the Government.

The teams can then present and discuss their conclusions.

B. ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSION

Possible Activities:

Discrimination

Vulnerability is frequently caused by marginalization and exclusion from the socioeconomic system and the processes of decision-making, and by the lack of access to resources and opportunities based on equality.⁸

The coordinator can ask the group to construct a definition of *discrimination*. It can be noted on a blank poster.

Then read **Article 1** of the Women's Convention and compare it to the definition by the participants.

Finally discuss the following question: *In what ways does the system in which Dot and Joy live discriminate?* Participants can respond to the question using scenes and dialogue from the video.

Government Policies and Social Assistance

Many governments sign and ratify human rights treaties, including those requiring steps in favor of disadvantaged groups like women. However, many governments don't follow through when it comes to putting their promises into practice.

The coordinator can divide the group into three teams, A, B, and C.

Group A will receive a card with **Article 2** of the Women's Convention on it. Group B will receive **Article 3**, and group C, **Article 4**. All groups can be given a copy of the list in Appendix C of this manual of all the countries that ratified the Women's Convention.

⁸See report of the Istanbul Conference on Human Settlement (HABITAT II).

Instructions:

In each group, read the content of the article and discuss its meaning.

Search in the list of States Parties to the Convention to see if Dot's country (USA) or the participants' country has ratified it. Think about the commitments that a government must make to defend and protect human rights.

Discuss why certain countries like the United States refuse to ratify the Women's Convention, and other countries -- including "developing" countries -- approve all human rights treaties that are written. How is a particular government's attitude toward ratification of a treaty related to the following statement?:

The human rights discourse is a highly political discourse.

Rights and Duties

"... States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights...."⁹

The group can create two teams. One group can list **ALL RIGHTS** that they consider important and/or possess as a citizen; the other can list **ALL DUTIES**.

Then these lists can be exchanged. The teams can cross-out those rights or duties that are not achieved, enjoyed or carried out. Both posters can then be presented. All rights and duties will be read, and those that are crossed out will be noted.

To initiate a final debate, the coordinator can present the following questions:

- What are the punishments for those responsible for the human rights violations (economic, social and cultural) against Dot and Joy?
- What are the punishments against Dot and Joy for not being able to complete the duties dictated by law? Is it fair to punish someone because of poverty?
- Who is responsible to guarantee these rights?

C. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Possible Activities:

Planning Political Action

In small groups:

- Characterize the government policies and the social assistance offered by the government in the video.
- Characterize the government policies and social assistance offered by the government of the participants.
- Issue judgements of each policy.

⁹Preamble, CEDAW.

Then list the claims and demands that we should make as citizens before the government. Think about and formulate plans to make these claims and demands viable and visible in our communities.

When each team has finished its work, present the conclusions in front of the group.

Searching for Another Ending

Think about the conclusion of the video, when the social workers come to take Joy away. Identify points and arguments that were not taken into account when coming up with this drastic solution.

Imagine another conclusion to the story, taking into account other points of view, especially those of Dot and Joy.

D. EVALUATION

Possible Activities:

A Project Without Discrimination

Invite the group to imagine that they are project evaluators. The coordinator needs to find some kind of project or plan that has been developed within the community. It could be the project of a school, a small business, health center, etc.

Divide the group into teams. Taking into account the ideas analyzed in the workshop, each group can evaluate whether the project contains any forms of discrimination (class, sex, age, race, religion, etc.)

- Then the teams can propose modifications or other changes to the original proposal. Each team can present its conclusions.

CHAPTER 8: FIRE CODE

Fire Code tells the story of an immigrant family from Bangladesh living in New York. The family is made up of a grandmother (Ma), her two adult sons (Hussein and Mazhar), the spouse of one of them (Sameena), her little girl and an aunt.

To earn money for survival, the women prepare baked goods in their kitchen which are sold by Hussein and Mazhar. In the video we see some of the power relations and real economic difficulties that women must endure.

Members of the family are living in poverty and illiteracy, and they suffer from discrimination like many immigrants. Moreover, Sameena, as a woman and a wife, experiences another type of discrimination as well -- violence against women inside the home.

Violence against women is present in most cultures and geographical regions, and takes place at different levels of every society.

The practice of "burning wives"¹⁰ continues to be a problem in Southern Asia. Recent cases of burned wives have also occurred in communities in the United States and Canada. *Fire Code* shows that even the threat of this practice can produce devastating consequences that affect the psychological and physical well-being of women.

Approximate duration: 15 minutes.

How is *Fire Code* related to the Women's Convention?

The story is centered on **Article 15**, which deals with women's equality before the law, principally parts 2 and 4, along with **Article 13**, parts a and b which establish full equality in economic life. *Fire Code* also addresses cultural stereotypes (see **Article 15**) that lie behind all kinds of discrimination, and **Article 16**, parts c and h, which guarantee women equality in marriage and within the family.

A. RAISING AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Possible Activities:

There are threats that are powerful in themselves, producing fear, terror and desperation. Even if they are not carried out, they can be so strong that they hold the power of the threatened act. Violence against women is manifested in many ways, defined culturally, and can be subtle or explicit.

Ask the group to think about the scene where Hussein asks Sameena: " *You want to be burned?*" and the consequences, physical and emotional, for Sameena.

Have the group identify phrases or threatening situations that are paralyzing for women, and

¹⁰In "dowry death" a woman may die because of burning or other types of personal injury within the first years of marriage, killed by her husband or in-laws in relation to dowry issues.

then write them on a large sheet of paper. For example:

- Shut up, or I'll hit you!
- You'll know who gives orders around here!
- You are useless and worthless!

Speaking to the Characters

The coordinator can ask participants to work in groups of 3 to 5 people. Each participant can describe the character which moved her or him the most, and why. Then each person can talk to the character. What would you say?

B. ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSION

Possible Activities:

Violence Against Women

Violence against women has grown out of the patriarchal character of our societies, which historically have considered women as inferior and subordinate, and as "property" of men. Actual or potential violence based on gender -- physical, sexual, economic, or psychological -- produces suffering for women. Violence can include threats, coercion, or restrictions on women's fundamental liberties, in public or private environments.

The coordinator can present the following statistic on a poster:

Between 20 and 50 percent of women experience some kind of domestic violence during their marriage.

While we often believe that such problems only happen to others, statistics show that violence affects women in all situations -- in cities or in rural areas, without regard to income, education levels, culture or religion.

The coordinator can divide the group into teams of approximately 10 people.

The teams can discuss the distinct forms of violence in their communities, including both explicit and subtle manifestations of violence, physical and sexual violence, as well as psychological and economic violence.

Each team can choose one form of violence and write a short story about it. Then stories can be presented to the rest of the group.

The group may also read part 1 of **General Recommendation No. 19: Violence Against Women**: "Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men."

It would also be important to read the rest of the Recommendation, especially points 11 and 23.

Power Relations

There are many characteristics that differentiate human beings -- sex, age, race, religion, ethnicity, culture, etc. As these differences are organized hierarchically, they become **inequalities** and consequently, create relations of power.

The coordinator can present the following poem on a poster:

The System ...

*that programs the computer that
alarms the banker who alerts
the ambassador who dines with the general
who replaces the president who
intimidates the minister who threatens
the director general who humiliates
the manager who screams at the chief who
rushes the employee who
despises the worker who mistreats the woman
who hits the child who kicks the dog.*

*-- Eduardo Galeano
Days and Nights of Love and War*

Why would it be absurd to think about this chain of events and violence in the opposite order -- the dog that kicks the child, who hits the woman, who mistreats the worker...?

Ask the group to describe the hierarchical relations that are shown in the video, then to try to describe, in general, the hierarchical relations in their communities.

Then discuss the following questions:

- In a family group, there are at least two basic differences, sex and age. Are they both organized hierarchically?
- In the video, why do the grandmother and Sameena, of the same sex, hold different positions of power?
- How is the power distributed between Mazhar and Hussein?
- Why do Sameena and Hussein not share decisions within their marriage?

Read **Article 16** of the Women's Convention, especially part c. Discuss the relationship between this article and the previous discussion.

Legal Equality

When a woman cannot make a contract, or she can't have access to financial credit, or when she can only do so with the consent and/or the backing of her husband or father, she lacks legal equality and autonomy. Restrictions of this type prevent women from exclusively owning property, from legally administering their own affairs, and from entering into any other type of contract. These restrictions seriously limit the capacity of women to provide for their own

needs or the needs of their families. (From **General Recommendation No. 21**, relating to **Article 15** of CEDAW.)

Think about the scene where Jamil asks Hussein, " *Who gives orders in your house?*"

Ask the group:

- Who gives orders in the family business shown in the video?
- Can the women working in the business make any decisions?
- Can they buy what they need?
- If it is the grandmother who runs the business, why does she talk sweetly to her son as she accepts his decisions?
- Are the women in the video allowed to go out freely?

On a poster, rewrite **Article 15**, parts 1, 2, and 4. What are the realities in participants' communities related to **Article 15**?

Family Business in the Home

Working at home is a strategy available to women so they can both earn a salary and manage household responsibilities delegated to them (child care, housework). It is often said that when women work in a family business, they are "helping." If we calculate hours and efforts, however, women provide far more than simple family support.

Ask the group to think about the following:

In a family, the husband, along with doing all the housework and taking care of the children, works in the family business making home-baked goods. The couple wakes up very early, and the wife is in charge of selling and delivering the product. She comes back very tired, after arguing with a client who refused to pay for the baked goods. Her husband comments that he needs a new set of jar lids; she does not agree. He insists softly; she says she will think about it tomorrow.

The next day, they all wake up as usual. When the woman goes out to sell the products, she mentions that she will apply for a bank loan. In this community, only women may get loans, because they are the only ones who "work."

Have a discussion about this. Is this absurd? Unfair?

In small teams, think about:

- Could this happen?
- What are some of the prejudices against women who work at home to make a living? What are some of the obstacles they face? What kind of work do they do?
- What do we think about men who help women with housework?

The teams can share their thoughts with the group, then discuss the following, written on a poster:

"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life, in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: ... the right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit...."

-- CEDAW, Article 13

In what ways does a lack of economic independence force many women to endure violence?

C. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Possible Activities

Defining Our Responses

A few years ago, referring to sexual violence against women, we began talking about gender violence as a collective, social, and political problem, not an individual or psychological one.

Women generally are not passive in response to violence against them. Within our communities, and thanks to many creative women, responses are being expressed every day. Here is an example from Peru: *When neighborhood women heard a man beating a woman, they warned neighbors and congregated around the house, making noise and throwing rocks on the roof. The man stopped the abuse.*

The coordinator can ask for volunteers to prepare a short play. The coordinator can tell them, in private, to recreate a scene of family violence (any type of violence.) Ask them to concentrate their efforts on developing the character of the woman in the family, showing what she does and says during and after the violence. The group can think about its skit for a few minutes.

The spectators can be informed that they will see a play about family violence.

The group can present the play, to be followed by discussion. The coordinator can ask the participants to answer the following questions:

- What can we do to address the problem of violence experienced by ourselves or someone we know?
- Do we know of centers for victims of domestic violence in our community?
- Do we know of organizations (governmental or non-governmental) working to prevent violence? What are they?

Changing Our Images

Images of women as docile, suffering all types of violence, reinforces the stereotypes of women as weak and defenseless, and men as strong and aggressive. This feeds the vicious cycle of violence and reproduces ideas of inferiority and superiority based on sex.

Propose to the group the following challenge:

*Begin to change stereotypes about men and women
that lead to violence between the sexes.*

Ask the group to begin a campaign for the prevention of violence against women and children. Some examples of possible slogans:

- Our Right to a Life Without Violence
- Violence is Everyone's Problem
- We are Different, but Equal

Propose activities to develop the campaign: pamphlets, drawings, posters, theater performances, video presentations. Contact other organizations in the community, like schools, clubs, health centers, police, community radio stations and local television stations, to publicize the campaign.

D. EVALUATION

Possible Activity:

When I Hear Your Song ...

The coordinator can invite the group to choose a popular or traditional song that refers to a particular woman, or women in general, and that is often heard in the participants' communities.

Comment on and analyze the content of the song. How has the workshop changed your understanding of the lyrics? Can we re-write it to reflect a sensitivity to women's human rights?

Appendix A

Glossary

GLOSSARY

- **Convention:** a legal instrument or treaty that sets out the human rights standards in certain specific environments. Conventions are legally binding for Member States when ratified, and Member States are obligated to implement and guarantee the rights stipulated in a Convention.
- **Gender:** On a basis determined by sex (male or female), we have assigned an "ideal" identity for men and women. Gender is a SOCIAL product, so characteristics considered feminine or masculine vary enormously across different cultures or time periods. "Gendered" constructs include forms and patterns of social relations, practices associated with daily life, symbols, customs, clothing, decoration, treatment of the body, and other elements that vary greatly according to how a culture differentiates men and women.
- **Sex:** refers to the biological difference between men and women.
- **Sexual Abuse:** includes all sexual aggression and acts realized with or against children or adolescents who do not understand or cannot avoid or refuse the abuse.
- **Sexual Harassment:** all sexual comments, approaches, or physical or moral pressure to have sex that are not consented to by the person being harassed. It is most often directed by men toward women or by people with power over their subordinates. Gestures, caresses, verbal expressions, and suggestive or actual sexual advances are all manifestations of sexual harassment. (See *Human Rights of Women: A Manual for Women and Men*, Bonaparte, Chiarotti, Habichayn.)
- **Stereotypes:** are rigid conceptual constructions or generalizations that are based only partly (if at all) on reality, to result in a model with which we can measure and evaluate other people or groups.
- **Violence:** We understand violence as an exercise of power that has as its objective to maintain, construct or destroy an order of rights, producing as a consequence the negation or restriction of the rights of the other. Some of the main tools of violence are exercise of power, obtaining or maintaining determinate positions or advantages, and the destruction or restriction of the rights of the other. (CLADEM bulletin, p. 38).

Appendix B

**Summary of CEDAW
Full Text of CEDAW
General Recommendations
Signatories**

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

"The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community."

-- excerpt from the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, part I, para. 18

"Equality is the cornerstone of every democratic society which aspires to social justice and human rights. In virtually all societies and spheres of activity women are subject to inequalities in law and in fact. This situation is both caused and exacerbated by the existence of discrimination in the family, in the community and in the workplace. While causes and consequences may vary from country to country, discrimination against women is widespread. It is perpetuated by the survival of stereotypes and of traditional cultural and religious practices and beliefs detrimental to women...."

"The concept of equality means much more than treating all persons in the same way.... True equality can only emerge from efforts directed towards addressing and correcting ... situational imbalances. It is this broader view of equality which has become the underlying principle and the final goal in the struggle for recognition and acceptance of the human rights of women...."

"The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women ... sets out, in legally binding form, internationally accepted principles on the rights of women which are applicable to all women.... The basic legal norm of the Convention is the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against women. This norm cannot be satisfied merely by the enactment of gender-neutral laws. In addition to demanding that women be accorded equal rights with men, the Convention goes further by prescribing the measures to be taken to ensure that women everywhere are able to enjoy the rights to which they are entitled."

"The Convention was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979 to reinforce the provisions of existing international instruments ... designed to combat the continuing discrimination against women. It identifies many specific areas where there has been notorious discrimination against women, for example in regard to political rights, marriage and the family, and employment. In these and other areas the Convention spells out specific goals and measures that are to be taken to facilitate the creation of a global society in which women enjoy full equality with men and thus full realization of their guaranteed human rights."

-- excerpts from *Discrimination Against Women:
The Convention and the Committee,
Fact Sheet #22, UN Centre for Human Rights*

CEDAW

Unofficial Summary

- Article 1 Definition of discrimination against women: any distinction, exclusion, or restriction, made on the basis of sex, with the purpose or effect of impairing the enjoyment by women of political, economic, social, cultural, or civil human rights on equal footing with men.
- Article 2 States Parties condemn discrimination against women and undertake to pursue a policy of eliminating it in all its forms. States Parties undertake to: include the principles of equality of men and women in national constitutions; adopt legislation prohibiting all discrimination against women; ensure legal protection and effective remedy against discrimination; refrain from any act of discrimination against women and ensure that no public authorities or institutions engage in discrimination; take measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise; take measures to modify or abolish existing laws, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women.
- Article 3 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, especially in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them enjoyment of human rights on equal footing with men.
- Article 4 Affirmative action measures shall not be considered discrimination. Special measures protecting pregnancy shall not be considered discriminatory.
- Article 5 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures: to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women which are based on ideas of inferiority or superiority or on stereotyped roles for men and women; to ensure that family education includes the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in raising children.
- Article 6 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to suppress traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution.
- Article 7 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and shall ensure equal rights to vote and be eligible for election; to participate in forming government policy and to hold public office; to participate in NGOs.
- Article 8 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure a woman's equal right to represent her government at the international level and participate in the work of international organizations.
- Article 9 States Parties shall grant women equal rights to a nationality. Neither marriage nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife. Women shall have equal rights with men with respect to their children's nationality.
- Article 10 States Parties shall ensure to women equal rights in the field of education. States Parties shall ensure the same conditions for career guidance, access to

studies, the same teaching staff and equipment. Stereotyped roles of men and women are to be eliminated in all forms of education. States Parties shall ensure that women have the same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and the same access to continuing education. States Parties shall ensure the reduction of female drop-out rates and shall ensure that women have access to educational information to help ensure health and well-being of families, including information on family planning.

Article 11

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in employment and shall ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women, the same rights to work, to the same employment opportunities, to free choice of employment, to promotion, benefits, vocational training, equal remuneration, equal treatment with respect to work of equal value, the right to social security, unemployment, protection of health. States Parties shall prohibit dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status. States Parties shall take measures to introduce maternity leave with pay or social benefits.

Article 12

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care and shall ensure women equal access to health care services and appropriate services in connection with pregnancy.

Article 13

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life and shall ensure the same rights to family benefits, to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of credit.

Article 14

States Parties shall take into account the special problems of rural women and the significant roles they play in the economic survival of their families and shall ensure to them all rights in this convention. States Parties shall ensure equal rights of men and women to participate in and benefit from rural development, and shall ensure to rural women the rights to: participate in development planning; have access to adequate health care facilities and family planning; benefit from social security programs; receive training and education; have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing, and appropriate technology; receive equal treatment in land reform; and have adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

Article 15

Women shall have equality with men before the law. Women and men shall have the same rights regarding movement of persons and freedom to choose residence.

Article 16

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and shall ensure equal rights to enter marriage, to choose a spouse, to enter marriage only with full consent, the same rights and responsibilities within marriage and in divorce, the same rights and responsibilities as parents, the same rights to decide on the number and spacing of children, the same rights with regard to ownership of property. A minimum age shall be set for marriage.

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

full text

The States Parties to the present Convention,

Noting that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,

Noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex,

Noting that the States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights,

Considering the international conventions concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

Noting also the resolutions, declarations and recommendations adopted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

Concerned, however, that despite these various instruments extensive discrimination against women continues to exist,

Recalling that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity,

Concerned that in situations of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs,

Convinced that the establishment of the new international economic order based on equity and justice will contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality between men and women,

Emphasizing that the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women,

Affirming that the strengthening of international peace and security, the relaxation of international tension, mutual co-operation among all States irrespective of their social and economic systems, general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control, the affirmation of the principles of justice, equality and mutual benefit in relations among countries and the realization of the right of peoples under alien and colonial domination and foreign occupation to self-determination and independence, as well as respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, will promote

social progress and development and as a consequence will contribute to the attainment of full equality between men and women,

Convinced that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields,

Bearing in mind the great contribution of women to the welfare of the family and to the development of society, so far not fully recognized, the social significance of maternity and the role of both parents in the family and in the upbringing of children, and aware that the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination but that the upbringing of children requires a sharing of responsibility between men and women and society as a whole,

Aware that a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women,

Determined to implement the principles set forth in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, for that purpose, to adopt the measures required for the elimination of such discrimination in all its forms and manifestations,

Have agreed on the following:

PART I

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean 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.

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle; (b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women; (c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination; (d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation; (e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise; (f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women; (g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 3

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, 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.

Article 4

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

Article 5

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures: (a) 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; (b) 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, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

Article 6

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

PART II

Article 7

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; (b) 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; © To participate in non_governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Article 8

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Article 9

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

PART III

Article 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre_school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training; (b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality; (c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods; (d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants; (e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women; (f) The reduction of female student drop_out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely; (g) The same Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education; (h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well_being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

Article 11

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings; (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment; (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training; (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work; (e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave; (f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures: (a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status; (b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances; (c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child_care facilities; (d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post_natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

Article 13

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: (a) The right to family benefits; (b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit; (c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non_monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right: (a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels; (b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning; (c) To benefit directly from social security programmes; (d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non_formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency; (e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment; (f) To participate in all community activities; (g) To have 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; (h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

PART IV

Article 15

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they 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.

3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

Article 16

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (a) The same right to enter into marriage; (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent; (c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution; (d) 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; (e) 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; (f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount; (g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation; (h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

PART V

Article 17

1. For the purpose of considering the progress made in the implementation of the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) consisting, at the time of entry into force of the Convention, of eighteen and, after ratification of or accession to the Convention by the thirty fifth State Party, of twenty three experts of high moral standing and competence in the field covered by the Convention. The experts shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution and to the representation of the different forms of civilization as well as the principal legal systems.

2. The members of the Committee shall be elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States Parties. Each State Party may nominate one person from among its own nationals.

3. The initial election shall be held six months after the date of the entry into force of the present Convention. At least three months before the date of each election the Secretary General of the United Nations shall address a letter to the States Parties inviting them to submit their nominations within two months. The Secretary General shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated, indicating the States Parties which have nominated them, and shall submit it to the States Parties.

4. Elections of the members of the Committee shall be held at a meeting of States Parties convened by the Secretary General at United Nations Headquarters. At that meeting, for which two thirds of the States Parties shall constitute a quorum, the persons elected to the Committee shall be those nominees who obtain the largest number of votes and an absolute majority of the votes of the representatives of States Parties present and voting.

5. The members of the Committee shall be elected for a term of four years. However, the terms of nine of the members elected at the first election shall expire at the end of two years; immediately after the first election the names of these nine members shall be chosen by lot by the Chairman of the Committee.

6. The election of the five additional members of the Committee shall be held in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this article, following the thirty_fifth ratification or accession. The terms of two of the additional members elected on this occasion shall expire at the end of two years, the names of these two members having been chosen by lot by the Chairman of the Committee.

7. For the filling of casual vacancies, the State Party whose expert has ceased to function as a member of the Committee shall appoint another expert from among its nationals, subject to the approval of the Committee.

8. The members of the Committee shall, with the approval of the General Assembly, receive emoluments from United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the Assembly may decide, having regard to the importance of the Committee's responsibilities.

9. The Secretary General of the United Nations shall provide the necessary staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the present Convention.

Article 18

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Secretary General of the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee, a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and on the progress made in this respect: (a) Within one year after the entry into force for the State concerned; (b) Thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.

2. Reports may indicate factors and difficulties affecting the degree of fulfilment of obligations under the present Convention.

Article 19

1. The Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

2. The Committee shall elect its officers for a term of two years.

Article 20

1. The Committee shall normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order to consider the reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the present Convention.

2. The meetings of the Committee shall normally be held at United Nations Headquarters or at any other convenient place as determined by the Committee.

Article 21

1. The Committee shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities and may make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from the States Parties. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be included in the report of the Committee together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit the reports of the Committee to the Commission on the Status of Women for its information.

Article 22

The specialized agencies shall be entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the present Convention as fall within the scope of their activities. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities.

PART VI

Article 23

Nothing in the present Convention shall affect any provisions that are more conducive to the achievement of equality between men and women which may be contained: (a) In the legislation of a State Party; or (b) In any other international convention, treaty or agreement in force for that State.

Article 24

States Parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 25

1. The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States.

2. The Secretary General of the United Nations is designated as the depositary of the present Convention.

3. The present Convention is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations.

4. The present Convention shall be open to accession by all States. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Article 26

1. A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any State Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

2. The General Assembly of the United Nations shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such a request.

Article 27

1. The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of deposit with the Secretary General of the United Nations of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

2. For each State ratifying the present Convention or acceding to it after the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 28

1. The Secretary General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.

2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.

3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to this effect addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States thereof. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received.

Article 29

1. Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court.

2. Each State Party may at the time of signature or ratification of the present Convention or accession thereto declare that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 1 of this article. The other States Parties shall not be bound by that paragraph with respect to any State Party which has made such a reservation.

3. Any State Party which has made a reservation in accordance with paragraph 2 of this article may at any time withdraw that reservation by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 30

The present Convention, the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts of which are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, duly authorized, have signed the present Convention.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS
made by the
COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

General Recommendation No. 14 (ninth session, 1990)

Female circumcision

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,

Concerned about the continuation of the practice of female circumcision and other traditional practices harmful to the health of women,

Noting with satisfaction that Governments, where such practices exist, national women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, and bodies of the United Nations system, such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, remain seized of the issue having particularly recognized that such traditional practices as female circumcision have serious health and other consequences for women and children,

Taking note with interest the study of the Special Rapporteur on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, and of the study of the Special Working Group on Traditional Practices,

Recognizing that women are taking important action themselves to identify and to combat practices that are prejudicial to the health and well-being of women and children,

Convinced that the important action that is being taken by women and by all interested groups needs to be supported and encouraged by Governments,

Noting with grave concern that there are continuing cultural, traditional and economic pressures which help to perpetuate harmful practices, such as female circumcision,

Recommends that States parties:

(a) Take appropriate and effective measures with a view to eradicating the practice of female circumcision. Such measures could include:

(i) The collection and dissemination by universities, medical or nursing associations, national women's organizations or other bodies of basic data about such traditional practices;

(ii) The support of women's organizations at the national and local levels working for the elimination of female circumcision and other practices harmful to women;

(iii) The encouragement of politicians, professionals, religious and community leaders at all levels, including the media and the arts, to co-operate in influencing attitudes towards the eradication of female circumcision;

(iv) The introduction of appropriate educational and training programmes and seminars based on research findings about the problems arising from female circumcision;

(b) Include in their national health policies appropriate strategies aimed at eradicating female circumcision in public health care. Such strategies could include the special responsibility of health personnel, including traditional birth attendants, to explain the harmful effects of female circumcision;

(c) Invite assistance, information and advice from the appropriate organizations of the United Nations system to support and assist efforts being deployed to eliminate harmful traditional practices;

(d) Include in their reports to the Committee under articles 10 and 12 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women information about measures taken to eliminate female circumcision.

General Recommendation No. 15 (ninth session, 1990)

Avoidance of discrimination against women in national strategies for the prevention and control of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,

Having considered information brought to its attention on the potential effects of both the global pandemic of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and strategies to control it on the exercise of the rights of women,

Having regard to the reports and materials prepared by the World Health Organization and other United Nations organizations, organs and bodies in relation to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and, in particular, the note by the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women on the effects of AIDS on the advancement of women and the Final Document of the International Consultation on AIDS and Human Rights, held at Geneva from 26 to 28 July 1989,

Noting World Health Assembly resolution WHA 41.24 on the avoidance of discrimination in relation to HIV-infected people and people with AIDS of 13 May 1988, resolution 1989/11 of the Commission on Human Rights on non-discrimination in the field of health, of 2 March 1989, and in particular the Paris Declaration on Women, Children and AIDS, of 30 November 1989,

Noting that the World Health Organization has announced that the theme of World Aids Day, 1 December 1990, will be "Women and Aids",

Recommends:

(a) That States parties intensify efforts in disseminating information to increase public awareness of the risk of HIV infection and AIDS, especially in women and children, and of its effects on them;

(b) That programmes to combat AIDS should give special attention to the rights and needs of women and children, and to the factors relating to the reproductive role of women and their subordinate position in some societies which make them especially vulnerable to HIV infection;

(c) That States parties ensure the active participation of women in primary health care and take measures to enhance their role as care providers, health workers and educators in the prevention of infection with HIV;

(d) That all States parties include in their reports under article 12 of the Convention information on the effects of AIDS on the situation of women and on the action taken to cater to the needs of those women who are infected and to prevent specific discrimination against women in response to AIDS.

General Recommendation No. 19 (11th session, 1992)

Violence against women

Background

1. Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men.
2. In 1989, the Committee recommended that States should include in their reports information on violence and on measures introduced to deal with it (General recommendation 12, eighth session).
3. At its tenth session in 1991, it was decided to allocate part of the eleventh session to a discussion and study on article 6 and other articles of the Convention relating to violence towards women and the sexual harassment and exploitation of women. That subject was chosen in anticipation of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, convened by the General Assembly by its resolution 45/155 of 18 December 1990.
4. The Committee concluded that not all the reports of States parties adequately reflected the close connection between discrimination against women, gender-based violence, and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The full implementation of the Convention required States to take positive measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women.
5. The Committee suggested to States parties that in reviewing their laws and policies, and in reporting under the Convention, they should have regard to the following comments of the Committee concerning gender-based violence.

General comments

6. The Convention in article 1 defines discrimination against women. The definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence, that is, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Gender-based violence may breach specific provisions of the Convention, regardless of whether those provisions expressly mention violence.
7. Gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general international law or under human rights conventions, is discrimination within the meaning of article 1 of the Convention. These rights and freedoms include:
 - (a) The right to life;
 - (b) The right not to be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

- (c) The right to equal protection according to humanitarian norms in time of international or internal armed conflict;
- (d) The right to liberty and security of person;
- (e) The right to equal protection under the law;
- (f) The right to equality in the family;
- (g) The right to the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health;
- (h) The right to just and favourable conditions of work.

8. The Convention applies to violence perpetrated by public authorities. Such acts of violence may breach that State's obligations under general international human rights law and under other conventions, in addition to breaching this Convention.

9. It is emphasized, however, that discrimination under the Convention is not restricted to action by or on behalf of Governments (see articles 2(e), 2(f) and 5). For example, under article 2(e) the Convention calls on States parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise. Under general international law and specific human rights covenants, States may also be responsible for private acts if they fail to act with due diligence to prevent violations of rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence, and for providing compensation.

Comments on specific articles of the Convention

Articles 2 and 3

10. Articles 2 and 3 establish a comprehensive obligation to eliminate discrimination in all its forms in addition to the specific obligations under articles 5-16.
Articles 2(f), 5 and 10(c)

11. Traditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men or as having stereotyped roles perpetuate widespread practices involving violence or coercion, such as family violence and abuse, forced marriage, dowry deaths, acid attacks and female circumcision. Such prejudices and practices may justify gender-based violence as a form of protection or control of women. The effect of such violence on the physical and mental integrity of women is to deprive them the equal enjoyment, exercise and knowledge of human rights and fundamental freedoms. While this comment addresses mainly actual or threatened violence the underlying consequences of these forms of gender-based violence help to maintain women in subordinate roles and contribute to the low level of political participation and to their lower level of education, skills and work opportunities.

12. These attitudes also contribute to the propagation of pornography and the depiction and other commercial exploitation of women as sexual objects, rather than as individuals. This in turn contributes to gender-based violence.

Article 6

13. States parties are required by article 6 to take measures to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of the prostitution of women.

14. Poverty and unemployment increase opportunities for trafficking in women. In addition to established forms of trafficking there are new forms of sexual exploitation, such as sex tourism, the recruitment of domestic labour from developing countries to work in developed

countries and organized marriages between women from developing countries and foreign nationals. These practices are incompatible with the equal enjoyment of rights by women and with respect for their rights and dignity. They put women at special risk of violence and abuse.

15. Poverty and unemployment force many women, including young girls, into prostitution. Prostitutes are especially vulnerable to violence because their status, which may be unlawful, tends to marginalize them. They need the equal protection of laws against rape and other forms of violence.

16. Wars, armed conflicts and the occupation of territories often lead to increased prostitution, trafficking in women and sexual assault of women, which require specific protective and punitive measures.

Article 11

17. Equality in employment can be seriously impaired when women are subjected to gender-specific violence, such as sexual harassment in the workplace.

18. Sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour as physical contact and advances, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography and sexual demand, whether by words or actions. Such conduct can be humiliating and may constitute a health and safety problem; it is discriminatory when the woman has reasonable grounds to believe that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment, including recruitment or promotion, or when it creates a hostile working environment.

Article 12

19. States parties are required by article 12 to take measures to ensure equal access to health care. Violence against women puts their health and lives at risk.

20. In some States there are traditional practices perpetuated by culture and tradition that are harmful to the health of women and children. These practices include dietary restrictions for pregnant women, preference for male children and female circumcision or genital mutilation.

Article 14

21. Rural women are at risk of gender-based violence because traditional attitudes regarding the subordinate role of women that persist in many rural communities. Girls from rural communities are at special risk of violence and sexual exploitation when they leave the rural community to seek employment in towns.

Article 16 (and article 5)

22. Compulsory sterilization or abortion adversely affects women's physical and mental health, and infringes the right of women to decide on the number and spacing of their children.

23. Family violence is one of the most insidious forms of violence against women. It is prevalent in all societies. Within family relationships women of all ages are subjected to violence of all kinds, including battering, rape, other forms of sexual assault, mental and other forms of violence, which are perpetuated by traditional attitudes. Lack of economic independence forces many women to stay in violent relationships. The abrogation of their

family responsibilities by men can be a form of violence, and coercion. These forms of violence put women's health at risk and impair their ability to participate in family life and public life on a basis of equality.

Specific recommendation

24. In light of these comments, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommends that:

- (a) States parties should take appropriate and effective measures to overcome all forms of gender-based violence, whether by public or private act;
- (b) States parties should ensure that laws against family violence and abuse, rape, sexual assault and other gender-based violence give adequate protection to all women, and respect their integrity and dignity. Appropriate protective and support services should be provided for victims. Gender-sensitive training of judicial and law enforcement officers and other public officials is essential for the effective implementation of the Convention;
- (c) States parties should encourage the compilation of statistics and research on the extent, causes and effects of violence, and on the effectiveness of measures to prevent and deal with violence;
- (d) Effective measures should be taken to ensure that the media respect and promote respect for women;
- (e) States parties in their reports should identify the nature and extent of attitudes, customs and practices that perpetuate violence against women and the kinds of violence that result. They should report on the measures that they have undertaken to overcome violence and the effect of those measures;
- (f) Effective measures should be taken to overcome these attitudes and practices. States should introduce education and public information programmes to help eliminate prejudices that hinder women's equality (recommendation No. 3, 1987);
- (g) Specific preventive and punitive measures are necessary to overcome trafficking and sexual exploitation;
- (h) States parties in their reports should describe the extent of all these problems and the measures, including penal provisions, preventive and rehabilitation measures that have been taken to protect women engaged in prostitution or subject to trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation. The effectiveness of these measures should also be described;
- (i) Effective complaints procedures and remedies, including compensation, should be provided;
- (j) States parties should include in their reports information on sexual harassment, and on measures to protect women from sexual harassment and other forms of violence or coercion in the workplace;
- (k) States parties should establish or support services for victims of family violence, rape, sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence, including refuges, specially trained health workers, rehabilitation and counselling;
- (l) States parties should take measures to overcome such practices and should take account of the Committee's recommendation on female circumcision (recommendation No. 14) in reporting on health issues;
- (m) States parties should ensure that measures are taken to prevent coercion in regard to fertility and reproduction, and to ensure that women are not forced to seek unsafe medical procedures such as illegal abortion because of lack of appropriate services in regard to fertility control;
- (n) States parties in their reports should state the extent of these problems and should indicate the measures that have been taken and their effect;

- (o) States parties should ensure that services for victims of violence are accessible to rural women and that where necessary special services are provided to isolated communities;
- (p) Measures to protect them from violence should include training and employment opportunities and the monitoring of the employment conditions of domestic workers;
- (q) States parties should report on the risks to rural women, the extent and nature of violence and abuse to which they are subject, their need for and access to support and other services and the effectiveness of measures to overcome violence;
- (r) Measures that are necessary to overcome family violence should include:
 - (i) Criminal penalties where necessary and civil remedies in cases of domestic violence;
 - (ii) Legislation to remove the defence of honour in regard to the assault or murder of a female family member;
 - (iii) Services to ensure the safety and security of victims of family violence, including refuges, counselling and rehabilitation programmes;
 - (iv) Rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence;
 - (v) Support services for families where incest or sexual abuse has occurred;
- (s) States parties should report on the extent of domestic violence and sexual abuse, and on the preventive, punitive and remedial measures that have been taken;
- (t) States parties should take all legal and other measures that are necessary to provide effective protection of women against gender-based violence, including, inter alia:
 - (i) Effective legal measures, including penal sanctions, civil remedies and compensatory provisions to protect women against all kinds of violence, including inter alia violence and abuse in the family, sexual assault and sexual harassment in the workplace;
 - (ii) Preventive measures, including public information and education programmes to change attitudes concerning the roles and status of men and women;
 - (iii) Protective measures, including refuges, counselling, rehabilitation and support services for women who are the victims of violence or who are at risk of violence;
- (u) States parties should report on all forms of gender-based violence, and such reports should include all available data on the incidence of each form of violence and on the effects of such violence on the women who are victims;
- (v) The reports of States parties should include information on the legal, preventive and protective measures that have been taken to overcome violence against women, and on the effectiveness of such measures.

General Recommendation No. 21 (13th session, 1994)

Equality in marriage and family relations

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex) affirms the equality of human rights for women and men in society and in the family. The Convention has an important place among international treaties concerned with human rights.

2. Other conventions and declarations also confer great significance on the family and woman's status within it. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217/A (III)), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex), the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (resolution 1040 (XI), annex), the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (resolution 1763 A (XVII), annex) and the subsequent Recommendation thereon (resolution 2018 (XX)) and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

3. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women recalls the inalienable rights of women which are already embodied in the above-mentioned conventions and declarations, but it goes further by recognizing the importance of culture and tradition in shaping the thinking and behaviour of men and women and the significant part they play in restricting the exercise of basic rights by women.

Background

4. The year 1994 has been designated by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/82 as the International Year of the Family. The Committee wishes to take the opportunity to stress the significance of compliance with women's basic rights within the family as one of the measures which will support and encourage the national celebrations that will take place.

5. Having chosen in this way to mark the International Year of the Family, the Committee wishes to analyze three articles in the Convention that have special significance for the status of women in the family:

Article 9

1. States parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

Comment

6. Nationality is critical to full participation in society. In general, States confer nationality on those who are born in that country. Nationality can also be acquired by reason of settlement or granted for humanitarian reasons such as statelessness. Without status as nationals or citizens, women are deprived of the right to vote or to stand for public office and may be denied access to public benefits and a choice of residence. Nationality should be capable of change by an adult woman and should not be arbitrarily removed because of marriage or dissolution of marriage or because her husband or father changes his nationality.

Article 15

1. States parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

2. States parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they 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.

3. States parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

4. States parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

Comment

7. When a woman cannot enter into a contract at all, or have access to financial credit, or can do so only with her husband's or a male relative's concurrence or guarantee, she is denied legal autonomy. Any such restriction prevents her from holding property as the sole owner and precludes her from the legal management of her own business or from entering into any other form of contract. Such restrictions seriously limit the woman's ability to provide for herself and her dependents.

8. A woman's right to bring litigation is limited in some countries by law or by her access to legal advice and her ability to seek redress from the courts. In others, her status as a witness or her evidence is accorded less respect or weight than that of a man. Such laws or customs limit the woman's right effectively to pursue or retain her equal share of property and diminish her standing as an independent, responsible and valued member of her community. When countries limit a woman's legal capacity by their laws, or permit individuals or institutions to do the same, they are denying women their rights to be equal with men and restricting women's ability to provide for themselves and their dependents.

9. Domicile is a concept in common law countries referring to the country in which a person intends to reside and to whose jurisdiction she will submit. Domicile is originally acquired by a child through its parents but, in adulthood, denotes the country in which a person normally resides and in which she intends to reside permanently. As in the case of nationality, the examination of States parties' reports demonstrates that a woman will not always be permitted at law to choose her own domicile. Domicile, like nationality, should be capable of change at will by an adult woman regardless of her marital status. Any restrictions on a woman's right to choose a domicile on the same basis as a man may limit her access to the courts in the country in which she lives or prevent her from entering and leaving a country freely and in her own right.

10. Migrant women who live and work temporarily in another country should be permitted the same rights as men to have their spouses, partners and children join them.

Article 16

1. States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- (a) The same right to enter into marriage;
- (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
- (c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
- (d) 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;
- (e) 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;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

Comment

Public and private life

11. Historically, human activity in public and private life has been viewed differently and regulated accordingly. In all societies women who have traditionally performed their roles in the private or domestic sphere have long had those activities treated as inferior.

12. As such activities are invaluable for the survival of society, there can be no justification for applying different and discriminatory laws or customs to them. Reports of States parties disclose that there are still countries where de jure equality does not exist. Women are thereby prevented from having equal access to resources and from enjoying equality of status in the family and society. Even where de jure equality exists, all societies assign different roles, which are regarded as inferior, to women. In this way, principles of justice and equality contained in particular in article 16 and also in articles 2, 5 and 24 of the Convention are being violated.

Various forms of family

13. The form and concept of the family can vary from State to State, and even between regions within a State. Whatever form it takes, and whatever the legal system, religion, custom or tradition within the country, the treatment of women in the family both at law and in private must accord with the principles of equality and justice for all people, as article 2 of the Convention requires.

Polygamous marriages

14. States parties' reports also disclose that polygamy is practised in a number of countries. Polygamous marriage contravenes a woman's right to equality with men, and can have such serious emotional and financial consequences for her and her dependents that such marriages ought to be discouraged and prohibited. The Committee notes with concern that some States parties, whose constitutions guarantee equal rights, permit polygamous marriage in accordance with personal or customary law. This violates the constitutional rights of women, and breaches the provisions of article 5 (a) of the Convention.

Article 16 (1) (a) and (b)

15. While most countries report that national constitutions and laws comply with the Convention, custom, tradition and failure to enforce these laws in reality contravene the Convention.

16. A woman's right to choose a spouse and enter freely into marriage is central to her life and to her dignity and equality as a human being. An examination of States parties' reports discloses that there are countries which, on the basis of custom, religious beliefs or the ethnic origins of particular groups of people, permit forced marriages or remarriages. Other countries allow a woman's marriage to be arranged for payment or preferment and in others women's poverty forces them to marry foreign nationals for financial security. Subject to reasonable restrictions based for example on woman's youth or consanguinity with her partner, a woman's right to choose when, if, and whom she will marry must be protected and enforced at law.

Article 16 (1) (c)

17. An examination of States parties' reports discloses that many countries in their legal systems provide for the rights and responsibilities of married partners by relying on the application of common law principles, religious or customary law, rather than by complying with the principles contained in the Convention. These variations in law and practice relating to marriage have wide-ranging consequences for women, invariably restricting their rights to equal status and responsibility within marriage. Such limitations often result in the husband being accorded the status of head of household and primary decision maker and therefore contravene the provisions of the Convention.

18. Moreover, generally a de facto union is not given legal protection at all. Women living in such relationships should have their equality of status with men both in family life and in the sharing of income and assets protected by law. Such women should share equal rights and responsibilities with men for the care and raising of dependent children or family members.

Article 16 (1) (d) and (f)

19. As provided in article 5 (b), most States recognize the shared responsibility of parents for the care, protection and maintenance of children. The principle that "the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration", has been included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex) and seems now to be universally accepted. However, in practice, some countries do not observe the principle of granting the parents of children equal status, particularly when they are not married. The children of such unions do not always enjoy the same status as those born in wedlock and, where the mothers are divorced or living apart, many fathers fail to share the responsibility of care, protection and maintenance of their children.

20. The shared rights and responsibilities enunciated in the Convention should be enforced at law and as appropriate through legal concepts of guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption. States parties should ensure that by their laws both parents, regardless of their marital status and whether they live with their children or not, share equal rights and responsibilities for their children.

Article 16 (1) (e)

21. The responsibilities that women have to bear and raise children affect their right of access to education, employment and other activities related to their personal development. They also

impose inequitable burdens of work on women. The number and spacing of their children have a similar impact on women's lives and also affect their physical and mental health, as well as that of their children. For these reasons, women are entitled to decide on the number and spacing of their children.

22. Some reports disclose coercive practices which have serious consequences for women, such as forced pregnancies, abortions or sterilization. Decisions to have children or not, while preferably made in consultation with spouse or partner, must not nevertheless be limited by spouse, parent, partner or Government. In order to make an informed decision about safe and reliable contraceptive measures, women must have information about contraceptive measures and their use, and guaranteed access to sex education and family planning services, as provided in article 10 (h) of the Convention.

23. There is general agreement that where there are freely available appropriate measures for the voluntary regulation of fertility, the health, development and well-being of all members of the family improves. Moreover, such services improve the general quality of life and health of the population, and the voluntary regulation of population growth helps preserve the environment and achieve sustainable economic and social development.

Article 16 (1) (g)

24. A stable family is one which is based on principles of equity, justice and individual fulfilment for each member. Each partner must therefore have the right to choose a profession or employment that is best suited to his or her abilities, qualifications and aspirations, as provided in article 11 (a) and (c) of the Convention. Moreover, each partner should have the right to choose his or her name, thereby preserving individuality and identity in the community and distinguishing that person from other members of society. When by law or custom a woman is obliged to change her name on marriage or at its dissolution, she is denied these rights.

Article 16 (1) (h)

25. The rights provided in this article overlap with and complement those in article 15 (2) in which an obligation is placed on States to give women equal rights to enter into and conclude contracts and to administer property.

26. Article 15 (l) guarantees women equality with men before the law. The right to own, manage, enjoy and dispose of property is central to a woman's right to enjoy financial independence, and in many countries will be critical to her ability to earn a livelihood and to provide adequate housing and nutrition for herself and for her family.

27. In countries that are undergoing a programme of agrarian reform or redistribution of land among groups of different ethnic origins, the right of women, regardless of marital status, to share such redistributed land on equal terms with men should be carefully observed.

28. In most countries, a significant proportion of the women are single or divorced and many have the sole responsibility to support a family. Any discrimination in the division of property that rests on the premise that the man alone is responsible for the support of the women and children of his family and that he can and will honourably discharge this responsibility is clearly unrealistic. Consequently, any law or custom that grants men a right to a greater share of property at the end of a marriage or de facto relationship, or on the death of a relative, is

discriminatory and will have a serious impact on a woman's practical ability to divorce her husband, to support herself or her family and to live in dignity as an independent person.

29. All of these rights should be guaranteed regardless of a woman's marital status.

Marital property

30. There are countries that do not acknowledge that right of women to own an equal share of the property with the husband during a marriage or de facto relationship and when that marriage or relationship ends. Many countries recognize that right, but the practical ability of women to exercise it may be limited by legal precedent or custom.

31. Even when these legal rights are vested in women, and the courts enforce them, property owned by a woman during marriage or on divorce may be managed by a man. In many States, including those where there is a community-property regime, there is no legal requirement that a woman be consulted when property owned by the parties during marriage or de facto relationship is sold or otherwise disposed of. This limits the woman's ability to control disposition of the property or the income derived from it.

32. In some countries, on division of marital property, greater emphasis is placed on financial contributions to property acquired during a marriage, and other contributions, such as raising children, caring for elderly relatives and discharging household duties are diminished. Often, such contributions of a non-financial nature by the wife enable the husband to earn an income and increase the assets. Financial and non-financial contributions should be accorded the same weight.

33. In many countries, property accumulated during a de facto relationship is not treated at law on the same basis as property acquired during marriage. Invariably, if the relationship ends, the woman receives a significantly lower share than her partner. Property laws and customs that discriminate in this way against married or unmarried women with or without children should be revoked and discouraged.

Inheritance

34. Reports of States parties should include comment on the legal or customary provisions relating to inheritance laws as they affect the status of women as provided in the Convention and in Economic and Social Council resolution 884 D (XXXIV), in which the Council recommended that States ensure that men and women in the same degree of relationship to a deceased are entitled to equal shares in the estate and to equal rank in the order of succession. That provision has not been generally implemented.

35. There are many countries where the law and practice concerning inheritance and property result in serious discrimination against women. As a result of this uneven treatment, women may receive a smaller share of the husband's or father's property at his death than would widowers and sons. In some instances, women are granted limited and controlled rights and receive income only from the deceased's property. Often inheritance rights for widows do not reflect the principles of equal ownership of property acquired during marriage. Such provisions contravene the Convention and should be abolished.

Article 16 (2)

36. In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, States are urged to repeal existing laws and regulations and to remove customs and practices which discriminate against and cause harm to the girl child. Article 16 (2) and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights

of the Child preclude States parties from permitting or giving validity to a marriage between persons who have not attained their majority. In the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, "a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". Notwithstanding this definition, and bearing in mind the provisions of the Vienna Declaration, the Committee considers that the minimum age for marriage should be 18 years for both man and woman. When men and women marry, they assume important responsibilities. Consequently, marriage should not be permitted before they have attained full maturity and capacity to act. According to the World Health Organization, when minors, particularly girls, marry and have children, their health can be adversely affected and their education is impeded. As a result their economic autonomy is restricted.

37. This not only affects women personally but also limits the development of their skills and independence and reduces access to employment, thereby detrimentally affecting their families and communities.

38. Some countries provide for different ages for marriage for men and women. As such provisions assume incorrectly that women have a different rate of intellectual development from men, or that their stage of physical and intellectual development at marriage is immaterial, these provisions should be abolished. In other countries, the betrothal of girls or undertakings by family members on their behalf is permitted. Such measures contravene not only the Convention, but also a woman's right freely to choose her partner.

39. States parties should also require the registration of all marriages whether contracted civilly or according to custom or religious law. The State can thereby ensure compliance with the Convention and establish equality between partners, a minimum age for marriage, prohibition of bigamy and polygamy and the protection of the rights of children.

Recommendations

- Violence against women

40. In considering the place of women in family life, the Committee wishes to stress that the provisions of General Recommendation 19 (eleventh session) concerning violence against women have great significance for women's abilities to enjoy rights and freedoms on an equal basis with men. States parties are urged to comply with that general recommendation to ensure that, in both public and family life, women will be free of the gender-based violence that so seriously impedes their rights and freedoms as individuals.

Reservations

41. The Committee has noted with alarm the number of States parties which have entered reservations to the whole or part of article 16, especially when a reservation has also been entered to article 2, claiming that compliance may conflict with a commonly held vision of the family based, inter alia, on cultural or religious beliefs or on the country's economic or political status.

42. Many of these countries hold a belief in the patriarchal structure of a family which places a father, husband or son in a favourable position. In some countries where fundamentalist or other extremist views or economic hardships have encouraged a return to old values and traditions, women's place in the family has deteriorated sharply. In others, where it has been

recognized that a modern society depends for its economic advance and for the general good of the community on involving all adults equally, regardless of gender, these taboos and reactionary or extremist ideas have progressively been discouraged.

43. Consistent with articles 2, 3 and 24 in particular, the Committee requires that all States parties gradually progress to a stage where, by its resolute discouragement of notions of the inequality of women in the home, each country will withdraw its reservation, in particular to articles 9, 15 and 16 of the Convention.

44. States parties should resolutely discourage any notions of inequality of women and men which are affirmed by laws, or by religious or private law or by custom, and progress to the stage where reservations, particularly to article 16, will be withdrawn.

45. The Committee noted, on the basis of its examination of initial and subsequent periodic reports, that in some States parties to the Convention that had ratified or acceded without reservation, certain laws, especially those dealing with family, do not actually conform to the provisions of the Convention.

46. Their laws still contain many measures which discriminate against women based on norms, customs and socio-cultural prejudices. These States, because of their specific situation regarding these articles, make it difficult for the Committee to evaluate and understand the status of women.

47. The Committee, in particular on the basis of articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, requests that those States parties make the necessary efforts to examine the de facto situation relating to the issues and to introduce the required measures in their national legislations still containing provisions discriminatory to women.

Reports

48. Assisted by the comments in the present general recommendation, in their reports States parties should:

- (a) Indicate the stage that has been reached in the country's progress to removal of all reservations to the Convention, in particular reservations to article 16;
- (b) Set out whether their laws comply with the principles of articles 9, 15 and 16 and where, by reason of religious or private law or custom, compliance with the law or with the Convention is impeded.

Legislation

49. States parties should, where necessary to comply with the Convention, in particular in order to comply with articles 9, 15 and 16, enact and enforce legislation.

Encouraging compliance with the Convention

50. Assisted by the comments in the present general recommendation, and as required by articles 2, 3 and 24, States parties should introduce measures directed at encouraging full compliance with the principles of the Convention, particularly where religious or private law or custom conflict with those principles.

Courtesy of: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm>

As of March, 2000, 165 countries - more than two-thirds of the members of the United Nations - are party to the Convention and an additional 4 have signed the treaty, binding themselves to do nothing in contravention of its terms. 97 Signatures/165 ratification and accessions:

- a/ Accession;**
- b/ Declarations or reservations;**
- c/ Reservation subsequently withdrawn;**
- d/ Succession**

Afghanistan 14 August 1980
Albania 11 May 1994 a/
Algeria 22 May 1996 a/ b/
Andorra 15 January 1997 a
Angola 17 September 1986 a/
Antigua and Barbuda 1 August 1989 a/
Argentina 17 July 1980 15 July 1985 b/
Armenia 13 September 1993 a/
Australia 17 July 1980 28 July 1983 b/
Austria 17 July 1980 31 March 1982 b/
Azerbaijan 10 July 1995 a/
Bahamas 6 October 1993 a/ b/
Bangladesh 6 November 1984 a/ b/
Barbados 24 July 1980 16 October 1980
Belarus 17 July 1980 4 February 1981 c/
Belgium 17 July 1980 10 July 1985 b/
Belize 7 March 1990 16 May 1990
Benin 11 November 1981 12 March 1992
Bhutan 17 July 1980 31 August 1981
Bolivia 30 May 1980 8 June 1990
Bosnia & Herzegovina 1 September 1993 d/
Botswana 13 August 1996 a/
Brazil 31 March 1981 b/ 1 February 1984 b/
Bulgaria 17 July 1980 8 February 1982 c/
Burkina Faso 14 October 1987 a/
Burundi 17 July 1980 8 January 1992
Cambodia 17 October 1980 15 October 1992 a/
Cameroon 6 June 1983 23 August 1994 a/
Canada 17 July 1980 10 December 1981 c/
Cape Verde 5 December 1980 a/
Central African Republic 21 June 1991 a/
Chad 9 June 1995 a/
Chile 17 July 1980 7 December 1989 b/
China 17 July 1980 b/ 4 November 1980 b/
Colombia 17 July 1980 19 January 1982

Comoros 31 October 1994 a/
Congo 29 July 1980 26 July 1982
Costa Rica 17 July 1980 4 April 1986
Cote d'Ivoire 17 July 1980 18 December 1995 a/
Croatia 9 September 1992 d/
Cuba 6 March 1980 17 July 1980 b/
Cyprus 23 July 1985 a/ b/
Czech Republic / 22 February 1993 c/ d/
Democratic Republic of the Congo / 17 October 1986 16 November 1986
Denmark 17 July 1980 21 April 1983
Djibouti 2 December 1998 a/
Dominica 15 September 1980 15 September 1980
Dominican Republic 17 July 1980 2 September 1982
Ecuador 17 July 1980 9 November 1981
Egypt 16 July 1980 b/ 18 September 1981 b/
El Salvador 14 November 1980 b/ 19 August 1981 b/
Equatorial Guinea 23 October 1984 a/
Eritrea 5 September 1995 a/
Estonia 21 October 1991 a/
Ethiopia 8 July 1980 10 December 1981 b/
Fiji 28 August 1995 a/ b/
Finland 17 July 1980 4 September 1986
France 17 July 1980 b/ 14 December 1983 b/ c/
Gabon 17 July 1980 21 January 1983
Gambia 29 July 1980 16 April 1993
Georgia 26 October 1994 a/
Germany / 17 July 1980 10 July 1985 b/
Ghana 17 July 1980 2 January 1986
Greece 2 March 1982 7 June 1983
Grenada 17 July 1980 30 August 1990
Guatemala 8 June 1981 12 August 1982
Guinea 17 July 1980 9 August 1982
Guinea-Bissau 17 July 1980 23 August 1985
Guyana 17 July 1980 17 July 1980
Haiti 17 July 1980 20 July 1981
Honduras 11 June 1980 3 March 1983
Hungary 6 June 1980 22 December 1980 c/
Iceland 24 July 1980 18 June 1985
India 30 July 1980 b/ 9 July 1993 b/
Indonesia 29 July 1980 13 September 1984 b/
Iraq 13 August 1986 a/ b/
Ireland 23 December 1985 a/ b/ c/
Israel 17 July 1980 3 October 1991 b/
Italy 17 July 1980 b/ 10 June 1985
Jamaica 17 July 1980 19 October 1984 b/

Japan 17 July 1980 25 June 1985
 Jordan 3 December 1980 b/ 1 July 1992 b/
 Kazakhstan 26 August 1998 a/
 Kenya 9 March 1984 a/
 Kuwait 2 September 1994 a/ b/
 Kyrgyzstan 10 February 1997 a/
 Lao Peoples Democratic Rep. 17 July 1980 14 August 1981
 Latvia 14 April 1992 a/
 Lebanon 21 April 1997 a/ b/
 Lesotho 17 July 1980 22 August 1995 a/ b/
 Liberia 17 July 1984 a/
 Libyan A. Jamahiriya 16 May 1989 a/ b/
 Liechtenstein 22 December 1995 a/ b/
 Lithuania 18 January 1994 a/
 Luxembourg 17 July 1980 2 February 1989 b/
 Madagascar 17 July 1980 17 March 1989
 Malawi 12 March 1987 a/ c/
 Malaysia 5 July 1995 a/ b/
 Maldives 1 July 1993 a/ b/
 Mali 5 February 1985 10 September 1985
 Malta 8 March 1991 a/ b/
 Mauritius 9 July 1984 a/ b/
 Mexico 17 July 1980 b/ 23 March 1981
 Mongolia 17 July 1980 20 July 1981 c/
 Morocco 21 June 1993 a/ b/
 Mozambique 16 April 1997 a/
 Myanmar 22 July 1997 a/ b/
 Namibia 23 November 1992 a/
 Nepal 5 February 1991 22 April 1991
 Netherlands 17 July 1980 23 July 1991 b/
 New Zealand 17 July 1980 10 January 1985 b/ c/
 Nicaragua 17 July 1980 27 October 1981
 Niger 8 October 1999 a/
 Nigeria 23 April 1984 13 June 1985
 Norway 17 July 1980 21 May 1981
 Pakistan 12 March 1996 a/ b/
 Panama 26 June 1980 29 October 1981
 Papua New Guinea 12 January 1995 a/
 Paraguay 6 April 1987 a/
 Peru 23 July 1981 13 September 1982
 Philippines 15 July 1980 5 August 1981
 Poland 29 May 1980 30 July 1980 b/
 Portugal 24 April 1980 30 July 1980
 Republic of Korea 25 May 1983 b/ 27 December 1984 b/ c/

Republic of Moldova 1 July 1994 a/
Romania 4 September 1980 b/ 7 January 1982 b/
Russian Federation 17 July 1980 23 January 1981 c/
Rwanda 1 May 1980 2 March 1981
Saint Kitts and Nevis 25 April 1985 a/
Saint Lucia 8 October 1982 a/
St. Vincent & the Grenadines 4 August 1981 a/
Samoa 25 September 1992 a/
Sao Tome and Principe 31 October 1995
Senegal 29 July 1980 5 February 1985
Seychelles 5 May 1992 a/
Sierra Leone 21 September 1988 11 November 1988
Singapore 5 October 1995 a/ b/
Slovakia / 28 May 1993 d/
Slovenia 6 July 1992 d/
South Africa 29 January 1993 15 December 1995 a/
Spain 17 July 1980 5 January 1984 b/
Sri Lanka 17 July 1980 5 October 1981
Suriname 1 March 1993 a/
Sweden 7 March 1980 2 July 1980
Switzerland 23 January 1987 27 March 1997 a/ b/
Tajikistan 26 October 1993 a/
Thailand 9 August 1985 a/ b/ c/
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 18 January 1994 d/
Togo 26 September 1983 a/
Trinidad and Tobago 27 June 1985 b/ 12 January 1990 b/
Tunisia 24 July 1980 20 September 1985 b/
Turkey 20 December 1985 a/ b/
Turkmenistan 1 May 1997 a/
Tuvalu 6 October 1999 a/
Uganda 30 July 1980 22 July 1985
Ukraine 17 July 1980 12 March 1981 c/
UK & Northern Ireland 22 July 1981 17 April 1986 b/
United Republic of Tanzania 17 July 1980 20 August 1985
United States of America 17 July 1980
Uruguay 30 March 1981 19 October 1981
Uzbekistan 19 July 1995 a/
Vanuatu 8 September 1995 a/
Venezuela 17 July 1980 2 May 1983 b/
Viet Nam 29 July 1980 17 February 1982 b/
Yemen / 30 May 1984 a/ b/
Yugoslavia 17 July 1980 26 February 1982
Zambia 17 July 1980 21 June 1985
Zimbabwe 13 May 1991 a/

Appendix C

Workshop Evaluation

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Place:

Date:

What did you think about the workshop?

Do you feel that you learned something? What?

Do you think that the manual helped you to address subjects of interest?
What were they?

What activities were most useful or provocative?

What changes would you suggest?

Do you feel that the video is a good resource for training and learning?

Had you read the Women's Convention before? Do you feel it is an
important document? Why?

Other comments:

Appendix D

Optional Protocol – What's in it?

Official Text

Optional protocol to CEDAW

Courtesy of: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/protocol/protocol.pdf>

What's in it?

The draft optional protocol incorporates the features of existing UN complaints procedures. It also incorporates some of the practices of other UN treaty bodies that have developed as their complaints procedures have been used.

Preamble:

The preamble is the introductory part of the Protocol which sets out the object and purpose of the Protocol. It refers to the principles of equality and non-discrimination as embodied in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It reaffirms the determination of States parties which adopt the protocol to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to take effective action to prevent violations of these rights and freedoms."

Article 1

Establishes that States who become parties to the optional protocol recognise the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications under the protocol.

Article 2

Provides a Communications Procedure which allows either individuals or groups of individuals to submit individual complaints to the Committee. Communications may also be submitted on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, with their consent, unless it can be shown why that consent was not received.

Article 3

Establishes that a communication will only be considered by the Committee if it concerns a country that has become party to the protocol. In addition, a communication must be submitted in writing and may not be anonymous.

Article 4

Stipulates admissibility criteria of communications. Before a complaint is considered, the Committee must determine that all available domestic remedies have been exhausted and the complaint is not, nor has been examined by the Committee or has been or is being examined under another procedure of international investigation or settlement. In addition, a complaint will only be admissible provided the complaint is compatible with the provisions of the Convention; is not an abuse of the right to submit a communication; the claimants' allegations can be substantiated, and the facts presented occurred after the State party ratified the Protocol.

Article 5

After receipt of a communication and prior to its final decision, the Committee has the option of contacting the State Party with an urgent request that the State Party take steps to protect the alleged victim or victims from irreparable harm.

Article 6

Establishes the communications procedure. Where a communication has been found admissible; the Committee will confidentially bring a communication to the attention of the State Party, provided the complaint has consented to disclosure of their identity to the State Party. The State Party is given six months to provide a written explanation or statement to the complaint.

Article 7

Outlines the process of complaint consideration. The Committee will examine and consider all information provided by a complaint in closed meetings. The Committee's views and recommendations will be transmitted to the parties concerned. The State Party has six months to consider the views of the Committee and provide a written response, including remedial steps taken. The Committee may request further information from the State Party, including in subsequent reports.

Article 8

Establishes an inquiry procedure that allows the Committee to initiate a confidential investigation by one or more of its members where it has received reliable information of grave or systematic violations by a State Party of rights established in the Convention. Where warranted and with the consent of the State Party, the Committee may visit the territory of the State Party. Any findings, comments or recommendations will be transmitted to the State Party concerned, to which it may respond within six months.

Article 9

Establishes a follow-up procedure for the Committee. After the six-month period referred to in article 8, the State Party may be invited to provide the Committee with details of any remedial efforts taken following an inquiry. Details may also be provided in the State Party report to the Committee under article 18 of the Convention.

Article 10

Provides an opt-out clause. At ratification of the Optional Protocol, a State Party has the option of refusing to recognize the competence of the Committee to initiate and conduct an inquiry as established under articles 8 and 9. However, this declaration may be withdrawn at a later time.

Article 11

Requires a State Party to ensure the protection of those submitting communications.

Article 12

A summary of the Committee's activities relating to the Protocol will be included under article 21 of the Convention.

Article 13

Establishes a requirement that States Parties widely publicize the Convention and its Protocol and provide access to the views and recommendations of the Committee.

Article 14

Requires the Committee to develop its own rules of procedure when dealing with communications and inquiries considered in accordance with the Optional Protocol.

Article 15

Governs eligibility for States to sign, ratify or accede to the Protocol. Any State Party that is party to the Convention may become party to the Protocol.

Article 16

Establishes that a minimum of ten countries must have ratified or acceded to the Protocol before the Protocol enters into force. The Protocol will enter into force three months after the 10th ratification or accession.

Article 17

Provides that there shall be no reservations to the Protocol.

Article 18

Establishes procedures for amending the Protocol. Any State Party may suggest amendments to be sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to be communicated to all States Parties to the Protocol. If requested by a minimum of one-third of States Parties, a conference may be convened to discuss and vote on any amendments. With the support of a two-thirds majority and the General Assembly, an amendment comes into force and is binding on States that have accepted the amendments.

Article 19

Provides for a State Party to withdraw from the Protocol by written notification to the Secretary-General. Withdrawal will not impact any communications submitted prior to the effective date of withdrawal.

Article 20

States that the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform States of signatures, ratifications and accessions, the date the Protocol comes into force and any amendments and withdrawals.

Article 21

Provides that the Protocol will be deposited in the United Nations archives, made available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish and sent to all States Parties by the Secretary General. [Click here for full text of the Optional Protocol](#)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention **Revised draft optional protocol submitted by the Chairman on the basis of informal consultations held on the compilation text contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-second session (E/1998/27)**

The States Parties to this Protocol,

Noting that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,

Noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex,

Recalling that the International Covenants on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex,

Recalling also the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ("the Convention"), in which the States Parties thereto condemn discrimination against women in all its forms And agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women,

Reaffirming their determination to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to take effective action to prevent violations of these rights and freedoms, Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

A State Party to this Protocol ("State Party") recognizes the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ("the Committee") to receive and consider communications submitted in accordance with article 2.

Article 2

Communications may be submitted by or on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, under the jurisdiction of a State Party, claiming to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set forth in the Convention by that State Party. Where a communication is submitted on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, this shall be with their consent unless the author can justify acting on their behalf without such consent.

Article 3

Communications shall be in writing and shall not be anonymous. No communication shall be received by the Committee if it concerns a State Party to the Convention that is not a party to this Protocol.

Article 4

1. The Committee shall not consider a communication unless it has ascertained that all available domestic remedies have been exhausted unless the application of such remedies is unreasonably prolonged or unlikely to bring effective relief.

2. The Committee shall declare a communication inadmissible where:

(i) The same matter has already been examined by the Committee or has been or is being examined under another procedure of international investigation or settlement;

(ii) It is incompatible with the provisions of the Convention;

(iii) It is manifestly ill-founded or not sufficiently substantiated;

(iv) It is an abuse of the right to submit a communication;

(v) The facts that are the subject of the communication occurred prior to the entry into force of this Protocol for the State Party concerned unless those facts continued after that date.

Article 5

1. At any time after the receipt of a communication and before a determination on the merits has been reached, the Committee may transmit to the State Party concerned for its urgent consideration a request that the State Party take such interim measures as may be necessary to avoid possible irreparable damage to the victim or victims of the alleged violation.
2. Where the Committee exercises its discretion under paragraph 1, this does not imply a determination on admissibility or on the merits of the communication.

Article 6

1. Unless the Committee considers a communication inadmissible without reference to the State Party concerned, and provided that the individual or individuals consent to the disclosure of their identity to that State Party, the Committee shall bring any communication submitted to it under this Protocol confidentially to the attention of the State Party concerned.
2. Within six months, the receiving State Party shall submit to the Committee written explanations or statements clarifying the matter and the remedy, if any, that may have been provided by that State Party.

Article 7

1. The Committee shall consider communications received under this Protocol in the light of all information made available to it by or on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals and by the State Party concerned, provided that this information is transmitted to the parties concerned.
2. The Committee shall hold closed meetings when examining communications under this Protocol.
3. After examining a communication, the Committee shall transmit its views on the communication, together with its recommendations, if any, to the parties concerned.
4. The State Party shall give due consideration to the views of the Committee, together with its recommendations, if any, and shall submit to the Committee, within six months, a written response, including information on any action taken in the light of the views and recommendations of the Committee.
5. The Committee may invite the State Party to submit further information about any measures the State Party has taken in response to its views or recommendations, if any, including as deemed appropriate by the Committee, in the State Party's subsequent reports under article 18 of the Convention.

Article 8

1. If the Committee receives reliable information indicating grave or systematic violations by a State Party of rights set forth in the Convention, the Committee shall invite that State Party to cooperate in the examination of the information and to this end to submit observations with regard to the information concerned.
2. Taking into account any observations that may have been submitted by the State Party concerned as well as any other reliable information available to it, the Committee may designate one or more of its members to conduct an inquiry and to report urgently to the Committee. Where warranted and with the consent of the State Party, the inquiry may include a visit to its territory.
3. After examining the findings of such an inquiry, the Committee shall transmit these findings to the State Party concerned together with any comments and recommendations.
4. The State Party concerned shall, within six months of receiving the findings, comments and recommendations transmitted by the Committee, submit its observations to the Committee.
5. Such an inquiry shall be conducted confidentially and the cooperation of that State Party shall be sought at all stages of the proceedings.

Article 9

1. The Committee may invite the State Party concerned to include in its report under article 18 of the Convention details of any measures taken in response to an inquiry conducted under article 8 of this Protocol.
2. The Committee may, if necessary, after the end of the period of six months referred to in article 8.4, invite the State Party concerned to inform it of the measures taken in response to such an inquiry.

Article 10

1. Each State Party may, at the time of signature or ratification of this Protocol or accession thereto, declare that it does not recognize the competence of the Committee provided for in articles 8 and 9.
2. Any State Party having made a declaration in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article may, at any time, withdraw this declaration by notification to the Secretary-General.

Article 11

A State Party shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that individuals under its jurisdiction are not subjected to ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of communicating with the Committee pursuant to this Protocol.

Article 12

The Committee shall include in its annual report under article 21 of the Convention a summary of its activities under this Protocol.

Article 13

Each State Party undertakes to make widely known and to give publicity to the Convention and this Protocol and to facilitate access to information about the views and recommendations of the Committee, in particular, on matters involving that State Party.

Article 14

The Committee shall develop its own rules of procedure to be followed when exercising the functions conferred on it by this Protocol.

Article 15

1. This Protocol shall be open for signature by any State that has signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention.
2. This Protocol shall be subject to ratification by any State that has ratified or acceded to the Convention. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
3. This Protocol shall be open to accession by any State that has ratified or acceded to the Convention.
4. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 16

1. This Protocol shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the tenth instrument of ratification or accession.
2. For each State ratifying this Protocol or acceding to it after its entry into force, this Protocol shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 17

No reservations to this Protocol shall be permitted.

Article 18

1. Any State Party may propose an amendment to this Protocol and file it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall thereupon communicate any proposed amendments to the States Parties with a request that they notify her/him whether they favour a conference of States Parties for the purpose of considering and voting on the proposal. In the event that at least one third of the States Parties favour such a conference, the Secretary-General shall convene the conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Any amendment adopted by a majority of the States Parties present and voting at the conference shall be submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations for approval.
2. Amendments shall come into force when they have been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and accepted by a two-thirds majority of the States Parties to this Protocol in accordance with their respective constitutional processes.
3. When amendments come into force, they shall be binding on those States Parties that have accepted them, other States Parties still being bound by the provisions of this Protocol and any earlier amendments that they have accepted.

Article 19

1. Any State Party may denounce this Protocol at any time by written notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Denunciation shall take effect six months after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.
2. Denunciation shall be without prejudice to the continued application of the provisions of this Protocol to any communication submitted under article 2 or any inquiry initiated under article 8 before the effective date of denunciation.

Article 20

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform all States of:

- (a) Signatures, ratifications and accessions under this Protocol;
- (b) The date of entry into force of this Protocol and of any amendment under article 18;
- (c) Any denunciation under article 19.

Article 21

1. This Protocol, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations.
2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit certified copies of this Protocol to all States referred to in article 25 of the Convention.