

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

Information note prepared by OHCHR for NGO participation

Functions of CEDAW

During its sessions the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) considers reports of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Following such consideration, the Committee formulates concluding observations that contain recommendations to assist the State party concerned in the further implementation of the Convention. These concluding observations outline positive aspects, principal subjects of concern and the Committee's recommendations on how to address challenges faced by the State party. The reports of States parties, the lists of issues and questions prepared by the Committee's pre-sessional working group, the Committee's concluding observations (once adopted) and other documentation for the sessions can be found on the secretariat's website at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CEDAW

CEDAW members

The CEDAW Committee consists of 23 members, serving in their personal capacity. For details about the members of the Committee, please see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Membership.aspx>

NGO engagement with CEDAW

Since its early sessions, the Committee has invited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to follow its work and this is reflected in its rules of procedure. In order to ensure that it is as well informed as possible, the Committee and its pre-sessional working group welcome representatives of national and international NGOs to provide country-specific information on States parties whose reports are before it. This can be done orally or in writing. The Committee encourages international NGOs and United Nations entities and specialized agencies to facilitate attendance at Committee sessions by representatives of national NGOs.

Written NGO submissions for CEDAW sessions

The Committee welcomes country-specific information from NGOs. Once received and with the consent of the NGOs concerned, OHCHR posts NGO submissions containing such information on its website, under the relevant CEDAW session. Coordination of report writing amongst NGOs is highly encouraged.² *When and how to submit information* Submissions should be sent by email (**in Word format**) and in hard copy by post (30 copies of each submission). All submissions should reach the secretariat of the Committee two weeks prior to the beginning of the session.

NGOs wishing to make written submissions to CEDAW should:

1. Indicate the full name of the NGO;
2. Indicate the State party scheduled for consideration to which the information relates;
3. Indicate whether or not the submission can be posted on the CEDAW website for public information purposes; and
4. Submit the written information in Word format by e-mail and thereafter submit 30 copies in hard copy format.

All submissions should be received two weeks prior to the beginning of the session by the Secretariat of the Committee. The Word version of the submission should be sent to the following e-mail address: cedaw@ohchr.org Hard copy submissions should be sent to:

CEDAW Secretariat
OHCHR - Palais Wilson
52, rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Due to the high number of submissions received at each session, such submissions should not exceed ten pages and should highlight priority concerns and suggest possible country-specific recommendations, with a view to facilitating the work of the Committee. NGOs are also urged to ensure that the requisite number of hard copies of their submissions reach OHCHR in time for the respective session. Due to the high number of submissions received from NGOs and other stakeholders, OHCHR does not photocopy submissions from NGOs.

NGOs can also avail themselves of the support of IWRAW Asia Pacific to submit their written information, electronically and in hard copy, to the Secretariat. For details and deadlines, please contact IWRAW Asia Pacific:

10-2, Jalan Bangsar Utama 9
Bangsar Utama
59000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: +60 322 822 255
Fax: +60 322 832 552
Email: iwraw-ap@iwraw-ap.org or
iwraw_ap@yahoo.com

With regard to the above, it is noted that the Committee has the prerogative to take into account all information submitted to it until the consideration of a report by a State party has been concluded.

NGO reports for CEDAW pre-sessional working group

NGOs are encouraged to submit country-specific information to the pre-sessional working group. During the pre-session, the working group prepares lists of issues and questions which are subsequently sent to each State party whose report is scheduled to be considered *two sessions later*. NGOs should send their submissions in Word format two weeks prior to the beginning of the pre-sessional working group to the following e-mail address: cedaw@ohchr.org.

In addition, NGO representatives attending the pre-sessional working group should bring 10 copies for distribution at the meeting of the pre-sessional working group. NGOs not attending the pre-sessional working group should send the 10 hard copies of their submissions two weeks prior to the beginning of the pre-sessional working group to the following address:

CEDAW Secretariat
OHCHR - Palais Wilson
52, rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva 10
Switzerland

NGOs can also avail themselves of the support of IRAW Asia Pacific to submit information, either electronically and/or in hard copy or both, to the Committee. For details and deadlines, please contact IRAW Asia Pacific.

NGO attendance at the sessions of CEDAW or its pre-sessional working group

The Committee has set aside time at its sessions for NGOs to provide **oral** information in respect of countries being considered during the respective session. For details of dates, please see the NGO information note for the respective session or the provisional agenda (both available on the CEDAW website).

- Coordination of statements

Oral interventions by NGOs must be concise. On average, not more than 10 minutes overall are allocated for all NGOs wishing to intervene on one particular country. Efforts to share the available time amongst the NGOs wishing to speak on a country is encouraged and appreciated.

NGOs making oral interventions should ensure that they bring 35 written copies of their statements at least one hour prior to the meeting for circulation to the Committee and for interpretation purposes in addition to any written submissions. Prior to the presentation, NGOs are requested to send an electronic version of their statements in **Word format** to: cedaw@ohchr.org.

- How to submit

NGO representatives wishing to address the Committee or its pre-sessional working group are requested to indicate the full name of their NGO, the names of their representatives, and the proposed dates of attendance to the OHCHR at cedaw@ohchr.org no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of the session or pre-sessional working group so that arrangements can be made for the issuance of United Nations ground passes to enter the United Nations premises.

- How to attend

NGO representatives who wish to attend any sessions of the Committee or pre-session working group must be duly registered. **All NGO representatives must complete the online registration form for the respective session two weeks prior to the beginning of that session by accessing the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (DESA) CSO Net website. Please note that the online registration will be closed two weeks prior to the session and that the CEDAW Secretariat will no longer accept Conference Registration Forms that are sent by e-mail.** For details on the registration procedure, please see the NGO information note for the respective session.

Please note that OHCHR **will not provide letters of invitation to NGOs** to attend CEDAW sessions for purposes of obtaining visas. However, upon request, the Secretariat can provide, a general "to whom it may concern" letter specifying that a representative has requested and obtained accreditation to a meeting. Please also note that OHCHR is unable to assist with travel and/or accommodation costs.

NGO side events

NGOs can organize side events during the session of CEDAW for members of the Committee. Please contact the secretariat on cedaw@ohchr.org at least four weeks in advance of the session indicating the focus of the side event. The secretariat will inform you if it is possible to accommodate the requests in light of all requests received and availability of Committee members.

Secretariat of CEDAW

The secretariat of CEDAW is responsible for assisting the Committee and forms part of the Human Rights Treaties Division of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). For detailed information on past and upcoming sessions of the Committee, see the “NGO information note” on the session page, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CEDAW

Additional Information

For further information about the treaty bodies in general, specific information on CEDAW and on the participation and role of civil society in the reporting procedure, please consult the following links:

<http://www2.ohchr.org>; and
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx>

How to contact the secretariat

E-mail: cedaw@ohchr.org
