

**Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination
of Discrimination against Women**

**Adopted by General Assembly resolution A/54/4 on 6 October 1999
and opened for signature on 10 December 1999, Human Rights Day**

entry into force 22 December 2000

The States Parties to the present 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,

Also noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Resolution 217 A (III). 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 Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex. and other international human rights instruments prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex,

Also recalling 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 the present 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 the present 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:

(a) 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;

(b) It is incompatible with the provisions of the Convention;

(c) It is manifestly ill-founded or not sufficiently substantiated;

(d) It is an abuse of the right to submit a communication;

(e) The facts that are the subject of the communication occurred prior to the entry into force of the present 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 of the present article, 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 the present 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 the present 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 the present 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 the 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 the present 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 the

present 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 the present 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 the present Protocol.

Article 12

The Committee shall include in its annual report under article 21 of the Convention a summary of its activities under the present Protocol.

Article 13

Each State Party undertakes to make widely known and to give publicity to the Convention and the present 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 the present Protocol.

Article 15

1. The present Protocol shall be open for signature by any State that has signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention.

2. The present 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. The present 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.

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

New York, 6 October 1999

Status as of 1 December 2006:

Signatories: 76, Parties: 83.

Participant	Signature	Ratification, Accession (a), Succession (d)
Albania		23 Jun 2003 a
Andorra	9 Jul 2001	14 Oct 2002
Antigua and Barbuda		5 Jun 2006 a
Argentina	28 Feb 2000	
Armenia		14 Sep 2006 a
Austria	10 Dec 1999	6 Sep 2000
Azerbaijan	6 Jun 2000	1 Jun 2001
Bangladesh	6 Sep 2000	6 Sep 2000
Belarus	29 Apr 2002	3 Feb 2004
Belgium	10 Dec 1999	17 Jun 2004
Belize		9 Dec 2002 a
Benin	25 May 2000	
Bolivia	10 Dec 1999	27 Sep 2000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7 Sep 2000	4 Sep 2002
Brazil	13 Mar 2001	28 Jun 2002
Bulgaria	6 Jun 2000	20 Sep 2006
Burkina Faso	16 Nov 2001	10 Oct 2005
Burundi	13 Nov 2001	
Cambodia	11 Nov 2001	
Cameroon		7 Jan 2005 a
Canada		18 Oct 2002 a
Chile	10 Dec 1999	
Colombia	10 Dec 1999	
Costa Rica	10 Dec 1999	20 Sep 2001
Croatia	5 Jun 2000	7 Mar 2001
Cuba	17 Mar 2000	
Cyprus	8 Feb 2001	26 Apr 2002
Czech Republic	10 Dec 1999	26 Feb 2001
Denmark	10 Dec 1999	31 May 2000

Dominican Republic	14 Mar 2000	10 Aug 2001
Ecuador	10 Dec 1999	5 Feb 2002
El Salvador	4 Apr 2001	
Finland	10 Dec 1999	29 Dec 2000
France	10 Dec 1999	9 Jun 2000
Gabon		5 Nov 2004 a
Georgia		1 Aug 2002 a
Germany	10 Dec 1999	15 Jan 2002
Ghana	24 Feb 2000	
Greece	10 Dec 1999	24 Jan 2002
Guatemala	7 Sep 2000	9 May 2002
Guinea-Bissau	12 Sep 2000	
Hungary		22 Dec 2000 a
Iceland	10 Dec 1999	6 Mar 2001
Indonesia	28 Feb 2000	
Ireland	7 Sep 2000	7 Sep 2000
Italy	10 Dec 1999	22 Sep 2000
Kazakhstan	6 Sep 2000	24 Aug 2001
Kyrgyzstan		22 Jul 2002 a
Lesotho	6 Sep 2000	24 Sep 2004
Liberia	22 Sep 2004	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		18 Jun 2004 a
Liechtenstein	10 Dec 1999	24 Oct 2001
Lithuania	8 Sep 2000	5 Aug 2004
Luxembourg	10 Dec 1999	1 Jul 2003
Madagascar	7 Sep 2000	
Malawi	7 Sep 2000	
Maldives		13 Mar 2006 a
Mali		5 Dec 2000 a
Mauritius	11 Nov 2001	
Mexico	10 Dec 1999	15 Mar 2002
Moldova		28 Feb 2006 a
Mongolia	7 Sep 2000	28 Mar 2002
Montenegro ¹		23 Oct 2006 d
Namibia	19 May 2000	26 May 2000
Nepal	18 Dec 2001	
Netherlands ²	10 Dec 1999	22 May 2002
New Zealand ³	7 Sep 2000	7 Sep 2000
Niger		30 Sep 2004 a
Nigeria	8 Sep 2000	22 Nov 2004
Norway	10 Dec 1999	5 Mar 2002

Panama	9 Jun 2000	9 May 2001
Paraguay	28 Dec 1999	14 May 2001
Peru	22 Dec 2000	9 Apr 2001
Philippines	21 Mar 2000	12 Nov 2003
Poland		22 Dec 2003 a
Portugal	16 Feb 2000	26 Apr 2002
Republic of Korea		18 Oct 2006 a
Romania	6 Sep 2000	25 Aug 2003
Russian Federation	8 May 2001	28 Jul 2004
Saint Kitts and Nevis		20 Jan 2006 a
San Marino		15 Sep 2005 a
Sao Tome and Principe	6 Sep 2000	
Senegal	10 Dec 1999	26 May 2000
Serbia		31 Jul 2003 a
Seychelles	22 Jul 2002	
Sierra Leone	8 Sep 2000	
Slovakia	5 Jun 2000	17 Nov 2000
Slovenia	10 Dec 1999	23 Sep 2004
Solomon Islands		6 May 2002 a
South Africa		18 Oct 2005 a
Spain	14 Mar 2000	6 Jul 2001
Sri Lanka		15 Oct 2002 a
Sweden	10 Dec 1999	24 Apr 2003
Tajikistan	7 Sep 2000	
Thailand	14 Jun 2000	14 Jun 2000
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3 Apr 2000	17 Oct 2003
Timor-Leste		16 Apr 2003 a
Turkey	8 Sep 2000	29 Oct 2002
Ukraine	7 Sep 2000	26 Sep 2003
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ⁴		17 Dec 2004 a
United Republic of Tanzania		12 Jan 2006 a
Uruguay	9 May 2000	26 Jul 2001
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	17 Mar 2000	13 May 2002