

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

from a feminist perspective

SDGs & CEDAW

Women's Major Group

The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all." It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 and is intended to be achieved by 2030.

Both CEDAW and many of the SDGs, in its essence, are aimed towards promoting the duty and responsibility of countries to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

SDGs are a complex agenda which attempts to integrate the social, economic and environmental dimension of development altogether, but as it was not specific in its women's human rights approach to sustainable development, *CEDAW can be used to strengthen the women's human rights approaches of the SDGs.*

Integrate SDGs Targets, Indicators in your shadow reporting to the CEDAW Committee.

Integrate human rights perspective into your alternative reporting to all national, regional and global review processes on SDGs implementation.

Use SDGs as a tool to advocate your governments to accelerate the progress and implementation of their human rights obligations.

Engage with your governments to influence the development of SDGs indicators, especially at national level, that can integrate human rights standards and obligations.

Engage with your local or national governments to ensure that human rights obligations are incorporated as part of their implementation of the SDGs in local and national policies and actions.

WHAT ARE THE SDGs?

WHAT IS THE INTERLINK AND INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE SDGS AND CEDAW?

WHAT CAN FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS DO?

WHAT IS CEDAW?

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Often described as the international bill of rights for women, it came into force on 3 September 1981 and has thus far been ratified by 189 governments. Governments who have ratified CEDAW are required to submit regular reports to the **CEDAW Committee**, usually every four years. The Committee, which consists of independent experts, can also receive individual complaints on countries where the government has ratified **CEDAW's Optional Protocol**.

WHY USE UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS (SUCH AS CEDAW AND OTHER MECHANISMS) TO ADVANCE SDGS COMMITMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY?

To support and enhance the implementation of the SDGs from a feminist and human rights based perspective. The human rights mechanism can add a dimension of accountability which is absent within the SDGs framework, while the SDGs with their concrete and time-bound Agenda, Targets and Indicators can add a more concrete time-frame to the implementations of human rights treaties and conventions.



WHO COULD YOU REACH OUT TO?

The **Women's Major Group** facilitates participation and inputs CSOs working to promote human rights based sustainable development with a focus on women's human rights at the UN

There are currently four **Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanisms** that exist in **Asia Pacific**, **Africa**, **Europe** and **Latin America**. These mechanisms exist to ensure and facilitate stronger cross constituency coordination and ensure that the voices from each of the sub-regions from each region are heard in the intergovernmental processes at regional and global levels.

The International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP AP) is an NGO in Special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It facilitates and monitors CEDAW implementation as well as provides support to women's rights organisations in shadow report writing and monitoring the implementation of the convention.

TIPS FROM THE MOVEMENTS

Whether your government is up for review at the CEDAW Committee and the SDGs Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the same time or at different times, women's rights organizations can take advantage of either reviews or coinciding reviews by:

Drafting a shadow report to the CEDAW Committee and an Alternative Report to the VNR in a complimentary way by incorporating SDGs commitments into the CEDAW shadow reporting and vice versa or utilize one or the other report to highlight issues that cannot be covered in the other review process, e.g., if a particular issue is not or cannot be covered in the CEDAW shadow report, you can raise that issue in the SDGs Alternative Report instead.

Add whatever changes that might have occurred in the time between the two reviews in the latter reporting.

If your government is avoiding some of their commitments under the SDGs, you can use **relevant articles from CEDAW** to demand those same commitments from your governments and vice versa.

Submit your SDGs Alternative Report to the CEDAW Committee for its consideration in its review and Concluding Observations to your government.

Use the Concluding Observation or General Recommendations from the CEDAW Committee in your SDGs advocacies with your government.

Utilize existing regional and global platforms and networks on SDGs or on CEDAW to demand accountability from your government at regional and global level, especially when democratic spaces at national level are restricted.

The most recent **CEDAW Guidelines** developed by the CEDAW Committee in 2018. This Guideline aims to examine not only whether state parties are carrying out their duties to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights of women in line with CEDAW, but also to identify whether progress is on track vis a-vis the SDGs, particularly Goal 5 and its target and indicators.

TOOLS TO CHECK OUT

The **Danish Institute of Human Rights' Guide to the Sustainable Development Goals** makes concrete links between the SDGs Targets and the relevant international and regional human rights instruments, international labour standards and key environmental instruments.

Check out **IWRAP AP CEDAW-SDGs Tool**, an evolving tool linking the human rights framework and the sustainable development framework, with a particular focus on CEDAW and the SDGs.

SDG 5 TARGET 1 CALLS FOR "ENDING ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS EVERYWHERE"

While its indicator mentioned "whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex" it does not specify the use of Temporary Special Measures. Article 4 of CEDAW on the other hand, specifically mentions the use of TSM to "accelerate de facto equality between men and women."