



**FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL:
Using the United Nations to
achieve local change for women**



**The United Nations
Human Rights Treaty System**





Where do we find human rights?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights | ✓ International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination |
| ✓ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights | ✓ Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| ✓ Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women | ✓ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| ✓ Convention Against Torture | ✗ International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families |



How does the Human Rights Treaty System help us?

- Commitment to a set of standards
- Necessity to implement standards
- External assessment of implementation



What are the accountability mechanisms under CEDAW?

- 4-year reporting by Governments
- Inter-state complaints mechanism
- Optional Protocol
 - Individual complaints
 - Inquiries procedure


ywca



What is in CEDAW?



- Eliminate discrimination against women
- Achieve substantive equality
- Take action in both the public and private spheres
- Take action in all areas of women's lives
- Take action for all women

ywca




What is in CEDAW?

1 Discrimination	8 Representation
2 Policy Measures	9 Nationality
3 Guarantee of Basic Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	10 Education
4 Special Measures	11 Employment
5 Sex Role Stereotyping and Prejudice	12 Health
6 Trafficking / Exploitation in Prostitution	13 Economic and Social Benefits
7 Political and Public Life	14 Rural Women
	15 Law
	16 Marriage and Family Life



CEDAW in Australia

- Reservations
- Sex Discrimination Act
 - Discrimination prohibited in a range of areas, including employment and access to services
- Government programs and policy, eg:
 - public housing
 - Medicare
 - free primary/secondary education
- Gaps?





National Machinery relevant to Women's Rights

- Federal Ministerial Portfolio for Women
- Ministerial Council (meeting of State Ministers)
- Federal and state Office for Women
- Sex Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission (federal)
- State/Territory anti-discrimination agencies
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (federal)

ywca



Australia's CEDAW reporting process

- Last review: January 2006
- Last NGO shadow reports in 2005:
 - Women's Rights Action Network Australia (WRANA)
 - Koorie Women Mean Business (KWMB)
- New government report: December 2008
- New NGO shadow reports: second half of 2009

ywca



What happens when a Government reports?

- Report is submitted to CEDAW Committee
- Women's NGOs prepare NGO report
- Initial review → clarifying questions
- NGOs lobby Committee members
- Official Review & Constructive dialogue
- Committee issues Concluding Comments

ywca



CEDAW Committee concerns

Concerns about Australia in 2006 Concluding Comments:

- women's working conditions
- issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women
- lack of institutional mechanisms to advance women's interests
- violence against women in Australia
- racism against women in Australia
- women's health in Australia
- women with disability in Australia
- discrimination against lesbians
- Australia's failure to ratify the Optional Protocol

ywca



Human Rights Treaty System: Practical Exercises

ywca



Exercises: Using Concluding Comments

Using the concluding comments to...

1. Inform advocacy reports? (p 54)
2. Garner media coverage for your issue? (p 56)
3. Build support amongst like-minded community organisations for your issue ('peer-to-peer advocacy')? (p 58)
4. Support political advocacy arguments and strategies? (p 59)
5. To strengthen budget analysis? (p 60)
6. Support a funding submission/proposal? (p 63)
7. To develop a public meeting agenda? (p 64)

ywca



Policy Review:

**What have been the policy shifts
and developments since the 2003
Australian Government Report?**

ywca



Australian Government Report:

**What are the policy shifts
reflected in this year's report?**

ywca



Australian Government Report: Policy shifts

- Education revolution
- Employment and economic participation
- Health policy
- National Disability Strategy
- Rural women
- Domestic and Family violence:
 - National Council
 - Homelessness report
- Northern Territory Emergency Response

ywca



Exercise:

Getting to know the Australian Government Report

ywca



Australian Government Report: Impact of Concluding Comments

- Systemic:
 - Statistics and gender-disaggregated data
 - Focus on marginalised groups subject to multi-sectoral discrimination
- Issue based
 - Full and consistent implementation and enforcement of laws on violence against women
 - Funding to NGOs involved in women's rights
 - Impact assessment of legislative reforms
 - Awareness of and training on CEDAW

ywca



Reviewing the last NGO Shadow Reports

Questions:

What were the key issues raised in the Government and 2005 NGO Reports?

What issues are still priorities for this year's NGO Report?

What are the new and emerging issues?

Report back:

Write it down on Issues Sheets (as many as you want)

Nominee to tell group 3-4 key priorities discussed

ywca



Plenary Consultation: Where to from here?

- The Shadow Report Process
- Follow up on the next Concluding Comments
- What can I do to help?
- Our contact details:
 - T: 03 9349 1699 (Emily); 02 9749 7700 (Edwina)
 - F: 03 9349 3633
 - E: cedaw@ywca.org.au
 - W: www.ywca.org.au/policy/cedaw.php

The YWCA logo, consisting of the lowercase letters 'ywca' in a white, cursive script font, positioned on a dark blue background with a pattern of small white dots.