



SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT ON THE
STATUS OF WOMEN



Beijing + 20



Talking to Your Elected Official about Implementing CEDAW

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (**CEDAW**) is the only international human rights treaty to focus exclusively on the rights of women. Adopted by many countries in 1979, CEDAW has been ratified by 186 of 193 UN member states worldwide. The United States is one of the seven member states, and the only industrialized nation, that has failed to ratify CEDAW, joined by countries such as Iran, Somalia, and Sudan.

In 1998, San Francisco became the first city in the world to adopt an ordinance reflecting the principles of CEDAW. The purpose of the Cities for CEDAW campaign is to "make the global local" by harnessing the power of cities and promoting the adoption of CEDAW as a municipal ordinance in cities large and small in order to create a framework for improving the status of women and girls. Mobilizing multiple stake holders, including elected officials, the media, business, youth, NGOs, faith communities, and women leaders, the campaign will focus on engaging cities across the United States.

As a Cities for CEDAW advocate, you will need to meet with the elected officials in your city. You may be asking a city official for his or her support, but, ultimately, you should work to develop a long term relationship that will pave the way for a local CEDAW measure. Below are some best practices for talking to your elected official from *Making Rights Real: A Workbook on the Local Implementation Human Rights*. For more advocate resources, tips, and tricks, visit www.cities4cedaw.org for the complete Human Rights Handbook.

➤ HOW TO TALK TO YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL

1. Do your homework and tailor your meeting to highlight the relationship between your work and their interests. Contact their assistant or scheduler for more efficient scheduling.
2. Describe why you want a meeting and whom you represent, be persistent, and don't forget to call and confirm your meeting!
3. Time may be limited, so be prepared! Create an agenda, limit your talking points to 15 minutes or less (officials may need to depart at a moment's notice), and limit the number of speakers to 2-3 people who can convey a strong message.
4. Be specific, clear, and polite.
5. Get business cards and stay in touch. Sending a thank you letter after your meeting will go a long way in developing a strong relationship and making sure they remember your key points and action items.

What it Takes to Make CEDAW Work, Locally

➤ **ONLY THREE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION**

1. **Gender analysis** – This tool analyzes workforce, services, and the city budget in order to integrate gender considerations into the daily operations of local agencies, and to institutionalize new ways of thinking about equitable distribution of government resources. The report includes other demographic characteristics linked to gender such as race, disability, immigration status, and sexual orientation.
2. **Oversight body** – Crucial to the implementation of programming and policies is having community and government leaders oversee the implementation of action plans.
3. **Funding** – Municipalities should allocate between \$0.10 and \$0.25 per woman resident to implement program and policy reforms as outlined by CEDAW.

➤ **EXAMPLE: PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

It is important to involve the private sector when implementing CEDAW locally. San Francisco launched the Gender Equality Principles Initiative to build a more productive workplace, for both women and men, by implementing seven gender equality principles, based on the Calvert Women's Principles, ranging from employment and compensation to supply chain practices. These principles were later adopted by the UN Global Compact as the Women's Empowerment Principles in 2010. For more information, visit www.genderprinciples.org.

➤ **EXAMPLE: STATUS OF GIRLS**

The CEDAW approach has offered an effective way to examine the status of girls in San Francisco. Understanding San Francisco's unique demographic of girls and ensuring their rights to health, freedom from violence, and the right to education has been the goal of the disaggregated data collected by the Commission and Department. Information collected has been documented in the 2004 *Report on Girls in San Francisco: Benchmarks for the Future* and the 2012 follow up report *An Update on Girls in San Francisco: A Decade of Success and Challenges*.

➤ **EXAMPLE: PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Freedom from violence is a human right and a keystone of CEDAW. The San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women funds non-profit organizations that provide direct services to victims of violence against women including crisis intervention, legal services, case management, transitional housing, and prevention education. The Department also founded and partnered with numerous local initiatives:

1. **Justice and Courage Project for Domestic Violence Policy Reform** – to 1) Promote a victim-centered response by law enforcement agencies, 2) expand the cultural competence of first responders and community service providers to immigrant victims, and 3) advocate a systemic approach of domestic violence including the use of new technologies. **As a result of this work, San Francisco eliminated domestic homicides for a record 44 months (2010-2013).** See the *Justice and Courage Project* archive, [here](#).
2. **Family Violence Council** – Advocates working against child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse meet on a quarterly basis to document the rates of family violence and propose policy reforms. See the *Family Violence in San Francisco Report*, [here](#).
3. **Collaborative Against Human Trafficking** – Brings together community-based organizations and government agencies to eliminate modern slavery. See the San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking directory, [here](#).

For all of these, visit www.cities4cedaw.org.