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I. INTRODUCTION

The international community faces new and complex vulnerabilities that transgress boundaries such as climate change, infectious diseases, civil war, the displacement of peoples and transnational crime. The importance of developing strategies to ensure the security of individuals and not just states in an increasingly globalized world characterized by a greater interplay among states, groups and individuals has led to the recognition that ensuring human security in addition to that of national security is vital. Intrinsic to this approach is recognizing that 'security' is not just the absence of flying bullets, but access to land, clean water, employment, health care, and education. There is a holistic and all encompassing dimension to human security. The ever pressing need for security provides further layers of possibilities for the realization of social justice and peace.

Integral to any successful strategy for human security is the role of women. Comprehensive security recognizes and responds to women's diverse roles as not only victims, but as important agents during times of uncertainty. "Gender equality is not merely a matter of social justice but of international security in predicting state aggressiveness internationally" (North-South Institute, 2008). Providing a localized, national security for women creates a more secure and stable international environment for everyone. The framework of human security helps to reveal the interconnectedness of violence against women, poverty, health care, social and economic situations of women and also how class, race and nationality cross-cut these situations.

Perceived threats to human security, such as climate change and economic crisis, affect all States where women's empowerment in all sectors is crucial. These pressures can intensify existing food insecurity, shortage of safe, clean water; resource scarcity that can lead to economic drawbacks; disease; displacement; and conflicts due to growing competition over scare resources. Women are at particular risk as they make up the majority of the poor and constitute the majority of workers in the agricultural sector - rural women alone are responsible for more than half of the world's food production and between 60 and 80 percent of food production in most developing countries (FAO, 2004). They are more likely to depend on natural resources and live in areas vulnerable to risks such as climate change. Current socio-economic and political constraints that they face are consequently only exacerbated.

Simultaneously, women are frequently primary actors in mitigating the effects of and adapting to security challenges. During disaster and in its aftermath, women often play key roles in protecting, managing and recovering their household assets. In most of the world, women also have primary responsibility for gathering water and fuel, caring for their families and for the sick. Their incomes are not only positively correlated to the household's food security, but also to national economic growth. In times that increasingly call for social resilience and building networks of trust, their empowerment will be necessary in the organization, participation and control over resources and decision-making at all levels.

In 1999, an international workshop on *Women's Empowerment in the Context of Human Security* was held in Bangkok at UNESCAP. Participants emphasized that gender mainstreaming strategies should be designed to promote women's empowerment – interlinking freedom from fear and freedom from want. Five specific and inter-related issues that need to be incorporated into the discussion of human security were identified: violence against women and girls; gender inequalities in control over resources; gender inequalities in power and decision-making; women's human rights; and women and (men) as actors, not victims.

Women's socio-economic empowerment is critical to ensuring human security. Access to health care, education, property rights, credit and employment opportunities are all interlinked and mutually enhancing not only for women's individual empowerment but for their children, communities and future generations. Strengthening women's land and property rights through the transformation of land use, marital property and inheritance regimes improves their access to credit. Increased access to education and health care enhances their employment prospects, providing women with the opportunity to improve their livelihoods, that of their families and their capacity to live with dignity.

The international community has well established guidelines towards realizing women's socio-economic empowerment through international agreements such as CEDAW (1979), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Millenium Development Goals (2000). There is no region yet where women and men enjoy full equality in social, economic, and legal rights. Progress has been made in areas such as education and women's political participation, but significant work remains.

II. CHALLENGES

Human security can be divided into three areas: the security of survival, dignity and livelihood.

The Security of Survival

Healthcare

The World Health Organization (WHO) has established that despite considerable progress in the past decades, societies continue to fail to meet the health care needs of women at key moments of their lives (WHO, 2009). Women's sexual and reproductive health care needs remain hugely underserved. The three important areas that need improvement are family planning, attendance at birth, and emergency obstetrics care. The obstacles that stand in the way of better health for women are not primarily technical or medical in nature; they are social and political.

Although many health indicators in developing countries have improved over the last two decades, such as women's life expectancy, maternal mortality ratios have shown little change. At the global level, maternal mortality decreased by less than 1 % per year between 1990 and 2005. More than half a million women die every year – or one woman every minute – from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth – and for every woman who dies, millions more survive but suffer a debilitating injury, often with lifelong consequences (UNFPA, 2004). In 2005, 99 % of these deaths occurred in the developing regions (86% in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia) (UN, 2009). In Sierra Leone, for instance, a woman has a one in eight chance of dying during pregnancy or childbirth, whereas in the industrialized world, the risk of maternal death is one in 8,000.

Nearly all maternal mortality occurs in developing countries and it is among the health indicators that show the greatest gap between the rich and the poor – both between countries and within them. There are also significant differentials between urban and rural areas and education levels. Fewer than half of pregnant women in developing countries have the benefit of adequate prenatal care (UN, 2009). The health system reforms needed to improve ante and post-natal care are relatively low-cost and straightforward, which reveals a gender bias that is not being addressed in health-care oversight systems (UNIFEM, 2009). Even though women live, on average, six to eight years longer than men they tend to receive poorer quality care throughout their lives, particularly as teenagers and as elderly people.

The feminization of AIDS is another critical issue as young women are increasingly disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. Women not only have greater biological susceptibility to infection, but also a lack of sociocultural power which constrains their ability, especially young women, to negotiate safe sex (UNFPA, 2005). While about half of all people living with HIV/AIDS globally are female, in sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 67% in 2007 were female, and in some areas girls are 2 to 4.5 times more likely than boys to become infected (UN 2009; UNAIDS, 2004). In many African countries, females aged 15-24 have prevalence rates three times higher or more than those of males of the same age (UNAIDS, 2004). And in many Caribbean countries, it is women that comprise the majority of new HIV cases.

Yet women and girls often have less information about HIV/AIDS and fewer resources to take preventive measures. Legal and policy barriers exist, such as those limiting the age of consent for HIV counseling and testing and for sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services (Mane, 2010). Young women and girls are usually not even aware they have rights, let alone offered the skills or legal support required to realize them. Accessing youth friendly SRH and HIV services, and securing commodities such as condoms, is impeded by judgmental health providers, opposition from parents, cost, fear, distance, stigma, lack of confidentiality and privacy, and low quality of services (ibid). Often, too, women and girls are not differentiated relative to their particular challenges, resulting in programs that do not meet their wide-ranging needs.

Poor health can also directly influence an individual's opportunities – her earnings capacity, performance at school, participation in community activities and decision making, etc. For instance, in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS has resulted in girls, in particular, dropping out of school to assist their families. This important instrumental function of health implies that inequalities in health often translate into inequalities in other dimensions, and they are reproduced over time. Meeting a woman's need for SRH services will increase her chances of finishing her education, and breaking out of poverty.

The Security of Dignity

Overall, female education levels have improved considerably, but significant disparities still exist internationally. The gender gap in primary education is closing – but slower than expected. More than 95 girls of primary school age are now in school for every 100 boys in 2007 (UN, 2009). Overall female enrolment at the primary level in low-income countries has grown from 87% in 1990 to 94% in 2004 (World Bank, 2008). In several regions, primary enrolment rates have reached gender parity; in East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Central Asia, gross enrolment rates for females have reached or surpassed 100 percent (World Bank, 2001). Significant progress in primary school enrolment has been seen in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with rates increasing from 59 % to 74% from 2000 to 2005 in the former and from 79% to 90% over the same period in the latter (UN 2009).

Progress on the ground, however, remains slow and uneven. On average, women in South Asia have only half as many years of schooling as men. And in Sub-Saharan Africa, only 60 percent of girls are enrolled in primary school (World Bank, 2003). Pakistan has the third largest out-of-school population in the world after Nigeria and India, accounting for seven per cent of global absentees (UNESCO, 2009). In 2000, almost two-thirds of the 860 million non-literates worldwide were women (UNESCO, 2003).

Secondary education statistics paint a bleaker picture. Gender disparities are now greatest at this level of education where the acquisition of cognitive skills is crucial to enter the labor market

(World Bank, 2008). In 2007, only 53 of the 171 countries for which data is available had achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education. Indeed, gender gaps have widened in CIS, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific (UN 2009:19) Current estimates predict that only 22 of 128 countries studied will reach gender parity in secondary education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2003).

Poor and rural girls face higher barriers to secondary education – only 39% of rural girls and 24% of the poorest 20% attend secondary school (UN, 2009). The percentage of primary school-age girls out of school in rural areas is more than twice that in urban areas. In the richest 40 percent of households, only one in every ten girls is out of school, while in the poorest 60 percent of households, one in every three girls is out of school.
Available data show that 60% of all countries have achieved gender parity in primary education, 30% in secondary education and only 6% in tertiary education (UN, 2009). The quality of educational services in most developing countries remains stubbornly low.

Conflict

Civil conflicts and humanitarian crises currently represent a major obstacle to primary education for girls. Girls often bear the brunt of the fall-out from these crises. They are often the first to be withdrawn from school if money is short or if household work needs attention, if family members need to be cared for, if the school is too far away, or in situations of pervasive insecurity.

In more recent times, conflict has endangered the right to education in Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, and Uganda, among others. In view of low completion rates and severe quality issues in education, UNESCO (2008) found 'a very limited commitment to needs-based aid financing' of conflict-affected and other fragile states. Often neglected gender dimensions are of critical importance in needs-based analyses of education, particularly in contexts characterized by human rights violations, internal displacement, and refugee outflows. In addition, to the obvious consequences of conflict on education systems such as the destruction of school buildings and the inability to deploy sufficient numbers of teachers, much research has exposed the differential effects of conflict on the lives of women and men, girls and boys and their access to education.

Particular gendered effects in conflict situations include: sexual violence against female students and teachers in schools (e.g. Sierra Leone), schools as recruitment sites for boys and girls as child soldiers (e.g. Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka), non-completion due to internal displacement (e.g. Nepal, Sudan), and chronic absenteeism due to premature uptake of adult domestic roles by girls (e.g. Pakistan). The compounded effects of exclusion from education can only be understood by an appreciation that conflict most severely affects those who are already marginalized. Thus, women and girls belonging to ethnic, religious, and other minority groups are most likely to face 'hard-core exclusion' from education in conflict-affected contexts (Kabeer, 2000).

While gender disparities are prevalent in countries with relative low levels of school enrolment and attendance, the problem is acute in refugee camps. Case studies from Kenya show that insecure camp environments and reports of gang rape foster ambivalence among parents in sending their daughters to school. Socially ascribed roles also impede access. For example, girls are reportedly routinely driven out of school to collect food rations from the distribution centres or are forcibly married (Sommers, 2001; 2002).

The decline in schooling for females during periods of armed conflict has implications for a nation's post-conflict recovery: the World Bank says that education is the single most important factor contributing to national economic growth.

The education of women is positively correlated with increased economic productivity, more robust labor markets, higher earnings, and improved societal health and well-being.
It is also an important determinant of women's capacity to interact and communicate with others, and obtain information necessary to making decisions. Inequalities in education thus contribute to inequalities in other important dimensions of well-being.

Low investment in girls' education significantly reduces a country's economic output. If South Asian, African and Middle Eastern countries had closed the schooling gender gap at the rate that East Asia did between 1960 and 1992, a study suggests that their income per capita would likely have an additional 0.5-0.9 percentage points per year (World Bank, 2001).

Educated women have fewer children, provide better nutrition and health for their families, experience significantly lower child mortality, and are far more likely to educate their children than women with little or no schooling, creating a virtuous cycle for the community and the country. In India, for example, research suggests that achieving universal female primary education would likely reduce the infant mortality rate by between 20 and 25 percent (Wange and van der Klaauw, 2004).

The Security of Livelihood

Giving women more control over resources is essential to enhancing human development, from the household to the national level.

Women's Land and Property Rights

Women's land and property rights have been recognized as integral to human security by international agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank and locally situated women's NGOs around the world. Data is inconclusive, but the FAO estimates women own from as little as 2% to 10% of land globally (FAO, 2002).

Property rights of women are linked to household security. Rights to land and natural resources increase a woman's bargaining power within the household, which results in increased allocation of household resources to children and women as well as increased household welfare (Katz and Chamorro, 2003). There seems to be a positive relationship between the amount of assets (including land) that a woman possesses at the time of marriage and the shares of household expenditures devoted to food, education, health care, and children's clothing (ibid). Women's asset ownership also indicates they are less likely to face violence in the home (Panda and Agarwal, 2005). A growing body of evidence suggests that if access to inputs such as land were more equal between men and women, agricultural output would increase (Quisumbing, et al, 1995).

Land rights are related not only to wellbeing but also to women's empowerment (Agarwal, 1994). Asset ownership empowers women to participate more effectively not only in their households, but in their immediate communities and civil society at large. Women with land rights are more likely to be active members of their communities, and, as a result, community institutions themselves are more likely to be responsive to women's needs.

Legal, social and institutional factors create significant barriers, however, for women to own land. The key barriers to change include inadequate laws and systems of enforcement, the prevalence of traditional attitudes and practices, many of which directly contradict statutory laws and established civil rights, a lack of awareness that laws do exist and insufficient understanding of options for legal redress and the resolution of disputes.

Over the last few decades, there has been some progress as many nations have reformed or begun a process of reform of their respective constitutions and civil codes to incorporate gender-neutral language or explicitly recognize women's rights and prohibit discrimination based on gender. Many nations have also modified land and property laws and regulations so as to guarantee women's equal property and inheritance rights. In Latin America, for instance, the signing of CEDAW has had profound effects – most countries have now reformed or adopted new national constitutions and/or their civil and family codes to end statutory discrimination against women in family matters.

While over 90% of the members of the UN have signed on to CEDAW, a number of states have ratified 'with reservations'. These reservations are centred on particular articles, and are justified on the grounds that national law, tradition, religion or culture is not congruent with the Convention's principles. These reservations appear to limit a State's obligations, particularly where they address family relations including matters such as women's legal capacity, and property and inheritance rights. For instance, some countries have made substantive reservations to paragraphs in Articles 2, 9, 15 and 16 of the Convention on the ground that they conflict with certain provisions of the Islamic sharia, the Family Code, or that they are contrary to existing customs and practices. Some countries, such as Morocco and Tunisia are, however, making more progressive interpretations of Sharia law.

Equality for Women In Morocco's Family Law

The groundbreaking introduction of Morocco's new Family Code in 2004 gave women greater equality and protection of their human rights within marriage and divorce, as mandated by Article 16 of the Convention. The new law embodies the principle of shared family responsibilities between the spouses. It was the product of extensive public discussion of challenges women faced under the previous law, as well as analysis of the implications of human rights standards and religious texts. To help ensure effective implementation of the new rights that have been guaranteed, the legislative changes were also accompanied by the creation of dedicated Family Courts, and the Ministry of Justice is enhancing the provision of support services and training for judges and court officials.

Introduction of the new Family Code has been part of a broader wave of important reforms within the country, including changes to the Labour Code to introduce the concept of sexual harassment in the workplace (2004), changes to the Penal Code to criminalize spousal violence, changes to the Nationality Code (2007) to give women and men equal rights to transmit nationality to their children as required by the Convention's Article 9, and changes to the Electoral Code, which introduced a "national list" that reserved 30 parliamentary seats for women (2002).

In light of these extensive changes to the nation's legal framework to protect women's human rights, the Government has announced its intention to remove Morocco's reservations to the Convention.

http://www.unifem.org/cedaw30/success_stories/#kenya

Some countries have passed formal legislation that strengthens women's property rights, but maintain property rights regimes that are still a combination of customary and legal systems including modern constitutional law, traditional law, and in some cases, religious law (such as Islamic or Hindu) in many regions including Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. These systems can entail overlapping and sometimes conflicting rules which often result in discrimination against women. Even when laws do provide women with legal access to land, the laws may be in conflict with custom. Cultural or local prohibitions against women's ownership of land are often more powerful than written laws.

Passing formal legislation, therefore, is inadequate. Enforcement of these laws can be intermittent, and attempts by women to have the law enforced extremely difficult. In many countries, the state and its institutions, including the courts, exert only a weak presence beyond major urban areas. All too frequently, the state lacks, or is unwilling to commit resources to advocating, promoting, enforcing, and protecting women's rights to land and property.

There is a need for greater education regarding existing legislation on women's property, and as discussed below, inheritance rights. Women's illiteracy in legal matters and their lack of empowerment prevent them from enjoying the rights they already possess. Resources need to be committed to inform women of their rights and to support them in realizing these rights, particularly in rural areas.

Inheritance

Inheritance regimes are inextricably linked to women's economic autonomy as inheritance play a fundamental role in the transfer of wealth in society and is directly related to women's right to land and property. Inheritance and property rights for women are closely linked – many countries that have unequal property rights regimes also have unequal inheritance laws. Inequality in inheritance relates to the underlying reasons for women's disproportionately high levels of poverty. Women that enter into marriage with assets, and maintain them, are less vulnerable to poverty. Agarwal (1994) argues "the single most important factor affecting women's situation is the gender gap in command over property".

Many countries have yet to change inheritance laws to favor women. Under customary law, it is assumed that the relatives of the deceased will take care of a widow, but in practice this often does not occur. Relatives will typically dispossess the widow of her assets, forcing her to move back to her parents' home. Women themselves, often renounce their fair share of inheritance in favour of a close male relative, succumbing to pressure. In parts of the Middle East and North Africa, mostly under Shari'a law, or the basis for Islamic personal status code, women are allowed to inherit, but not equally with men. Even the share they are allocated can be taken from them by family members and in laws – often through means of coercion, violence and even murder. In Hindu countries, such as India and Nepal, gender inequities under Hindu based inheritance laws are beginning to change with the recent Hindu Succession Act (2005) in India and recent efforts by the Ministry of Women and NGOs to change Nepalese law.

Access to Credit

Women's lack of access to land and the insecurity of their property rights pose significant constraints on women's access to credit as it generally requires collateral. For women in rural areas, it also constrains women's access to agricultural services that require formalized ownership

of land, such as extension services, and access to other inputs, such as irrigation water, seed and fertilizer. This can become a vicious cycle whereby women are not given land because they are seen as less productive and they are less productive because they have less access to land and other inputs.

There may also be socio-cultural and educational barriers for women in accessing credit. The transaction costs, paperwork and time spent waiting may be higher for women than for men owing to higher opportunity costs from forgone activities. Women's lack of familiarity with loan procedures may also limit their mobility and interaction with predominantly male credit officers or moneylenders. Agriculturally, women also tend to be involved in the production of relatively low-return crops that are not included in former sector lending programs.

Since the early 1980s, a number of alternatives to the formal sector have given women access to credit and financial services, such as what has become known as **micro-credit**. There have been well publicized successes with micro-credit lending. By 2007 microfinance had reached over 88 million of the poorest women in the world, 84% of the poorest microfinance clients were female (Microcredit Summit Campaign Report, 2009). More equality in household decision-making is a benefit of access to microcredit. Access to microcredit is one of the very important instruments in empowering income poor women, but not sufficient on its own.

Disadvantageous outcomes have also been observed in micro-credit lending. Studies have shown that women sometimes have little or no control over their loan, with the husband or male family member making all the decisions (Goetz and Sen Gupta, 1996). In response to women's increased incomes, men may withdraw more of their own contribution for their own luxury expenditure. Women may also struggle with heavier workloads. Moreover, differences in literacy, property rights and social attitudes about women may limit impact outside of the immediate household. In many cases women's increased contribution to household well-being has considerably improved domestic relations, but in other cases it has intensified tensions (Mayoux, 2002).

Some limitations remain. Micro-credit interest rates are high, usually at least 20%, or higher now that commercial banks are getting into the business. Even when women know of a microcredit program, evidence suggests that few of them actually have taken a loan from one (DHS, 2009). Residents of rural areas specifically continue to have difficulties in accessing microfinance.

Women entrepeneurs are key to long-term economic growth. Increasing the number of women entrepreneurs involved in starting new businesses is critical for a country's long-term economic growth, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2000 (GEM), a 21-country study of entrepreneurship and economic growth GEM global study on entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurism as a whole is good for a country's economy.

Employment

There is a significant gender differential in employment globally, though it varies across countries. Women are still vulnerable in the world of work**.** They make up at least 60% of the working poor internationally (ILO, 2007). More than two thirds of women in the developing world work in vulnerable jobs where they are either self-employed or work as unpaid family workers (UN, 2008; UNDP, 2010). The labor market remains highly gender-segregated, and female dominated positions tend to be characterized by inferior status, lower pay and poorer working conditions in both the formal and informal sectors.

Women continue to face discrimination in being paid equal to men for performing the same work. Despite decades of anti-discrimination legislation around the globe, women continue to be paid on average 17% less than their male co-workers globally (ITUC, 2009). This doesn't include the large segments of women who work in the informal sector, particularly in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. The gender gap in income/wages appears higher in the informal sector than in the formal sector and exists even when women are not wage workers (Chen, 2001) Higher education of women does not necessarily lead to a smaller pay gap, however, and in some cases, the gap actually increases with the level of education obtained.

Women have a higher likelihood of being unemployed than men. In 2006, the unemployment rate for women was 6.6% compared to 6.1% for men, and that represents an increase from 6.3% in 1996 (ILO, 2007). In absolute numbers, the amount of women who were actively looking for work and without a job rose 22.7% over 10 years (ibid). Unemployment estimates exclude people who want to work but may not be actively seeking work because they feel none is available, have restricted labor mobility, or face discrimination or structural, social or cultural barriers. They are referred to as 'discouraged workers'. A review of data for Australia, Austria, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and Norway suggests that women make up two-thirds of discouraged workers and in Switzerland and Italy, up to 90% (ibid).

During the past 10 years, the labour participation rate of women globally has actually stopped growing, with many regions registering actual declines. Women are more likely to work in low-productivity sectors such as agriculture (40.4%) and services (42.4%) (ILO, 2007) . They have a higher rate of agricultural employment in East Asia, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, and in the poorer countries of the other regions. In all regions, women's share of employment in the industrial sector (17.2%) is much smaller than men's and has decreased over the last ten years (ibid).

Women are over-represented in the informal sector worldwide. The informal sector is the primary source of employment for women in most developing countries. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, virtually all of the female non-agricultural labor force is in the informal sector. For example, the informal sector accounts for over 95 percent of women workers outside agriculture in Mali and nine out of every ten in India (Chen, 2001). In ten Latin American and four East Asian countries, for which data are available, half or more of the female non-agricultural workforce is in the informal sector (ibid).

The vast majority of women in the informal sector are home-based workers or street vendors. Informal workers typically lack the social protection afforded to formal paid workers, such as worker benefits and health insurance, and often work under irregular and casual contracts. Women's subcontracted work, including home-based work is subject to extremely poor conditions. Average incomes of both men and women are lower in the informal sector than in the formal sector

Even though the average earnings of women in the informal sector are low, the female informal workforce contributes significantly to gross domestic product (GDP). Women informal traders contribute a significant share (20-65%) of GDP in the trading sector. For those countries where data is available, the contribution of women in the informal sector to total GDP is greater than their share of employment in the informal sector (Charmes, 1998 as cited in Chen, 2001).

Arguably, the most invisible informal workers – homeworkers or industrial outworkers – contribute the most to global trade. This is because homeworkers often comprise a significant share of the workforce in key export industries, particularly those that involve simple manual

tasks, labor-intensive operations, simple machines, or portable technology. In Asia and Latin America, for example, homeworkers account for 30-60 percent of the workforce in key export industries such as textiles, garments, and footwear (Chen et all, 1999).

Why are women overrepresented in the informal sector? Many observers suggest that women are less able than men to compete in labor, capital and product markets because they have relatively low levels of education and skills or are less likely to own property or have market know-how. Other observers argue that women's time and mobility are constrained by social and cultural norms that assign the responsibility for social reproduction to women and discourage investment in women's education and training. The low participation rate of girls in education and training is not the only problem. Of equal importance is the type of education and training they receive.

III. INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL COMMITMENTS: BEIJING, CEDAW AND THE MDGs

Human security for women is legalized and promoted through a number of international agreements and programs of action.

CEDAW and other Treaties

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is commonly referred to as the bill of rights for women. It asserts that state Parties are bound to guarantee women and men equal opportunities in terms of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Parties agree to incorporate the principle of equality of women and men in their national constitutions and/or other appropriate legislation; and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle. Article 2 (f) of CEDAW required States "to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish exiting laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women."

As of 2010, the CEDAW had been ratified by 179 UN member countries, up from 146 in 2005. The Optional Protocol, which enables women to file complaints directly with the CEDAW Committee was adopted in 2000 and ratified by 99 countries to date. The U.S. is the only industrialized nation that has not yet ratified CEDAW. The goal of universal ratification of the Convention by 2000 was not achieved.

As previously noted in this Background Paper, however, and citing conflict with existing national laws, cultural practices and religious beliefs, a number of States Parties have entered reservations to core aspects of CEDAW, namely condemnation of discrimination against women in all its forms (Article 2); in social, culturally and family-based patterns of conduct (Article 5); in political and public life (Article 7); regarding nationality (Article 9); and regarding marriage and family relations. Few countries have removed their reservations – these include Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Egypt, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malawi, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, and the UK, and few have incorporated CEDAW's provisions into domestic policy. In some cases, explicitly discriminatory laws remain.

The importance of women's role in human security has been recognized specifically in other international legal instruments in the context of both development and equality as well. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 ensures the equal right of women and men to civil and political rights set forth by the covenant. The

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 1966 forms a blueprint for establishing human security by specifying socio-economic rights. It affirms the equal right of women and men to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, thereby ensuring material and social security. For instance, Article 3 of the ICCPR, clearly obligates States to act to ensure women's inheritance rights:

> *The grounds for divorce and annulment should be the same for men and women, as well as decisions with regard to property distribution, alimony and the custody of children.. Women should also have equal inheritance rights to those of men when the dissolution of marriage is caused by the death of one of the spouses*.

Other international legal instruments that guide State behaviour on women's rights include the United Nations Human Rights Declaration (1948), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/49 and resolution 2005/25, UN Commission on the Status of Women Resolution 42/1 and Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on Women, Peace and Security.

Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in October 2000, emphasizes women's equal and full participation in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building. However, there is insufficient public awareness of the resolution and women are still rarely present at decision-making levels or in leadership roles.

Beijing

Held in Beijing, China, the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women represented a watershed in the movement for securing equality, development, and peace for all women across the world. With the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by representatives from 189 countries, the conference gave the world a new comprehensive action plan to enhance women's social, economic, and political empowerment. Governments laid out specific actions to attain the equality and empowerment standards set by CEDAW.

The outcomes of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing are presented in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). It defined a set of strategic objectives and spelled out actions to be taken by governments, the international community, NGOs and the private sector for the removal of the existing obstacles to women's advancement. For example, Article 61(b) indicates that governments should "undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the rights to inheritance and to ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies" (BPfA, 1995).

At the Beijing Conference, 12 critical areas of concern and priorities were identified. These were 1) women and poverty; 2) education and training of women; 3) women and health; 4) violence against women; 5) women and armed conflict; 6) women and the economy; 7) women in power and decision making; 8) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; 9) human rights of women; 10) women and the media; 11) women and the environment; and 12) the girl child.

The international community met again in 2000 at the Twenty-Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century" to review progress in the five years since Beijing. Commonly referred to as Beijing +5, the Special Session adopted a political declaration and outcome document

entitled Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the BPfA. In addition to a continued focus on the 12 critical areas of concern, the outcome document recommended that the international community focus on current challenges affecting the BPfA, including globalization, the impact of science and technology on development, the changing patterns of migratory flows, demographic trends, and the rapid progression of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In preparation for the Special Session, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) sent out questionnaires on the implementation of BPfA since Beijing. An analysis of the responses identified six major areas of constraint with regard to the implementation. These were discriminatory attitudes; economic change/instability; conflict and displacement; lack of data and monitoring mechanisms; resource allocation and backlash.

The 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2005, also known as 'Beijing +10', called on Member States to enhance rural women's income-generating potential, the importance of greater security of land tenure and property ownership for resource mobilization and environmental management.

'Beijing + 15' took place at the 54th Session of the CSW in 2010. It focussed on two key areas: a review of the implementation of the BPfA and linkages between the implementation of the BPfA and the achievement of the Millenium Goals (MDGs). Frustration was expressed at the slow level of progress of the commitments made in Beijing since 1995.
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The Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)

The United Nations Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) represents a momentous global partnership signed by 189 nations during the UN Millenium Summit in September 2000 to reduce poverty. It consists of eight goals that respond to world's main development challenges with specific targets to be met by 2015. The Declaration commits governments "to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable." It also addresses "the equal rights and opportunities of women and men" and pledges "to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)" (UN, 2000). Helen Clark, the Administrator of UNDP highlighted that gender equality is "not only a goal in its own right, but also an important means for realizing all the MDGs" (UNDP, 2008).

Goals that explicitly name women are Goal 3 to Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women and Goal 5 to Improve Maternal Health. MDG3 on Gender Equality measures the ratio of girls to boys in education; the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; and the proportion of seats held by women in national legislatures. MDG5 on Maternal Mortality and Reproductive Health focuses on reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters and since 2005 on achieving universal access to reproductive health.

A UNDP (2003) review of MDG country reports indicated gender equality received scant attention. Insufficient data disaggregated by sex across all the goals, and inadequate consultation with civil society organizations, especially with women's organizations, prevented them from highlighting gender equality issues.

Progress on MDG3 has been most pronounced in education (indicator9) and literacy (indicator 10), with all regions except Sub-Saharan Africa broadly on track for 2015. However, large

gender gaps still exist in rural areas, among minority groups and in lower-income households, as revealed when average national gender parity ratios are disaggregated by income, location, race, ethnicity, disability, etc..

The UN (2008, 2009) reports that maternal mortality (target 6, MDG5) remains unacceptably high across much of the developing world. At the global level, maternal mortality decreased by less than 1 % per year between 1990 and 2005, far below the 5.5 % annual improvement needed to reach the target. Among developing countries, only the Middle East and North Africa region is on target to meet the maternal mortality MDG, which sets out to reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015 (World Bank 2004).

Although an important first step, the current focus on gender equality in the MDGs is arguably somewhat narrow and sidelines important gender issues. In isolation from a gender-responsive approach to the other Goals, this focus is unlikely, in the long term, to lead to girls' and women's empowerment and gender equality.

Turkey

Turkey is unique in the Muslim World because of its secular and uniform legal system which applies to women's lives. The Turkish Civil Code in 1926 was revolutionary in that it brought an end to the Islamic Family Code of the Ottoman Empire, and replaced it with one that granted women equal rights with men and abolished polygamy with the advent of the new Turkish Republic (1923). In 2001, the Civil Code was extensively revised to improve the status of women and girls in the family – the clause that designated the husband as head of the family was removed and Turkey became the only Muslim country to have full gender equality in inheritance. The 1926 Penal Code also underwent significant reform in 2004 and now contains several amendments ensuring gender equality and protection of women's sexual and bodily rights. Despite these significant legal victories, customary and religious practices continue to exert more influence in the daily lives of millions of women, particularly for women of lower socio-economic status, in Turkey than the Civil Code does.

The Turkish Constitution provides the force of the law for international treaties duly ratified which can be invoked in Turkish courts. Turkey ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and became a State Party to its Optional Protocol in 2002. It has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In 2000, it signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), but has yet to ratify either Covenant.

At the regional level, Turkey is a member of the Council of Europe. In order to satisfy membership criteria for accession to the European Union, Turkey has ratified a number of regional human rights treaties including the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, also known as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms).

Turkey has ambitiously undertaken obligations to uphold women's rights via these international and regional treaties – inheritance rights, housing and land rights, the rights to education, health and equality. There is still a need, however, for Turkey to fulfil all these obligations not only in law, but in practice as well.

(COHRE, 2006)

IV. PARLIAMENTARY PROGRESS FORWARD

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming was endorsed as the key methodology for promoting equality between women and men by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The introduction of gender mainstreaming focused on structural relationships of inequality between men and women and was committed to restructuring institutions and political and economic decision-making in society as a whole.

"Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels, and as a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality." (ECOSOC 1997/2)

The Beijing 1995 Platform for Action identifies two strands in gender mainstreaming that have practical and operation implications: the integration of gender in policy analysis and formulation, and ensuring that the priorities of women as well as men are heard in participatory consultation and development processes (Sibbons et al, 2000 as cited in Subrahmanian, 2006).

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy has opened up critical spaces for starting to resource women's development, and in some areas, there have been significant shifts. It has resulted in tangible and considerable achievements; many countries and international agencies and NGOs have put gender mainstreaming policies into place and become better at capacity building, many programs now feature performance indicators and the OECD DAC has encouraged the use of gender equality markers in program delivery of aid (OECD 2007).

In terms of successful implementation of those policies, however, the evidence is rather mixed. Experience to date suggests that the move from policy to practice has been challenging. In most cases, implementation has fallen well short of declared policy. That these shifts do not go far enough may just be a reflection of the limitations of the spaces, such as hierarchical/bureaucratic structures and unequal power relations, into which gender mainstreaming is being brought in. It may also reflect the enormous difficulty of advocating social change more generally, particularly within current neo-liberal and neo-conservative policy environments.

Over a decade of mainstreaming experience, many realities have emerged. It has been criticized for being narrow and technocratic. Mainstreaming has largely been located at the national level, rarely reaching provincial or local levels where development change may be more manageable, and may more closely reflect the needs and priorities of particular groups (Subrahmanian, 2006). The institutional coverage of mainstreaming efforts has been narrowly focused on particular departmental units or sections. There have also been critiques of policy evaporation or dilution, where gender fades out of the explicit commitments and actions that follow rhetorical claims of the importance of gender and development (ibid).

'It's not that gender mainstreaming has failed, but that we have failed to mainstream gender.'
(Comment made at a meeting of the DAC Gender Net in July 2006 as cited in Eyben, 2010)

Aligning national priorities with existing international frameworks

A renewed commitment to existing gender-related international rights-based frameworks, including CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action is necessary. Synergizing national legislation with the international agreements on gender discrimination is crucial to insuring the necessary resources and institutional mechanisms are in place to achieve gender-based rights. A parliamentary gender caucus made up of committed parliamentarians can lobby in the formal political arena.

International commitments have been successfully used to advance women's rights in certain cases such as in Nepal to demand tougher rape laws. [1] In India, the Supreme Court applied CEDAW principles to cases on sexual harassment at the workplace and to the right of the mother to be the guardian of a minor child.

Kenya's Court of Appeal made an important decision in 2005 that directly addressed the conflict between discrimination against women built into customary laws on inheriting family property, and the guarantee of gender equality in Kenya's Constitution, the African Charter, and CEDAW (UNIFEM, 2010). In Rono vs. Rono, the court found that, where discrimination is at stake, the Constitution and human rights standards must prevail. This same challenge was addressed again in 2008 by the Kenyan High Court in the Ntutu decision, where it was argued that Masai customary law did not recognize a daughter's right to inherit from her father's estate. The Court relied on the Rono vs. Rono decision, noting in particular the need to respect the requirements of CEDAW and international law, and recognized women's inheritance rights.

Despite legislative gains in many countries, however, discriminatory laws remain on the books that constitute a denial of women's basic rights and reinforce discriminatory practices, mainly in the areas of personal status and marriage subject to customary rules. For instance, Mali institutionalized obligatory obedience to the husband (WEDO, 2005).

Yet, even where non-discriminatory laws and national machineries have been in place for some time, inequity has not always been significantly curtailed (CIS countries, for example). Legislation needs to be backed by actual capacity-building support for judicial and police personnel as well as resources to undertake necessary community mobilization and awareness work. In all regions, women in particular are discouraged from using national laws because of the tedious procedures, the cost of litigation and the distance of the courts. Many people have limited or no knowledge at all vis-a-vis their rights and very limited access to the legal system.

Productive partnerships between government and civil society groups can help to insure two-way flows of influence and information regarding women's rights legislation. Governments have not made enough effort on public education about human rights through the education system or media campaigns as stipulated in the BPfA (WEDO, 2005). A popular website in Jordan, for instance, provides information about women's human rights, but women's groups still cannot hold national level public meetings to critique gender-based discrimination in countries like Kuwait (ibid).

[1] For examples of CEDAW successfully being utilized at the national level see: *http://www.unifem.org/cedaw30/success_stories/#kenya*

Obstacles/Opportunities

National Development Plans and Gender Budgeting

Although more than 120 countries now have national action plans for the advancement of women, they are still largely within the domain of the national women's machinery and are rarely integrated into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or adequately resourced in national budgets. Without access to the mechanisms of key decision making, such as macroeconomic and development policy, women's empowerment has stalled. The failure to attach money to policy commitments explains part of the slow progress towards gender equality - budgets offer the potential to transform gender inequalities.

An increasing number of countries are incorporating the MDGs into their national programs with UN assistance – and this process offers a chance to integrate the MDGs with CEDAW and the BPfA (UNIFEM, 2009). Low levels of consultation with civil society and women's groups have been problematic in the implementation of BPfA. Nation wide consultations with a wide range of civil society engender national and local policy processes

'Gender budgets', increasingly used for monitoring government spending as pioneered in Australia and South Africa, analyze the likely impacts of planned spending, and supply parliamentarians with gender-aware budgetary information in the hope that they will push the executive into more appropriate spending. They are tools and processes designed to facilitate a gender analysis in the formulation of government budgets and the allocation of resources (Leadbetter, 2010). Gender budgets attempt to break down or disaggregate the government's mainstream budget according to its impacts on women and men. They can be effective in exposing the gap between government commitments to certain social policies, and actual spending.

Gender budgeting is increasingly being adopted by more countries, most recently India and Morocco. In South Africa, parliamentarians together with NGOs started working on gender sensitive analysis of budgets in 1995, followed by the South African Government officially adopting it in 1997. Twenty-two states of India are presently implementing Gender Budget Initiatives - Indian female parliamentarians have taken the lead to raise these initiatives at the parliamentary level (Leadbetter, 2010).

There has been an increased recognition of the importance of statistics on gender equality and the empowerment of women - sufficient data is not yet available to adequately monitor progress towards gender equality. Documents and studies still lack accurate data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics

Political will and leadership are critical for generating sustained action for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and for progress in development, peace, security and human rights. Reports consistently point to a lack of political will on the part of governments as the basis for weak institutional machineries and enforcement structures, inadequate resources and lack of follow-up action. For example, the Government of Pakistan's own recent National Education Policy (2009) notes the lack of political commitment to girls' education.

The recent financial crises, going back to the Asian financial crisis in 1997 to the current global economic crisis, are consistently identified as a key obstacle to gender equality programs. There

can be no doubt that financial resources play a significant role, but much more could be achieved if governments were determined to find the way.

UN Women

The UN General Assembly took a major step of political will towards investing in women's equality by creating a new agency, UN Women, on July 2, 2010. The new Gender Equality Entity to be headed by the former president of Chile, Michele Bachelet, as a Under-Secretary General, will consolidate the four existing UN bodies on women, increase operational capacity at the country level and have gain increased funding for work on women's empowerment and advancement. The UN currently has four separate entities dedicated to women's issues which will be combined in the new entity: the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and the Office of the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI). It will enhance, not replace, efforts by other parts of the UN system (such as UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA) that continue to have responsibility to work for gender equality and women's empowerment in their areas of expertise

UN Women will have two key roles: It will support inter-governmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms, and it will help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, as well as forging effective partnerships with civil society. It will also help the UN system to be accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress. The work of UN Women will be framed by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW which marked its 30th anniversary in 2009.

The intention of the new agency is to be as politically powerful and financially stable as other full-fledged U.N. agencies. As noted, a key feature of the new entity is that it will be headed by an Under Secretary General, who will be a member of the UN Secretary General's cabinet and will have access to the highest levels of decision-making at the United Nations. UN Women is set to have an annual budget of at least $500 million — double the current combined resources of the four agencies it will comprise. The UN's current structure which deals with gender equality and women's empowerment is fragmented and under resourced. In contrast to UN Women, the existing four entities and their representatives do not have access to the highest decision-making tables at the UN.

The process of improving the UN structure for addressing women's equality and rights started in 2006, when Kofi Annan, then Secretary General, appointed a high-level panel to recommend structural changes to make the UN more efficient. The panel on arrived at the conclusion that "UN needs.. a dynamic UN entity focued on gender equality and women's empowerment. This entity should mobilize forces of change at the global level and inspire enhanced results at the country level." (UNIFEM, 2009). The General Assembly has debated the panel's recommendations ever since. The General Assembly agreed to establish a new women's agency in August 2009, but discussions on the details stalled over funding sources and oversight.

UN Women is the result of years of negotiations among Member States and advocacy by the global women's movement. The urgency and opportunity to act generated a global campaign, Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR), with over 300 NGOs under its umbrella from

every region calling for the creation of a stronger, full resourced women's entity, headed by an Under Secretary-General and with extensive country presence. These groups worldwide pressed their governments and regional bodies to support the needed changes. Many governments lobbied hard in the UN corridors to secure this attitudinal change in international development policy.

The news has been heralded by women rights' champions around the world. Arguably it is the best way to promote effective gender mainstreaming across the UN system, as well as to monitor the effective implementation of gender goals and commitment to gender conventions within broader development efforts. The choice of Michele Bachelet is an excellent start – it will be vital that UN Women is accorded the requisite resources in order to make a meaningful impact.

V. CONCLUSION

The year 2010 is an important time to reflect and recommit to progress towards gender equality. It marks the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and the 10th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and of the international commitment to the Millenium Development Goals (2000). Of significant note, also, this year commemorates the creation of UN Women which finally gives women's equality a seat at the key decision making table, adequate resources and an integrative structure at the international level.

Human security offers a holistic approach towards gender equality. Survival, dignity and livelihood form the basis of establishing a secure society not only for women, but in the so doing, for all. There has been much progress in key areas of health care and education for women, but work remains. The material aspects of women's empowerment need to be addressed with equal vigor – these include women's land and property rights, inheritance rights, access to credit and employment. Women's socio-economic empowerment is integral to all nations' security and development.

Women's security is legalized and promoted through a number of international treaties and frameworks. Two international statutes laying out the foundations for gender equality are the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. These have been signed by 179 and 189 countries respectively. The international commitments to the Millenium Development Goals of 2000 are also a step towards enhancing women's empowerment vis-à-vis measurable criteria.

These times present opportunity as the institutional possibilities exist to engender human security, thereby tempering human insecurity. The work of gender mainstreaming has begun with considerable achievements, much being observed and learned as the process develops. Most countries have made a commitment to synergize existing international commitments with those at the national level and can continue to build upon their work to date. The integration of gender mainstreaming into national development plans and the development of gender budgets are two important mechanisms by which to more effectively enhance women's empowerment.

Women's empowerment is nothing less than a vital piece in the jigsaw of sustainable international, regional and national security for every man, woman and child in the world today.

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RATIFICATION OF PROTOCOLS BY REGION

[*Courtesy of Sarah Weinrich, Center for Global Women's Leadership (CGWL)*]

AFRICA

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Algeria	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Angola		R	R	R		R		
Benin	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	**S**
Botswana	R	R	R	R	R			
Burkina Faso	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Burundi	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Cameroon	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	**S**
Cape Verde	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**
Central African Republic		R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Chad	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Comoros	**S**	R	R		R	**S**	**S**	**S**
Congo	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	**S**
Cote d'Ivoire	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Djibouti	R	R	R	R	**S**	R		
Egypt	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Equatorial Guinea		R	R	R	R	R		
Ethiopia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Gabon	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	R
Gambia	**S**	R	R	R	R	R		
Ghana	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**
Guinea	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Guinea-Bissau	**S**	R	R		**S**	R	**S**	
Kenya	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Lesotho	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Liberia	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	**S**
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**
Madagascar	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Malawi	R	R	R	R	R	R		R

R = Ratified or Acceded

S = Signed, but not ratified or acceded

AFRICA, CONT.

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Mali	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Mauritania	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Mauritius	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Morocco	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Mozambique	R	R	R	R	R			**S**
Namibia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Niger	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Nigeria	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**
Rwanda	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Sao Tome & Principe	**S**	R	R		**S**	**S**	**S**	
Senegal	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Seychelles	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Sierre Leone	R		R	R		R	**S**	**S**
Somalia	R	R	**S**	R	R	R		
South Africa	R		R	R	R	**S**		R
Sudan	**S**	R	R	R	R	R		R
Swaziland	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Togo	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	**S**
Tunisia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Uganda	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
United Republic of Tanzania		R	R	R	R	R		R
Zaire	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Zambia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Zimbabwe		R	R	R	R	R		

R = Ratified or Acceded

S = Signed, but not ratified or acceded

ASIA

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Afghanistan	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Bangladesh	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	R
Bhutan		R	R		**S**			
Cambodia	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	**S**
China	R	R	R		R	R		R
Democratic People's Republic of Korea		R	R	R		R		
India	**S**	R	R	R	R	R		R
Indonesia	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Japan	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Lao People's Democratic Republic		R	R	R	R	R		R
Malaysia		R	R	R				R
Maldives	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Mongolia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Myanmar		R	R					
Nepal	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Pakistan	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Philippines	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Republic of Korea	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Singapore		R	R					
Sri Lanka	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**
Thailand	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Viet Nam		R	R	R	R	R		**S**

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NORTH AMERICA

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Antigua & Barbuda	R	R	R		R			**S**
Bahamas	**S**	R	R	R	R	R		
Barbados		R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Belize	R	R	R	R	R	**S**	R	
Dominica	**S**	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Grenada		R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Guyana	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**
Jamaica		R	R	R	R	R	R	R
St. Kitts & Nevis		R	R		R			
St. Lucia		R	R		R			
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Suriname		R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Trinidad & Tobago		R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Canada	R	R	R	R	R	R		
United States of America	R	**S**	**S**	R	R	**S**		**S**

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EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Albania	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**
Armenia	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Austria	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Azerbaijan	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Belarus	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Belgium	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Bosnia & Hertzegovia	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Bulgaria	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Croatia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Cyprus	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Czech Republic	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Denmark	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Estonia	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Finland	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
France	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Georgia	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Germany	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Greece	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Holy See*	R	R	R		R			
Hungary	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Iceland	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Ireland	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Italy	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Kazakstan	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Kyrgyztan	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Latvia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R

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*=Not a UN member state

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA, CONT.

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Liechtenstein	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Lithuania	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Luxemburg	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Malta	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Monaco	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Netherlands	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Norway	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Poland	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Portugal	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Republic of Moldova	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Romania	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Russian Federation	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
San Marino	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Slovak Republic	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Slovenia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Spain	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Sweden	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Switzerland*	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Tajikistan	R	R	R	R	R	R		
The Former Yugoslavia/ Republic of Macedonia	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Turkey	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Turkmenistan	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Ukraine	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
United Kingdom	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Uzbekistan	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Yugoslavia	R	R	R	R	R	R		

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state

LATIN AMERICA

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Argentina	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Bolivia	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Brazil	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Chile	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Colombia	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	**S**
Costa Rica	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Cuba	R	R	R	**S**	R	**S**		R
Dominican Republic	**S**	R	R	R	R	R		R
Ecuador	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
El Salvador	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Guatemala	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Haiti	R	R	R	R	R			R
Honduras	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Mexico	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Nicaragua	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Panama	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Paraguay	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Peru	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Uruguay	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Venezuela	R	R	R	R	R	R		

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OCEANIA

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Australia	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Fiji		R	R		R			**S**
Kinbati*		R	R					
Marshall Islands		R	R					
Micronesia/ Federated States of Nauru	**S**		R	**S**	**S**			
New Zealand	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Palua			R					
Papua New Guinea		R	R	R	R			
Samoa		R	R	R				
Solomon Islands		R	R		R	R		**S**
Tonga*			R		R			**S**
Tuvalu*		R	R					
Vanuatu	R	R	R	R				R

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MIDDLE EAST

	CAT	CEDAW	CRC	ICCPR	ICERD	ICESCR	ICPRMW	ICPRD
Bahrain	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Brunei Darussalem		R	R					**S**
Iran			R	R	R	R		R
Iraq		R	R	R	R	R		
Israel	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Jordan	R	R	R	R	R	R		R
Kuwait	R	R	R	R	R	R		
Lebanon	R	R	R	R	R	R		**S**
Oman		R	R		R			R
Qater	R		R		R			R
Saudi Arabia	R	R	R		R			R
Syrian Arab Republic	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
United Arab Emirates		R	R		R			R
Yemen	R	R	R	R	R	R		R

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Ratification Charts Concerning Treaties and Conventions Related to Women: Convention Abbreviations

CAT----------Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CEDAW-------Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC----------Convention on the Rights of the Child
ICCPR----------International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD---------International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR--------International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICPRMW------International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Works and Members of Their Families
ICRPD---------International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities