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Normative framework of gender inequalities

Inequalities between women and men have been a point of concern for the United Nations since its founding.

Gender equality and efforts to eliminate discrimination against women are reflected in both international and regional legal instruments that conceptualize and chart a path toward achieving those goals.



International legal instruments

a. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The UN established the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 1946.

It is one of the principal global intergovernmental bodies dedicated to formulating policies for the promotion of gender equality and improving the situation of women.



The Commission meets every year to evaluate progress, set norms, formulate concrete policies and prepare both recommendations and reports on the promotion of women's rights in the political, economic, civil, social and educational spheres, especially in relation to problems that demand immediate attention.



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b. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 and has been ratified by 90% of the world's countries.

It identifies multiple dimensions of discrimination experienced by women and sets out the human rights commitments assumed by signatory governments with a view to promoting gender quality and guaranteeing the rights of women in all their diversity



This Convention seeks to eliminate laws, practices and customs that discriminate against women whether from state or private actors, and covers their civil and political rights, as well as their economic, social, cultural and environmental ones.

c. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in 1995, is a visionary program for women's empowerment.

It is aimed at eliminating obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of their lives and concretize equality between women and men for the benefit of the entire population.



One of its principal achievements has been to connect and reinforce the activism of women's social movements from throughout the world.

d. Millennium Development Agenda

The world approved the Millennium Development Agenda in 2000 with its 8 goals for the year 2015, including that of promoting gender equality and empowering women.



e. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Building on the Millennium Agenda, global consensus efforts led in 2015 the 2030 Agenda, that included this issue as one of its 17 goals. This is a technical-political policy instrument for the implementation of public policies designed to guarantee human rights, women's autonomy and the realization of Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



a. Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women

Within the region, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (commonly known as the Convention of Belém do Pará) was approved in 1994, and has been ratified by 32 Latin American and Caribbean countries. The Convention establishes the right of women to a life free from violence, defines physical, sexual and psychological violence against women and states that such violence can be manifest at home, in the community and on the job.

b. Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

The objectives of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which first first met in 1997, include identifying the situation of women's autonomy and rights, presenting public policy recommendations for gender equality and serving as a forum for discussion and agreement on the Regional Gender Agenda.

The Agenda seeks consensus commitments by governments to promote equality and guarantee women's rights in all their diversity.

c. Regional Conference on Women

One of the most significant results of the Regional Conference on Women was its 2016 adoption of the Montevideo Strategy, designed to guide implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda.



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