

The UNIFEM website

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has launched a website to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (<http://www.unifem.org/cedaw30/>). CEDAW, the international human rights treaty for women, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly 30 years ago, on 18 December 1979. To date, 186 countries have ratified the Convention.

The Convention's 30th Anniversary provides an occasion to celebrate its near-universal ratification, as well as the recent progress that has been made at the national level to implement CEDAW and make true gains for the rights of women and girls on a practical, everyday level. Through the passage of new constitutions as well as national laws and policies based on the principle of gender equality, women's human rights are now becoming national standards.

The UNIFEM website highlights a number of successful stories of the Convention's implementation from around the world. Mexico, for example, has embarked upon a major transformation of its response to violence against

women, with the 2007 passage of the Mexican General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence. The law provides a comprehensive vision of government responsibility for preventing and eradicating violence against women (VAW), based on recognition of it as an extreme form of discrimination and violation of women's human rights.

In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan more women are now successfully claiming the right to own land and helping to avert the threat of feminized poverty, due to comprehensive changes to the land reform processes. In Kenya, where courts have forcefully asserted that the principle of gender equality must be respected despite a traditional male bias, women and girls are getting a fairer share of inheritance. For example, in the Rono vs. Rono case in Kenya, sons claimed a greater share of their deceased father's property arguing that, "according to Keiyo traditions, girls have no right to inheritance of their father's estate". They also argued that customary law supported their claim. The courts, however, ruled that where discrimination is at stake, the Constitution and human rights standards must prevail.

What's New, Webby?

