

# CEDAW Report Brief

CEDAW | convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women



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number of women who sought prenatal care from doctors/nurses/midwives — from 85.7% in 1998 to 87.6% in 2003.

- Nevertheless, there are still health care delivery issues pertaining to pregnant women. The NDHS showed that 5% of pregnant women did not seek any prenatal care and 6.5% resorted to traditional birth attendants (71.8% of which come from the rural areas). While only a few women were assisted by traditional birth attendants for prenatal care, 1 in 3 pregnant women were assisted by traditional birth attendants during childbirth. In addition, 3 in 5 pregnant women opted to deliver at home.
  
- In the 2000 Census, some 942,098 reportedly suffered from one disability or another, an increase by 2.5% since 1995. Women with disabilities slightly outnumbered their male peers (50.2% versus 49.8%), a reversal of the 1995 trend when men accounted for 51.1% of persons with disabilities. There were more women among those with low vision, partial blindness and hearing problems.
  
- As of January 2006, the health department had received a total of 2,429 reported cases of HIV Ab Seropositives since it started collecting data in 1984. Of these, 886 were women. Out of the total HIV cases, 721 are AIDS.
  
- Sexual contact is the most common mode of HIV/AIDS transmission (85.8%). Majority of the transmissions came from heterosexual contact, while the others came from homosexual relationships.



## Gains and Challenges: the Philippine Experience in Carrying out the Women's Convention (1996-2004)

In the Philippines, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (the Women's Convention) and the Beijing Platform for Action are translated into policies, strategies, programs and projects through the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995-2025. This 30-year plan presupposes that it takes at least a generation to transform society so its women could enjoy equal status with men at all levels. For the medium-term, government, together with women's groups and advocates in civil society, the private sector, and academe, crafted the Framework Plan for Women as a time slice of the PPGD to pursue gender equality and women's empowerment. These plans also anchored government's efforts in implementing the Women's Convention from 1996 to 2004.

Milestones have been made during the period that made a difference in the lives of Filipino women:

- Gender and development (GAD) mainstreaming as a key strategy is strengthened and gender as a cross-cutting factor is consciously considered in pursuing national development;
  
- The Framework Plan for Women is adopted to set directions for gender-responsive development planning for the medium-term;
  
- An annual GAD budget is required from all government offices and local units that ensures funding for GAD-related programs and projects;







-  Economic rights of women are protected through efforts that seek access to capital, market, training, information, technology, and technical assistance, just wages and benefits, protection against exploitation, participation in economic decision making, and safe working conditions;
-  Legislation critical in protecting women's human rights are passed, among which are laws benefiting solo parents, overseas workers, and victims and survivors of violence against women.







Significant gains achieved for each of the 16 articles of the Women's Conventions include:

**Article 1: Guarantee in the Constitution of equality of women and men; laws or policy statements that define discrimination; legal definition of discrimination broad enough to cover practices not intending to discriminate but are discriminatory in effect**

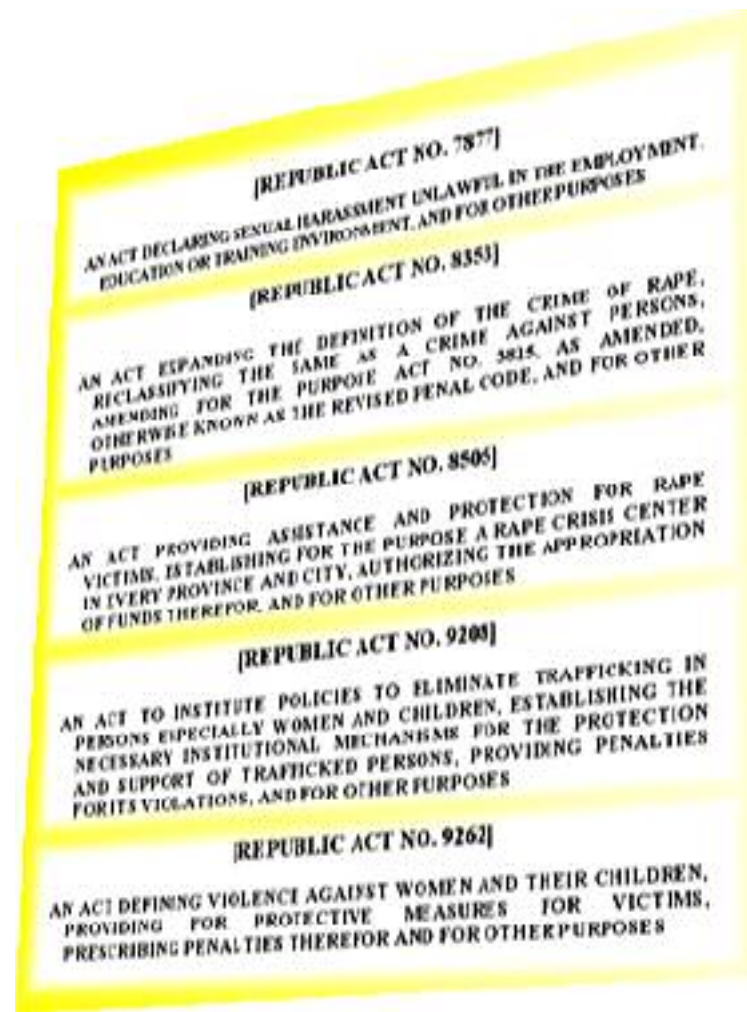
-  Laws passed to address violence against women and related discrimination:
  -  Anti-Sexual Harassment Law addressing sexual harassment in the workplace and in schools and training environments;
  -  Anti-Rape Law of 1997 redefining rape from being a crime against chastity to a crime against person and penalizing marital rape;
  -  Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998 establishing rape crisis centers nationwide to provide counseling and free legal assistance and ensuring the safety and privacy of rape survivors;

communications, medical and allied courses, among others. Men on the other hand are still concentrated in the areas of engineering and technology, architecture, town planning, and law and jurisprudence.

### Health and Nutrition


-  Progress was achieved in improving life expectancy, mortality and maternal mortality. Projected female life expectancy at birth rose by 1.4 years between 1995 and 2005, while the projected male life expectancy at birth rose by 1.2 years during the same period, but female life expectancy remains higher. The country has also reduced mortality for both sexes. The decrease in death rates had been greater for females, especially during infancy and at older ages. Maternal mortality rate also decreased from 209 in 1993 to 172 in 1998.
-  The Vital Statistics Report of the National Statistics Office showed a different figure on maternal mortality. In 1995, the maternal mortality rate per 100,000 births was 90.5, then it increased to 96.7 in 1998, and to 108.1 in 2002.
-  According to the 2004 Family Planning Survey (FPS), 49.3% of currently married women 15-49 years old have used at least one contraceptive method. Of these, 35.1% used modern methods while 14.2% used traditional methods. The pill was the leading contraceptive method used, followed by female sterilization, and the calendar/rhythm method. Condoms, even though widely distributed and easily accessible at health centers, accounted for only 2.1% of total usage.
-  Maternal health services are increasingly being made available to women. The 2003 NDHS revealed an almost 2% increase in the

- Based on the completion rates for the same period, more women have been able to finish elementary and secondary education in accordance with the required number of years for each level. The elementary completion rate of females was 66.9% while the comparative figure for males was only 57.8%. On the same hand, the secondary education completion rate of females was 63.7% versus 48.8% for males.
- For tertiary enrolment during the school year 2003-2004, more than half of the total enrollees were females, accounting for a total of 55%.
- Enrolment for technical-vocational courses is higher for men, registering a 50.6% enrolment during the school year 2003-2004. The lower enrolment rate of men in university-based academic institutions possibly has an inverse relationship with the enrolment rate in vocational institutions.
- The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) provides assistance to deserving indigenous youths enrolled in elementary, high school, vocational, college and even post-graduate courses through its Educational Assistance program (EAP). From 2003 to 2004, 64 per cent of the 11,249 beneficiaries were female students. In almost every region, women scholars outnumbered men scholars.
- There are considerably more women licensed professionals. From 2000 to 2003, women accounted for 65% of the total passers in government-sanctioned professional board examinations.
- Gender-tracking in employment can be traced from gender-tracking in education. Women are likely to take courses in home economics, service trades, teaching, mass






- Anti- Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 setting up policies, institutional mechanisms, and sanctions and penalties against traffickers to eliminate trafficking in persons and protect and support to those who have been trafficked;





-  Anti- Violence against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 protecting women in marital, dating or common-law relationships and their children from physical, psychological and economic abuse.



**Article 2: Principle of equality of women and men in the Constitution and adoption of appropriate measures prohibiting discrimination**

-  A provision of the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000 includes self-employed persons, housewives, and household staff among those entitled to enjoy the law's benefits; unmarried women civil servants can now avail of maternity leave;
-  Aside from the Women's Convention, the Philippines is a State Party to other human rights conventions and treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers. The Philippine Commission on Human Rights monitors the implementation of these conventions and national policies on human rights;
-  Government, trade unions and non-government organizations are engaged in campaigns against sexual harassment.







-  Between 1970 and 2003, the number of female-headed households increased by 50%. The population census and other household surveys reveal an increasing trend in the percentage of female-headed households: 10.0% in 1970, 12.2% in 1995, 13.5% in 2000 and 15.4% in 2003.
-  In 1995, female-headed households on the average would have a size of 4 persons, male-headed households would have 5.2. In 2003, the average size of households was 4.8 persons.






**Education and Training**

-  Literacy rates of both sexes dropped significantly in 2003. Unlike the previous survey results, the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) reported lower functional literacy rates for both sexes, although women still have a higher literacy rate as compared to men. In 2003, female literacy rate stood at 86.3 while the male literacy rate was 81.9. Simple literacy rates were registered at 95.5% for women and 94% for men.
-  Filipino women are slightly faring better in terms of enrolment indicators. Looking at the net enrolment ratio (proportion of population aged 6-11 and 12-15 who are enrolled in elementary and secondary schools, respectively) for elementary and secondary education, women consistently have higher enrolment ratios. At the elementary level during the school year 2003-2004, the female net enrolment ratio (NER) was 82.6% while the male NER was 80.9%. For the secondary level NER for the same school year, the female NER was 51.2% while the male NER was 43.0%.

## Population, Families and Households


-  The Philippines is among the most populous countries in the world, ranking 14th globally and 3rd in the Southeast Asian Region (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2005). Its population continues to balloon with an annual growth rate of 2.36%. The population size is estimated to be close to 84 million in 2005 and women comprise 49.6% of this total (National Statistics Office (NSO), 2000). The population census in 2000 yielded a sex ratio of 101.4, which means that for every 100 females there were 101 males.
  
-  Although women marry at a younger age than men, women are slightly delaying marriage. Based on the 1995 population census, the average age at first marriage of women is 23.8 years and 26.4 years for men. The National Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS) conducted by NSO indicate that the median age at first marriage of women aged 25-49 years is slightly increasing: 21.6 years in 1993, 22.1 years in 1998, and 22.0 years in 2003.
  
-  Similar to the global trend, Filipino women with advanced educational attainment tend to marry at a later age. On the average, women who had no education at all marry at around age 18 while women who get to college marry about 7 years later.
  
-  Filipino women live longer and are likely to be widowed. The projected life expectancy at birth of Filipino women in 2005 is considerably higher: 71.6 years for females versus 66.1 years for males. Moreover, according to the 2000 Census, for every widower, there are 3 widows.

## Article 3: Undertake all appropriate measures to ensure the full development and advancement of women in all fields


-  Mainstreaming of gender and development is adopted as a key strategy in government's development agenda;
  
-  The Framework Plan for Women is formulated and focused on three areas of concern: women's economic empowerment, protection and fulfillment of women's human rights, and gender-responsive governance;
  
-  A GAD budget policy is included in the national budget that mandates all government offices to allocate at least five per cent of their total annual budgets to finance the implementation of their GAD plans;
  
-  The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, government's national machinery for women, is strengthened through a joint five-year project with the Canadian International Development Agency so it can build its capability as a technical resource base for gender-responsive analysis and development of policies and development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects;
  
-  Handbooks, manuals and tools are produced to guide the bureaucracy in gender mainstreaming, including (a) Manual for Mainstreaming Gender in Development Planning: Framework and Guidelines; (b) Gender-Responsive Strategic Planning in National Government Agencies; (c) Mainstreaming GAD in Regional and Local Development Planning; (d) Integrating GAD in the Planning and Budgeting Processes of National Agencies; (e) A Guidebook on




Gender Mainstreaming: How Far Have We Gone; (f) Sourcebook on GAD Training for Government Agencies; (g) Ways to Gender-Responsive Organization; and (h) Guidebook in Using Statistics for gender-Responsive Development Planning;

-  GAD institutional mechanisms are created in the regions and provinces such as the one set up in the Regional Development Council of Region 10, the Provincial Commission on Women in the province of Bulacan, and GAD technical committees created through ordinances of local governments.


**Article 4: Adoption of temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality, including measures aimed at protecting maternity**


-  Provisions such as flexible schedules for pregnant women, protective measures for women working in night shifts, maternity loan, relief from heavy work, and availing of Social Security System maternity benefits in advance, among others;




-  The Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000 directs concerned agencies to develop and implement a comprehensive program of support services for solo parents and their children.

personnel and men are likely to be clerks or managers/executives.




-  A women's rights organization has secured party-list representation in Congress. Civil society/private sector organizations that carry the agenda of marginalized sectors vie for a limited number of seats in the House of Representatives. In 2004, a total of 16 party-lists were given seats in the House of Representatives, one of which is focused on women's concerns, the GABRIELA. Moreover, of the total 24 elected party-list representatives from 16 parties/ organizations, 4 are women.

-  The Act Providing for the Reform and Reorganization of the Philippine National Police, signed into law in 1998, specifies measures to increase women's participation in the police force, one of which is that one out of four commissioners of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) should be female. From 1999 to 2001, the NAPOLCOM had one female commissioner, two in 2002 and three since 2003, where one also served as vice-chair and executive director.








-  The recruitment and training of women to serve in police women's desks within the next five years are given priority and 10 per cent of the slots for the PNP's annual recruitment, training, and education activities are allocated to women. According to PNP data, there are about 9,000 women, around seven per cent of the total police force, as of April 2006. Also, about 759 women were recruited annually from 1998 to 2005 for positions of Police Officers 1-3, Inspector to Chief Inspector. To date, two women have been appointed as police generals.







## Politics and Governance



-  Filipino women have higher voter turnout rate and are winning in elections but still continue to have little participation in politics and governance. During the 1998 and 2001 national and local elections, women voters' turnout rates were slightly higher. In the same election years, women comprised a meager 20% of the total number of candidates although the proportion of women who won the elections is also around 20%. This means that all of the few women candidates who ran for public office succeeded in securing public posts. Despite the high success rate in elections, Filipino women still have dismal participation as decision-makers in the public sector. In 2004, the average proportion of women in key elected posts was no more than 17%. In fact, the dismal performance of women in the 2004 elections registered a sharp drop after an increasing trend beginning 1995 (12%).
  
-  The participation of women in the judiciary is another area for improvement. In 1996, only 15.4% of the total incumbent judges were women, although it increased to 17.7% in 1999 to 23.4% in 2002 and 28% in 2005. Currently, there are five women justices in the Supreme Court. Shari'a courts, special courts for Muslim law, have remained all-male, except in 1996 when there was one (1) woman judge in the Shari'a Circuit Court.
  
-  Even as women dominate the bureaucracy especially the technical or second-level, they seem unable to break the glass ceiling. Based on the 2004 data of the Civil Service Commission, women make up the majority of the bureaucracy, accounting for 57.6% of the total 1.31 million government personnel. Women in the bureaucracy are likely to be technical

## Article 5: Adoption of measures to modify sociocultural patterns of conduct to eliminate stereotyped roles for women and men and ensure sharing of responsibility in the upbringing and development of children




-  The Videogram Regulatory Board issues a memorandum circular stopping the showing of pornographic video in public transportation;
  
-  The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 strengthened the Anti-Mail Order Bride Law by including in its list of unlawful acts the matchmaking of *“any Filipino woman to a foreign national for marriage for the purpose of acquiring, buying, offering or trading her to engage in prostitution, pornography, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, involuntary servitude, and bondage;”*

  
-  Shared and gender-fair parenting is promoted through the Early Childhood Care and Development Act of 2000 while the project Empowerment and Reaffirmation of Parental Responsibilities, or ERPAT, a Filipino colloquial term for father, aims to develop the skills of fathers in rearing and caring for their children;
  
-  Networking and advocacy among media practitioners, government, academe and the private sector that is intended to raise consciousness and understanding of women's issues so people can take positive action to correct stereotyped and negative images of women and girls in media:
  -  Gender information sessions are held with media practitioners;
  
  -  Policy issued by the social welfare department in 2004 on media coverage of victims of abuse and exploitation to safeguard and ensure respect and protection of the rights of VAW victims;

-  The Code of Ethics and Media Guidelines has been reviewed and enhanced to ensure that women's rights are protected when they are subjects of news reports and radio and television programs;
-  The tourism department's marketing campaign is directed to be gender-sensitive, ensure non-discrimination of either women or men in its ads and promotion materials, and not promote sex tourism and Filipino women as commodities;
-  Partnership between the NCRFW and the Advertising Board of the Philippines to award advertising agencies that produce commercials with positive portrayals of women;
-  Awards and incentives given for gender-responsive advertisements and films such as the *Kababaihan* Awards (Women Awards) organized by the AdBoard and the NCRFW to recognize advertisements that raise awareness on women's issues, roles and rights and the Most Gender-Sensitive Film Award for the film that best portrays and resolves gender issues and biases given by the Quezon City GAD Resource Center (QC-GADRCO) during the annual Metro Manila Film Festival. The QC-GADRCO and the women's group *Kalakasan* also provide gender-sensitive training for film makers.

**Article 6: Suppression of trafficking of women, exploitation, and prostitution**

-  The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 is passed and its implementing rules and regulations are laid down by the Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking;
-  Measures are in place to address trafficking:



- slightly lower at 79.8%. Highest female LFPR was in 2001 (82.3%), while the lowest was in 2000 (80.3%).
-  Gender-tracking in employment continues to hold true. As in previous years, data in 2004 show that Filipino women still dominate occupation groups that may be considered as extensions of their reproductive roles at home such as office management, and professional services while men are still largely located in mechanized and heavy industries.
-  Filipino men are likely to be wage-and-salary and own-account workers and Filipino women are likely to be unpaid family workers. In 2004, 56% of unpaid family workers are women, while 64% of wage and salary workers and 67% of own-account workers are men. Among the employed women, however, 50% are wage and salary workers, 33% are either own-account workers (or self-employed or employee), and 17% are unpaid family workers.
-  The agriculture department provides credit and loans to women through its Countryside Assistance for Rural Employment (GMA-CARES) program. In 2005 the Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corporation (Quedancor) released about PhP 1.6 billion under this program for agricultural credit and loans to 45,173 women beneficiaries all over the country. One of the financing programs under GMA –CARES is the *Ginintuang Masaganang Ani* (Golden Bountiful Harvest) Women Entrepreneurs (GMA-Women) program that provides credit to women entrepreneurs who are engaged in agri-fisheries projects. In the same year, Quedancor has also provided PhP 73 million to 971 women beneficiaries under its other agricultural credit and loan programs.

of VAW cases in the police department peaked in 2001 at 10,345.

❏ The social welfare department, however, saw a general decline in the number of women in especially difficult circumstances (WEDC) cases served - from 7,763 in 1999 to 5,608 in 2002 and to 5,389 in 2005.

❏ Both the 2005 police and social welfare records show that physical injuries/battering and rape are the most common types of reported VAW cases. One in every three reported cases to the police were battering / physical injuries while 17.2% accounted for the rape cases. Similarly, the social welfare department served a total of 1,217 cases of physical abuse/battering or 28.8%, while sexual abuse cases accounted for 6.8%.

❏ As of December 2000, the Supreme Court has designated 71 Regional Trial Courts across the country as Family Courts.

❏ Since the passage of RA 9208, the Philippine National Police has conducted 25 rescue operations resulting in the rescue of 137 persons and the arrest of 57 violators while the National Bureau of Investigation has investigated 22 cases of violation. As of March 2006, there were seven cases of conviction of traffickers.

### Labor and Employment

❏ Female labor force participation rate (LFPR) consistently lags behind the male LFPR in the past ten years. Across 1995 to 2005, female LFPR invariably registered only 50% while male LFPR was steadily above 80%, except in 2005 where it was

❏ The Philippines is a State Party to a number of international conventions addressing trafficking and migration;

❏ Assistance is given to trafficked persons abroad in the form of temporary refuge, appropriate representations with the employer and the labor ministry of the host country, and legal aid in filing charges against the suspected trafficker or recruiter, among others;

❏ The Philippine Center on Transnational Crime established a shared central data base among government agencies for information on criminals, arrests and convictions on various transnational crimes, including trafficking in persons;

❏ The Commission for Filipinos Overseas holds community education programs on such migration issues as trafficking in persons, illegal recruitment, intermarriages, overseas employment, and service networks for migrants in distress;

❏ Programs are implemented by both government and NGOs that provide alternative employment for prostituted women who opt to leave the trade or are rescued from white slavery and sexual exploitation;

❏ Continued advocacy to pass an anti-prostitution bill that redefines it and decriminalizes persons exploited in prostitution;

❏ The Anti-Rape Law of 1997 and the Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998 are passed;

❏ The Anti-Violence against Women and Their Children Law allows protection orders to be issued to abusers to stop them from committing violence and recognizes the battered woman syndrome as a legal defense for women



- suffering from cumulative abuse;
- Guidelines for investigators and court personnel are adopted on how to handle rape cases involving adult victims;
- Family Courts are created in major cities to try cases of domestic violence and incest;
- Government agencies, including law enforcement agencies, have their respective units and desks to respond to the needs of women survivors of violence.

#### ***Article 7: Equal rights with men in political and public life***

- Laws and policies are adopted to increase women's participation in decision making:
  - The Indigenous People Rights Act of 1997 requires indigenous women to be represented in decision making at all levels;
  - The Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act of 1997 allots one seat for the women sector in the National Anti-Poverty Commission;
  - The National Police Commission and Philippine National Police Reorganization Act of 1998 specifies a 10-per cent quota of the police's annual recruitment, training, and education for women officers and prohibits sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation;
  - Directives are issued by concerned departments require women to be included as members of boards managing local agricultural and fishery councils, agrarian reform councils, and protected areas such as forests;
  - A memorandum circular is issued



*Twenty-five years after CEDAW, women in the Philippines have come a long way. But greater strides are to come if we work in unity towards respecting, protecting and fulfilling women's rights.*

#### **Overseas Employment**

- The number of overseas Filipino workers is generally increasing for both sexes. A survey on overseas Filipinos conducted in 2004 revealed a 34% increase in the number of Filipino overseas workers between 1995 and 2004.
- There is almost an equal level of participation between women and men in overseas work but the context of their participation is very much different. In 2004, women accounted for 51% of the total number of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) yet their average monthly cash remittance represents only 57% of the PhP 74,267 average monthly cash remittance of Filipino men. This is because Filipino women are likely to end up in jobs that are low-paying and often unprotected. The 2004 survey showed that 56% of women who went abroad for work are laborers and unskilled workers, while 28% of their male counterparts worked in trade and related work and 27% worked as plant and machine operators/assemblers. Common destinations of female workers abroad are Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, and Japan.

#### **Violence Against Women**

- There are different trends in the number of violence against women cases from different government agencies. The number of VAW cases reported to the police increased six-fold, from 1,100 in 1996 to 6,505 in 2005. The highest recorded number

should also be actively pursued, with key sectors contributing to the creation of financially viable and stable jobs for women and men so that they would not have to seek opportunities abroad.


In the area of promoting **women's health rights**, women and men should be provided with access to information and options for planning the number and spacing of their children. Interventions to promote women and girl-children's health, as well as to prevent incidences of **violence against women** should be actively pursued, especially by local government and civil society organizations.

In the **civil, cultural and political spheres**, laws and practices that discriminate against women and limit their capacities and opportunities for development should also be reviewed. Documenting such practices will help us understand the context of such, and facilitate the challenging task of eventually repealing such laws and practices.


Resources should be allocated for the sex-disaggregation of data so that progress in addressing development concerns could be easily tracked and remaining areas for action, easily identified. The availability of such data will also provide valuable support for advocacy on gender and development concerns. The government's policy of requiring the allocation of resources for gender mainstreaming and development concerns should be further strengthened and refined, with rights and results-based perspectives at its core.

The development of strategic partnerships with civil society, the private sector, media, academe and other institutions should also be part of government's agenda. Such partnerships are crucial, especially in a context where resources are scarce, and women's lives are at stake.


by the Civil Service Commission encouraging equal representation of women and men in third-level positions in the bureaucracy. To facilitate this, the CSC has in place the following initiatives: (a) a Career Advancement of Women in Government Service program that provides capability building, training, and other enabling mechanisms for women employees; (b) a Merit Promotion Plan to ensure nondiscrimination in the selection of employees and equal opportunity for women employees; and (c) the publication of a Directory of Women on the Move that presents to appointing authorities a list of qualified women who can be considered for top positions.

 The Absentee Voting Law allows Filipino nationals based abroad to cast their ballots in national elections;

**Article 8: Equal opportunity to represent governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international programs**

 Filipino women have been participating in international meetings and conferences as well as representing the country in international agencies and their committees such as the UN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. They lead Philippine delegations in regional and global conferences on women.


**Article 9: Equal rights of women and men to acquire, change or retain their nationality or that of their children**


 The Supreme Court rules on the circumstances by which women and men may possess dual citizenship, including how a





Filipino national married to a foreigner may retain her or his citizenship;


 The Dual Citizenship Law allows Filipino women and men who have lost their Philippine citizenship through marriage to foreigners or because of political or economic necessity to reacquire their citizenship and natural born citizens who became citizens of foreign countries to retain their Filipino citizenship;


 The Philippine Passport Act of 1996 allows women to apply for a passport without the consent of their husbands.


#### Article 10: Equality in education

 Laws are enacted to respond to gender issues in education:

 The Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 1997 aims to expand and upgrade educational opportunities for women and men to pursue careers in science and technology;

 The National Service Training Program Act of 2001 provides the three options of military, civil welfare, and literacy training that female and male students at the tertiary level can choose from for their national service training;

 Measures are continuously explored to maximize government's resources for education through reforms, alternative forms of instruction, community-based programs, and partnerships with community organizations and NGOs;

 Gender-related topics, modules, and teaching aids are integrated into school curricula and the five learning areas of English, Science, Math, Filipino, and Social Studies;



### *With CEDAW, What Now?*

As signatory to various international commitments, the Philippine government has taken strides in respecting, protecting and fulfilling women's rights. With the ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, our government is bound to protect Filipino women from inequalities and discrimination in the civil, economic, social, political, and cultural realms.

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration, which eventually led to the development of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>1</sup>. The MDGs aim to address global development problems and address poverty by 2015 and explicitly recognize the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment as a vital element for addressing global concerns.

However, even with the UN CEDAW, MDGs, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), other international commitments and national laws as a fitting foreground for the promotion of gender equality, much remains to be done to fulfill the State's obligations for women's empowerment. A quarter of a century from the ratification of the CEDAW, the facts and figures on the status of women in the Philippines show gaps that need to be addressed to carry out our commitment in respecting, protecting and fulfilling women's rights.

In the area of **labor, employment and poverty alleviation**, government and private sector institutions should develop and strictly implement gender-fair policies that protect women workers, as well as promote opportunities for women's economic empowerment. The government's agenda of jobs generation

<sup>1</sup> Pathway to Gender Equality: CEDAW, Beijing and the MDGs (UNIFEM)

and monitoring of initiatives and gains at the national and local levels;

- ❏ Weak enforcement and monitoring of gender equality legislation and policies related to GAD and women's concerns;
- ❏ Limited resources to produce gender statistics on poverty and VAW, the need to orient those who generate data and information and users on how to effectively use and analyze sex-disaggregated data, and the need to develop a comprehensive monitoring framework;
- ❏ Limited government resources allocated to women programs and projects, including lack of commitment and political will to implement the GAD budget and GAD-related programs and projects.

- ❏ Textbooks and teaching materials are evaluated to make them gender-responsive;
- ❏ A series of training is conducted for public school teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and supervisors on how to create a gender-sensitive and child-friendly school;
- ❏ Scholarship programs and training in various fields are open to male and female workers in government and the academe who want to continue their education or enhance their knowledge and skills in their current jobs;



- ❏ Gender and Development Resource Centers with their network of trained academics and professional researchers on gender planning, monitoring, and evaluation are set up in the regions to build the capability of local governments in planning and implementing GAD programs and projects;
- ❏ A technology-based education and training for women was launched by the National Vocational Training and Development Center for Women;

- ❏ Functional Education and Literacy Programs are carried out that include topics on maternal and child care and may have school-based child-minding centers so school-aged girls who are tasked to care for younger siblings can still attend class;
- ❏ Skills and livelihood training are available for women with disabilities.

**Article 11: Elimination of discrimination in all aspects of employment**

- ❏ Laws are enacted or amended to expand workers' benefits and protection and correct gender-based discrimination in the workplace;
- ❏ Programs are implemented addressing the concerns of women workers from specific groups such as women in government, overseas women workers, women workers in economic zones, women in the informal sector, women entrepreneurs, and working girl children;
- ❏ Studies were conducted to promote better understanding on the effects of globalization on women, gender-based discrimination in the workplace, and women's contributions to the economy, with some of the findings used for policymaking.



**Article 12: Equality in health care and access to health care services**

- ❏ Laws are passed to address women's health concerns:
  - ❏ The National Health Insurance Act of 1995 identifies women as one of the vulnerable groups that should be covered and provided with medical benefits;

- ❏ Programs are in place to assist women married to foreigners who are suffering from difficulties resulting from an interracial marriage.

**Remaining Challenges Confronting Filipino Women**

Amid all these gains, however, Filipino women still struggle with pressing challenges that hold back their aspiration for gender equality and women's empowerment. These are:

- ❏ Massive poverty and inequality in the ownership and enjoyment of economic resources;
- ❏ Negative effects of globalization;
- ❏ Persistent peace and order problems;
- ❏ Continued bias in various institutions such as schools, workplaces, churches, political systems and the media;
- ❏ Weak role of media in promoting women's issues and changing media's sexist and stereotypical portrayals of women;
- ❏ Lack of an integrated response to women's concerns in the workplace;
- ❏ Lack of critical mass of women in top level and decision-making positions;
- ❏ Need to strengthen the national machinery for women so it can respond efficiently and effectively to the increasing demand for technical assistance



- The community-based forest management program allows women equal access to and control of forest resources;
- Agriculture programs provide women with livelihood, training, credit, and opportunities to participate in planning and implementing agricultural projects and benefit from them.

**Article 15: Women's equality before the law and civil matters; equal opportunities to exercise legal capacity such as in concluding contracts and property administration; equal treatment in court procedures, among others**

- Married women have equal rights to buy or lease land without written permission from their husbands;
- A gender mainstreaming program has been launched by the Supreme Court managed by a Committee for a Gender-responsive Judiciary;
- Guidelines are issued in handling rape cases by various government offices offering direct services to rape victims and survivors to ensure their fair and respectful treatment;
- Guidelines are set for media coverage of victims of abuse and exploitation.



**Article 16: Equality right with respect to marriage and family**

- Laws are passed to address discrimination and other difficult situations in the family, including the Family Code of 1997, Paternity Leave Act of 1997, Family Courts Act of 1997, Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000, and the Early Childhood Care and Development Act of 2000;

- The Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998 includes gender inequality as one of the conditions that aggravate the spread of HIV/AIDS and should be addressed by government;
- The Early Childhood Care and Development Act of 2000 institutionalizes a national system for early childhood care and development that involves not just the mothers but the community, government, and other institutions as well;
- The country's family planning program has been refocused from being demographically-driven to one that promotes responsible parenthood;
- The principles of responsible parenthood, birth spacing, respect for life, and informed choice guide efforts to curb increasing population. A policy is adopted on the shared responsibility between women and men to decide on the number of their children and the spacing and timing of their birth;
- A reproductive health framework that excludes abortion is defined, that incorporates 10 elements of the reproductive health package: (a) family planning; (b) maternal and child health and nutrition; (c) prevention and management of abortion complications; (d) prevention and treatment of reproductive tract infections, including sexually-transmitted diseases, and HIV/AIDS; (e) breast and reproductive tract cancers and other gynecological conditions; (f) adolescent reproductive health; (g) education and counseling on sexuality and sexual health; (h) men's reproductive health; (i) violence against women; and (j) prevention and treatment of infertility and sexual disorders;
- Programs are carried out that address the health concerns of women and children such as women's health and development,



safe motherhood, prevention of breast and cervical cancer, prevention and control of AIDS/STD, violence against women, and health concerns of the elderly.

**Article 13: Equal access in other economic and social life**

National programs to eradicate poverty have been a major goal of Philippine Presidents: the Social Reform Agenda of the Ramos administration, the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services Flagship Program of the Estrada administration, and the *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* (Linking Arms against Poverty) program of the Arroyo administration;

Laws are passed to help women in their various roles of managing their families, including the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, the Early Childhood Care and Development Act of 2000, and the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003;

Social welfare programs are in place, among them day-care services, neighborhood support for older persons, and *Sagip Kalinga* that rescues mendicants, children and adults who have made the streets their homes and provides them with appropriate social care;

Loan and credit programs and training and technical assistance are available for women entrepreneurs:

Microfinance is provided by the People's Credit Finance Corporation, of which 98 per cent of beneficiaries from 2001 to 2004 have been women;

*Puhunan Inilaan sa nga Pinay* (Credit for Filipino Women), a credit and rediscounting facility exclusively for women offered by the Land Bank of the Philippines;



Credit assistance is provided by the Development Bank of the Philippines to women engaged in micro and cottage enterprises;

Lending windows are made available by the agriculture department to finance women's projects in agriculture and fishery;

Self-employment assistance *kaunlaran* (development) associations have been set up, a community-based program for managing microenterprises and microfinancing programs for the poor and marginalized sectors are established.

**Article 14: Elimination of discrimination against rural women**

Laws are in place to improve the situation of people living in the countryside, including rural women. Some of these are the:

Fisheries Law of 1998 that gives women the right to representation in local councils formed to implement government's coastal management program;

Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act of 1997 that serves as the basis for anti-poverty programs of three presidents. One of the law's characteristics is to pursue a gender-responsive approach to fight poverty. It sets up flagship programs explicitly targeting such disadvantaged groups as farmers, landless rural workers, fisherfolk, and indigenous peoples, including women;

Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997 that grants women equality and participation in decision making;

