



The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the primary international legal instrument that focuses on women's rights. State parties – which include all Southeast Asian countries – must submit periodic reports on their progress to the CEDAW Committee, which is a panel of independent experts. The Committee evaluates states' progress in implementing the treaty on the basis of those reports, as well as 'shadow reports' provided by NGOs.

Women as workers in CEDAW

CEDAW covers a broad range of concerns from the elimination of discrimination in political life, to equal access to education and healthcare. Gender equality in the workplace is primarily addressed through Article 11, which prohibits discrimination in employment, deals most directly with women and employment.

However, several other parts of the Convention also establish rights that are related to women and work generally. Most important among these are:

- Article 3, which is concerned with the advancement of women in political, social, economic and cultural fields;
- Article 13, which requires states to ensure non-discrimination in family benefits and loans; and

- Article 14, which requires states to take into account the particular problems faced by rural women, including their participation in the non-monetised sectors of the economy.

Women and work in Indonesia's reports

Indonesia ratified CEDAW in 1984, and has submitted four periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee setting out its progress in implementing the treaty.

There has been a gradual development of CEDAW jurisprudence and shifts in the way women's issues are framed internationally since Indonesia ratified CEDAW. Over the same period the primary focus of the Indonesian government's responses have remained consistent, although there has been more emphasis on women entrepreneurs and economic empowerment in recent years.

The themes raised by the Indonesian government in response to Article 11 have been reasonably consistent over time. As well as addressing the issue of workplace rights and conditions, the government's responses in regard to Article 11 have all referred to the standards established by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions it is a party to, and to the need to establish adequate rights and protection for women migrant workers, particularly through international agreements.

Themes in Indonesia's reports to CEDAW

	Article 11			Article 3			Article 13			Article 14		
	1997	2005	2011	1997	2005	2011	1997	2005	2011	1997	2005	2011
Women and work	x		x	x	x					x		
Labour migration	x	x	x									
Workplace rights	x	x	x						x			
Entrepreneurship					x				x	x	x	x
Economic empowerment									x		x	

In addressing its progress in implementing Article 3, the Indonesian government's responses have consistently emphasised concerns such as female empowerment in non-economic fields and gender mainstreaming. Most of its responses also mentioned concerns generally related to women and work, particularly discrimination and employment opportunities for women.

The Indonesian government's responses to Article 13 are highly consistent, as they closely mirror the article itself, with each addressing social security, access to credit, and access to culture and sport. Only its most recent report responded to this article in terms that also included themes related to women and work.

The Indonesian government's responses to Article 14 have also been consistent over time, with all responses emphasising rural development and infrastructure, with some attention given to the issue of female entrepreneurship, particularly in relation to the provision of credit to women in small-scale agricultural enterprises.

A striking pattern evident in the Indonesian government's responses to each of these articles is their focus on female entrepreneurship. In addressing Article 3, it has highlighted the role of the Indonesian Association of Women Entrepreneurs. In its responses to Articles 13 and 14, it has repeatedly emphasised the importance of programs that support women-led micro and small enterprises, particularly through the provision credit. The Indonesian government also raised the theme of the 'empowerment' of rural women in small-scale business in its response to Article 14 in 2005, and the 'economic empowerment' of women in tourist areas in its response to Article 13 in 2011. The only exception is in its responses to Article 11, which have consistently emphasised workplace rights and conditions rather than entrepreneurship.

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