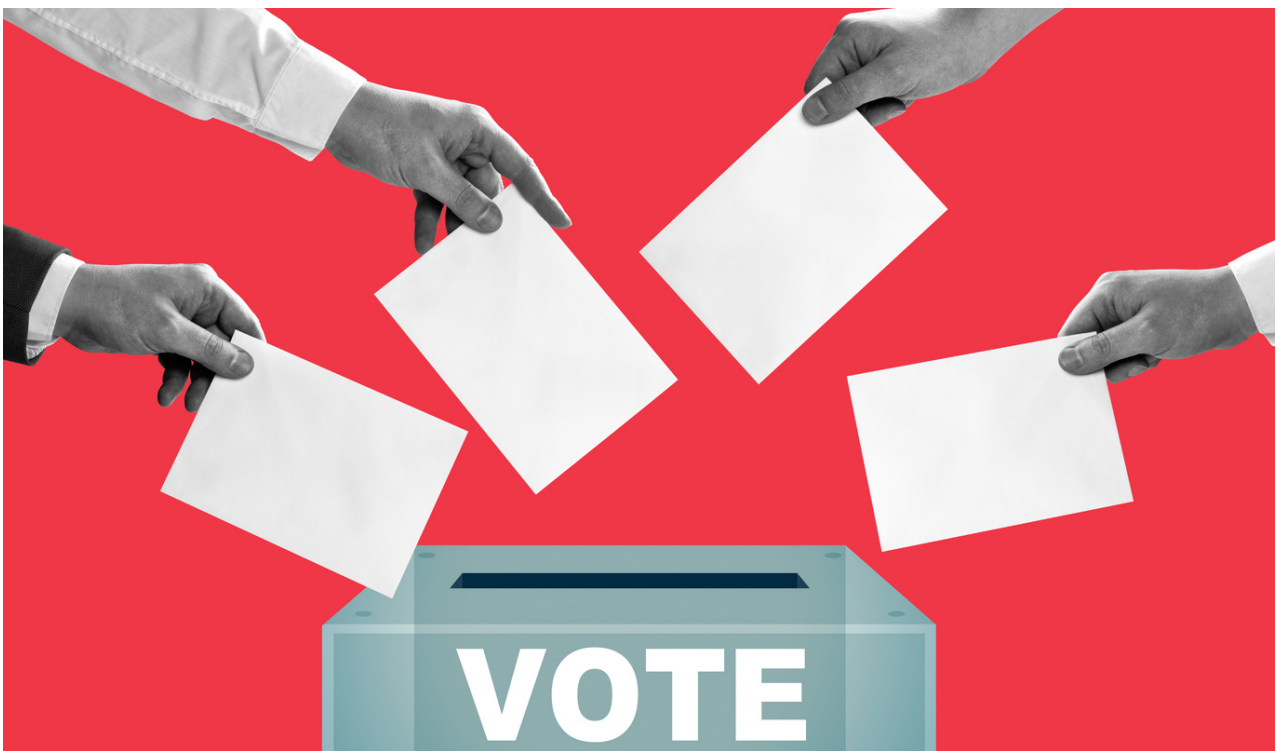


CEDAW Committee Elections 2024

An Introductory Guide



International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific



Introduction

If you've been involved in the CEDAW process before, you'll know of the importance of the convention and its mechanism to the promise of women's human rights. Meaningful NGO engagement in the CEDAW Committee election process is crucial for NGOs to be further involved in substantially shaping its framework.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women.

Demystifying the election process of the CEDAW Committee and finding ways to meaningfully engage civic voices in this process is part of IWRAW Asia Pacific's efforts to ensure that CEDAW continues to advance the rights of all women everywhere.

This guide details information about the nomination, candidacy and election process while highlighting avenues for NGO engagement in the 2024 CEDAW Committee elections.



1) Membership of the CEDAW Committee

The CEDAW Committee consists of 23 members who each serve four-year terms, and every two years half of these positions are up for re-election.

Members are elected at a Meeting of States Parties convened biennially in New York in June and the deadline for nominations tends to be a few months prior.

Nominations are made by States in accordance with the Addis Abeba guidelines, which require treaty body members to serve in their personal capacity and to be independent and impartial. In addition, nominations are restricted to one person per nationality.

Once elected, new members take office in January of the following year.

Qualifications and Selection Criteria

CEDAW Committee candidates require thematic expertise of the fields covered by the Convention. Consideration is also given to equitable geographical participation (although there is no formal quota for any regional group), and representation of marginalised groups.

[View the CVs of current members of the Committee.](#)

Responsibilities and Entitlements

[View the requirements, responsibilities and entitlements of CEDAW Committee Members.](#)

2) Nomination and Election Process

Nominations by States

To nominate someone, States are required to submit a name and a biographical data form to the CEDAW Secretariat at ohchr-cedaw@un.org, with copy to Ms. Jamila Seerathun (jamila.seerathun@un.org)

Late Nominations

Whilst delegates should make every effort to respect the deadline for nominations, the established practice is that the meeting of States Parties will be asked to endorse the nomination of candidates received after the deadline at the start of the meeting and, if there is agreement, their names will be included on the ballot paper.

In addition, in cases of a late nomination the OHCHR Secretariat cannot guarantee that the candidate's details can be processed, translated and made available to all States parties before the date of the election. Such nominees are therefore at a considerable disadvantage over other candidates in promoting their candidacy and winning support from other States parties.

Regional Balance of Committee

While there is no fixed region-based quota for membership on the CEDAW Committee, the geographical composition of candidates and Committee members depends on the amount of ratifications of the Convention per region. The region with the highest number of ratifications obtains the highest allocation of seats.

Timeline of nomination, candidacy and election process

8 March 2024
States send in their nomination

In some instances, States who are nominating a candidate will host national-level consultations with women's rights organisations and broader civil society groups prior to sending in their nomination.

8 March - 7 June 2024
Candidacy processes

During this period, Nominating States will host both bilateral and multilateral events, receptions, question and answer sessions, and townhalls to introduce their nominee to other member states prior to the election day.

7 June 2024
Election at the 23rd Meeting of States parties & elections 2024.

1 January 2025
Newly elected members take office



3) NGO Engagement in the Election Process

Why Should NGOs Take Action?

While treaty body elections are largely a State-run process, there is still a need for women's groups and women's rights advocates to continue advocating for the inclusion of independent feminist experts on the CEDAW Committee. The CEDAW Convention is the only UN human rights treaty that focuses on women's rights. It is important that the 23 experts of the CEDAW Committee have an understanding of the realities of women's lives, are of high moral standing and have competence in the field of women's human rights, as required by the Convention.

Thus, each CEDAW Committee member can make a difference for women's rights at many levels, including:

- Upholding the notion that States are accountable to women;

- Continuously expanding and furthering rights contained in the CEDAW Convention along feminist principles; and
- Ensuring that NGOs are included in CEDAW-related processes.

What can NGOs do?

I) Identify a national women's rights champion whom you would like to nominate.

This should be a feminist expert with a strong understanding of and experience in promoting and protecting women's rights, and who is willing and able to be a Committee member. In considering who to nominate, assess the expertise of the current composition of the CEDAW Committee and identify champions who have expertise on under-represented or under-addressed women's rights issues.

II) Build up her candidacy nationally.

National-level advocacy is critical, as nominations of candidates for elections to the CEDAW Committee must be sent to the CEDAW Secretariat through the respective State party of which the candidate is a national.

In most instances, this is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. National-level advocacy on this issue must be broad-based and long-term, as the processes for selection and nomination of candidates in most States are not yet transparent. [View some examples of good practices concerning nominations of experts for treaty body elections.](#)

Some suggested actions for national advocacy:

- Once a candidate has been identified, encourage her to develop and share her election platform. This could include information on her vision for the CEDAW Committee and its contributions to the progressive development of women's rights standards, her position on key issues of interest to the women's rights movement and her specific areas of expertise and interest.
- Encourage the candidate to publicise her candidacy and her platform through engaging with the media.
- Work with partners and allies in your government, including the Ministry of Women, National Human Rights Institution, and National Commission of Women or equivalent institution addressing women's issues, to raise the profile of the candidate publicly.

- Advocate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to nominate the CSO-supported/endorsed candidate. Ensure that the government is informed of and adheres to the Addis Abeba guidelines, particularly in relation to a) independence of members of human rights treaty bodies and b) concerns regarding real and perceived conflicts of interest between a State party and a member.

III) Continue international advocacy once candidates have been nominated by States.

At this point there is generally a period of three months before the election of the members takes place at the meeting of State parties in New York. In general, State parties are represented by their missions in New York at the meeting.

In the run-up to the election, NGOs can:

- Disseminate a public message or open letter setting out your endorsement of a candidate. Such an endorsement should be shared with the relevant candidate, the relevant State and the New York-based missions of the State parties to the CEDAW Convention.

- Continue engagement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission in New York, Ministry of Women, National Human Rights Institution and National Commission of Women to ensure support for the candidate you have endorsed, through encouraging the relevant State authorities to hold informal briefings publicising the candidature and election platform of the nominee.
- Connect with other women's rights NGOs working at the national, regional and international levels to coordinate efforts to advocate with respective governments and permanent missions as well as to develop ideas for media campaigns.

IV) Additional considerations for advocacy:

- Ensure fairness in representation of Committee members (per the Addis Abeba guidelines) by campaigning for candidacies from States which have not yet had an elected candidate.
- If you have evidence of a candidate within your regional bloc who does not represent the principles embedded in the CEDAW Convention, you should raise questions with your country's mission about the nominee.
- NGOs also have the power to hold states accountable to their obligations for a fair nomination process by reporting on the national process for nomination of human rights treaty body members within their shadow reports when reporting under Articles 7 and 8 of the CEDAW Convention.

2024 CEDAW Committee Elections

The next 11 CEDAW Committee members will be elected at a Meeting of States Parties convened in New York on 7 June 2024. The deadline for nominations for the upcoming elections was 8 March 2024 and new members will be taking office on 1 January 2025.

This table outlines current and prospective regional representation on the CEDAW Committee:

Region	Members Remaining post-2024	Outgoing Members in 2024	Outgoing Members Seeking Re-Election*
African Group	3	1	0
Asia Pacific Group	2	4	1
Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)	2	2	0
Eastern European Group (EEG)	3	1	0
Western European and Other States Group (WEOG)	2	3	2

*The information contained in this guide on outgoing members seeking re-election is current as of 23 February 2024. For the updated list of candidates, please refer [here](#).

The CEDAW Committee members whose terms are expiring are as follows:

Name	Country	Region	Terms served	Seeking re-election*
Nicole Ameline	France	Western Europe and Others Group	4	No
Marion Bethel	Bahamas	Latin America and Caribbean Group	2	No
Leticia Bonifaz Alfonzo	Mexico	Latin America and Caribbean Group	1	No
Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen	Netherlands	Western Europe and Others Group	1	Yes
Hilary Gbedemah	Ghana	African Group	3	No
Nahla Haidar	Lebanon	Asia and the Pacific Group	3	Yes
Dalia Leinarte	Lithuania	Eastern European Group	3	No
Rosario G. Manalo	Philippines	Asia and the Pacific Group	4	No
Bandana Rana	Nepal	Asia and the Pacific Group	2	Yes
Natasha Stott- Despoja	Australia	Western Europe and Others Group	1	Yes
Jie Xia	China	Asia and the Pacific Group	1	No

*The information contained in this guide on outgoing members seeking re-election is current as of 23 February 2024. For the updated list of candidates, please refer [here](#).

The remaining CEDAW Committee members, whose term expires on 31 December 2026, are as follows:

Name	Country	Region
Brenda Akia	Uganda	African Group
Hiroko Akizuki	Japan	Asia and the Pacific Group
Rangita de Silva de Alwis	Sri Lanka	Asia and the Pacific Group
Esther Eghobamien-Mshelia	Nigeria	African Group
Yamila González Ferrer	Cuba	Latin America and Caribbean Group
Daphna Hacker	Israel	Western European and Others Group
Marianne Mikko	Estonia	Eastern European Group
Maya Morsy	Egypt	African Group
Ana Peláez Narváez	Spain	Western European and Others Group
Rhoda Reddock	Trinidad and Tobago	Latin America and Caribbean Group
Elgun Safarov	Azerbaijan	Eastern European Group
Genoveva Tisheva	Bulgaria	Eastern European Group

New candidates seeking election



[View the list of candidates](#), with links to their biographical data.

We are here for you!

As a Global South-led feminist organisation, we recognise the time and resource constraints placed upon women's rights organisations the world over which can obstruct meaningful engagement with these international processes.

Accordingly, we offer our continuing support to those NGOs who seek to understand and engage with these processes. If you would like a discussion on how to engage with the nomination process at the State-level, please write to us at iwraw-ap@iwraw-ap.org for more information, with subject line: CEDAW Elections 2024.

Please also keep us informed if you are campaigning for a candidate from your country.

