

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SELECTION OF THE PHILIPPINE CANDIDATURE TO THE CEDAW**

### I. Background

Known as the International Bill of Rights of Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is the only human rights treaty that affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change, or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children.

CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations in 1979 and took effect in 1981. The Convention defines discrimination against women as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field.”

CEDAW also establishes a framework that draws on three over-arching principles: equality in opportunity, equality in access and equality in results.

### II. Membership to the Committee

The CEDAW Committee consists of 23 experts on women's rights from around the world of high moral standing and competence in the field covered by the Convention. The experts shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity with consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution and to the representation of the different forms of civilization as well as the principal legal systems. The members of the Committee shall be elected for a term of four years.

The Committee is mandated to: (1) receive communications from individuals or groups of individuals submitting claims of violations of rights protected under the Convention to the Committee and (2) initiate inquiries into situations of grave or systematic violations of women's rights. These procedures are optional and are only available where the State concerned has accepted them.

The Committee also formulates general recommendations and suggestions. The Committee normally meets for a period of not more than two weeks thrice a year, alternating between New York and Geneva.

The members of the Committee shall, with the approval of the General Assembly, receive emoluments from United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the Assembly may decide, having regard to the importance of the Committee's responsibilities.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall provide the necessary staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the present Convention.

### III. Selection Process

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), as the national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment, is facilitating the selection of the Philippine candidature to the CEDAW for the term 2015–2018. After calling for a Dialogue between the PCW Board of Commissioners and civil society organizations last 18 March 2013, it was agreed that a Technical Working Group (TWG), composed of government and civil society representatives, will be convened to define the nomination process, including the criteria and tools for selection.

The TWG finalized the criteria for nominations, attached as Annex A, and the nomination form, attached as Annex B.

The PCW will begin the call for nominations on 15 April 2013. This will be disseminated to government, women's groups, and civil society organizations through e-mails, website posting, and press releases. The PCW shall also make available and downloadable the said documents through its official website: [www.pcw.gov.ph](http://www.pcw.gov.ph).

Government, women's groups, and civil society organizations are expected to facilitate disseminating the information to their respective constituents and networks.

Each candidate should be nominated by at least two entities (individual, government, or non-government).

Deadline for submission of acceptance of nominations and attachments is midnight of 15 May 2013. Nominations and complete attachments received after this deadline shall not be considered.

The PCW Secretariat shall thereafter submit the complete list of nominees, including all supporting documents of their nominations, to the TWG. In turn, the TWG shall facilitate the screening and selection of nominees, reviewing their credentials, including all documents submitted in support of their nominations.

The PCW will conduct a forum with the nominees to be held on 13 June 2013 at 1:30-5:00 p.m. (venue TBD). The nominees will be given ten minutes each to present why they are accepting the nomination and what they have to offer. This will be followed by an open forum. The PCW Board Members and TWG will have the first priority / prerogative to ask questions before the rest of the CSOs and GOs invited to the forum.

After the complete review and evaluation of all nominees, the TWG shall prepare a shortlist of nominees and submit the same to the PCW Board.

The PCW Board shall be convened to review and select the final candidate from the shortlist. A CSO representative from the TWG may be invited by the PCW Board during the selection committee meeting as needed. The name of the final candidate shall be forwarded to the Department of Foreign Affairs, supported by a Board Resolution affirming the decision of the PCW Board.

The PCW shall officially announce the result of the final selection of all nominees through e-mails, website posting, and other means of public information.

The TWG agreed on the following summary of activities and timelines for the nomination process:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date/s</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Preparation of the tools for screening (criteria, nomination form)	April 1-15	draft screening tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>criteria</i></li> <li>• <i>indicators</i></li> <li>• <i>application /nomination form</i></li> <li>• <i>CV outline</i></li> <li>• <i>acceptance of nomination form</i></li> </ul>
Second TWG meeting	April 9 (1:00 p.m. in Miriam)	approval of screening tools
Call for nomination	April 15-May 15	To be posted in PCW Website; email blast to CSOs and GOs, radio, press releases
Deadline	May 15	Including all attachments
Initial screening and documentary evaluation of candidates' credentials	May 15-30	Individual review by members; TWG meetings to deliberate
Forum among candidates	June 13 (1:30-5:00 p.m. venue TBD)	PCW Board, CSOs, and other stakeholders to be invited to attend
Board deliberation and final selection	June	Final candidate to be submitted to DFA