

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SELECTION OF THE PHILIPPINE CANDIDATE 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.

The Convention was adopted by the United Nations in 1979 and took effect on 3 September 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.”

The Convention also establishes a framework that draws on three overarching principles: equality in opportunity, equality in access and equality in results.

II. Membership to the Committee

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was established in 1982 as a body of independent experts tasked to monitor States Parties' implementation of the Convention. It consists of 23 experts in the fields covered by the Convention serving in their personal capacities. The experts are elected by States Parties for renewable four-year terms, giving due consideration to equitable geographical distribution, balanced gender distribution, and appropriate representation of the different forms of civilization and principal legal systems.

The CEDAW is mandated to: (1) review national reports submitted by the States Parties within one year of ratification or accession, and every four years thereafter and (2) make recommendations on any issue affecting women to which it believes the States Parties should devote more attention.

Pursuant to an Optional Protocol to the Convention, which was adopted by GA resolution 54/4 (1999) and entered into force on 22 December 2000, the CEDAW may likewise (1) receive submissions from individuals or groups of individuals of claims of violations of rights protected under the Convention and (2) initiate inquiries into situations of grave or systematic violations of women's rights.

The CEDAW usually meets thrice a year, alternating between New York and Geneva.

The members of the Committee, 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 for the importance of the Committee's responsibilities.

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

III. Selection Process

A Technical Working Group composed of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC), Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), and a representative from civil society endorsed by the PCW Board will be convened to identify a shortlist of possible candidates to the CEDAW for the term 2017–2020.

The TWG will be guided by the criteria for nominations, attached as Annex A, in the screening of nominations. The nomination form is attached as Annex B.

The PCW will begin the call for nominations on 27 January 2015. 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 Annexes through its official website: 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 6 February 2015. 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.

After the complete review and evaluation of all nominees, the TWG shall prepare a shortlist of nominees with rankings and submit the same to the DFA.

The name of the final candidate shall be endorsed by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to the President.

The DFA shall officially announce the result of the final selection of all nominees upon receipt of Presidential approval.

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

Activity	Date/s	Remarks
Call for nominations	27 January - 6 February 2015	To be posted in PCW Website; email blast to CSOs and GOs, radio, press releases
Initial screening, documentary evaluation of candidates' credentials and force ranking of candidates by the TWG	9-11 February 2015	
Receipt of TWG-endorsed candidates by the DFA	13 February 2015	
Endorsement by SFA of the final candidate to the President	16 February 2015	
Soft launch of PH's CEDAW 2017-2020 bid	9 March 2015	At the sidelines of the CSW meeting in New York