

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
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**PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Today is Human Rights Day 2014.**

**In the UK, 35 years after the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), we are still far from full realisation of the principle of this enlightened convention**

In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, often referred to as CEDAW ([www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw)). The convention spelled out clearly what was meant by discrimination: 'Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex,' which has the effect of interfering with women's human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (Article 1).

States parties to this convention agreed to 'condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, ...to pursue by all appropriate means and **without delay** (our emphasis) a policy of eliminating discrimination, and, to this end, undertake (a) to embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation...and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realisation of this principle... '(Article 2).

This would seem a clear and firm enough commitment, but Article 3 made it comprehensive: 'States parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men'.

This equality was to include (articles 7,10,11,15): 'The right to...participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof'; equal rights with men in the field of education; 'the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels'; equality with men before the law; and 'in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity'; plus, elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- The same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment
- The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security,...training
- The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value
- The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions.

Thirty-five years later, just imagine if these things were the case in practice – if discrimination against women had in fact been eliminated, and women did have the same opportunities as men - what a different place the world would be! In the UK, we are still far from the full practical realisation of the principle of this enlightened convention.

WILPF campaigns on issues of gender, peace and security as well as human rights for women, using an ‘integrated approach’ because their realisation is interdependent.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

- **About WILPF:** The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is an international non-profit, non-governmental (NGO) peace organisation with National Sections spanning every continent. We have Branches and groups across the UK. *Brighton and Hove; Leicester; London; Orpington; Scotland; Sheffield; Cornwall (group)*
- **An International Secretariat** works out of New York and Geneva and focuses on the work of the United Nations (UN). In 1948, WILPF was part of the first group of NGOs to receive consultative status with the UN through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). We also have consultative status with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- **WILPF’s mission** is to end and prevent war, ensure that women are represented at all levels in the peace-building process, defend the human rights of women, and promote social, economic and political justice.
- To achieve this mission, **WILPF conducts programs** in three areas:
  - Disarmament; [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)
  - Gender, Peace and Security; [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)
  - Human Rights
- **Crisis Response:** During periods of transition or conflict, WILPF reacts by developing responsive projects. In 2014, WILPF has two active projects.
  - *MENA Agenda 1325:* This project advocates for women’s rights in the Middle East and North African region by building the capacity of women to participate in peace and security issues and emphasises the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325.
  - *Women Organising for Change in Bosnia and Syria:* This project focuses on sharing and learning from the different experiences of women living in conflict-affected societies in order to better understand how to organise and participate in change.
- **Women’s Power to Stop War** is WILPF’s global movement in the year prior to our centenary in April 2015. The movement’s goal is to strengthen, connect and celebrate the past 100 years of peace-building from a gender perspective. In April 2015, we will return to The Hague to host an international conference on Disarmament, Gender and Security and forge a new peace agenda for the 21st century. [www.womenstopwar.org](http://www.womenstopwar.org)
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