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## **Zonta International Resolution on Optional Protocol**

### **Resolution on promoting the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the optional protocol to the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, is a comprehensive and legally binding treaty on women's human rights. It aims to achieve equality between men and women in all fields of civil, political, social, economic and cultural life. It is the second most widely ratified human rights treaty. At the same time, it is the treaty to which countries have entered the greatest number of substantive reservations. Ratification binds state parties to seek to modify discriminatory patterns of behavior and attitudes regarding the sexes and to create standards of equality and non-discrimination in private as well as public life. The Optional Protocol, adopted by the United Nations in 1999, strengthens CEDAW by allowing individuals or groups of individuals to submit claims of violation, by state parties, of their rights as set forth in the Convention.

CEDAW has been used around the world to define the norms for constitutional guarantees for women's rights, to interpret laws, to dismantle discrimination and to establish pro-women policies. Yet despite these substantial achievements, many of the world's women and girls are still denied their human rights and live daily with violence or the threat of violence. The promise of CEDAW depends on the political will of governments and on the vigilance of civil society organizations to ensure that commitments made by governments are being implemented.

**WHEREAS:** Zonta International's Objects include "to promote justice and universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" and "to improve the legal, political, economic, educational, health and professional status of women"

#### ***Be it resolved therefore that:***

Zonta International supports ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women and ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention **and encourages all Zonta Clubs and Zontians to:**

1. Advocate for their government to both ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to carry out all commitments made to women and girls;

2. Support the removal of all unjust reservations made by their government to the Convention;
3. Work for the ratification by their country of the Optional Protocol to the Convention;
4. Prepare themselves for effective advocacy by informing themselves on the content of the Convention and potential actions for the expansion of women's rights and the elimination of discrimination;
5. Expand their cooperation with other NGOs in monitoring the actions of their governments for the implementation of CEDAW.

*Adopted at the 55<sup>th</sup> Zonta International Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii July 2000*