

16. Endnote

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By bringing together critical analyses of recent efforts towards the realisation of women's rights within legal and cultural contexts, this publication situates the progress and the challenges in advancing gender equality throughout the Commonwealth.

The volume presents substantive articles on current regional developments, Commonwealth principles and guidelines¹ for promoting and implementing CEDAW throughout its 54 member countries and practical examples provided by way of summaries of relevant case law. It is hoped that the global aspirations articulated in this publication for the full implementation of women's rights will assist practitioners, especially judges, magistrates and lawyers, in their vital role in supporting the implementation of CEDAW across the Commonwealth.

A comprehensive approach to understanding the importance of the Convention is provided by both the section on case law, which illustrates the practical application of CEDAW provisions at the national level, and by the inclusion of non-state entities' perspectives on its implementation. Non-state actors are important in the promotion and protection of human rights generally and in the implementation of CEDAW specifically. Examples of how the courts have, over the years, managed those customary or cultural practices that are discriminatory and inconsistent with CEDAW and/or national constitutions are pertinent in guiding or assisting other practitioners involved with similar issues.

It is hoped that a timely overview of international efforts to further the protection of women's rights is provided by the various analyses and personal reflections on CEDAW implementation and by the examples of how customs and practices may be reconciled with statutory legislation and international human rights standards.

It is hoped further that this publication will provide valuable inspiration for all members of Commonwealth judiciaries, as they continue in their efforts to interpret and apply constitutional guarantees purposively and with the generosity appropriate to charters of freedom to ensure the full protection of women's human rights.

1. Bangalore Principles, 1988; Victoria Falls Declaration of Principles for the Promotion of the Human Rights of Women, 1994; Hong Kong Conclusions, 1996; and the Georgetown Recommendations and Strategies for Action, 1997.

Part IV: Afterword

Key Commonwealth issues of concern that necessitate the interpretation of women's rights within the context of national laws and customary norms include land rights, marital property rights, child custody and maintenance, and the right to personal safety and security.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is committed to assisting member countries in the development and furtherance of legal norms for the protection of women's rights and in the promotion and implementation of CEDAW throughout its 54 national jurisdictions.