

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Men and Boys

Version 2

Developed by Nathan Beel, PhD, 16 October 2025.

- AI assisted this document.
- Based and adapted from UN Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
- Refer to the Supplementary Material in each section for clarifying notes.

Prelude

Noting that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women,

Noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,

Considering the international conventions and declarations that promote equality of rights between men and women,

Concerned, however, that despite these various instruments, extensive discrimination against men continues to exist, violating the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity,

Recognizing that men and boys face distinct forms of sex-based discrimination, social vulnerability, and systemic neglect. These challenges include disparities in health outcomes, harsher treatment in judicial systems, compulsory military service, and social expectations of male expendability,

Noting that more than 30 years after the preparation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations has yet to produce an equivalent document to support the protection of men and boys. At present, there is no branch of the UN, analogous to UN Women, dedicated to protecting the rights of men,

Bearing in mind the significant contribution of men to the welfare of the family and the development of society, the social significance of paternity, and the shared responsibility of both parents in the upbringing of children,

Affirming that to achieve true gender equality, human rights frameworks must be universally applied. This Declaration adapts the structure of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to affirm a belief in universal principles of non-discrimination. Its purpose is not to diminish the challenges faced by women but to ensure that the human rights of all people, regardless of gender, are fully recognized and protected. In the absence of a UN Men, this document shall serve as a guide until the UN resources an equivalent instrument,

Determined to implement the principles set forth in this Declaration and to adopt the measures required for the elimination of such discrimination in all its forms and manifestations,

Propose the following:

Article 1: Definition of discrimination against men and boys

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against men" shall mean 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 men and boys, irrespective of their marital or relationship 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.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This foundational article establishes a clear and comprehensive legal definition of what constitutes **discrimination against men and boys**. Its purpose is to create a universal standard for identifying and addressing inequality. It clarifies that discrimination is not limited to intentional malice but also includes any action, policy, or omission that results in men being denied their human rights on an equal basis with women. By defining the problem, this article provides the essential framework upon which all subsequent articles are built.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **"any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex"**: This is the core of the definition. It covers any form of differential treatment.
 - **Distinction**: Treating men differently without a sound, objective justification.
 - **Exclusion**: Denying men access to opportunities, services, or protections available to others (e.g., victims' services).
 - **Restriction**: Placing limits on men's rights or freedoms (e.g., in family law or reproductive choice).
- **"which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying"**: This is a critical element, as it addresses both intentional discrimination (*de jure*) and unintentional, systemic discrimination (*de facto*). A law or policy does not need to explicitly state an intention to discriminate; if its **effect** is to create a disadvantage for men, it is considered discriminatory under this convention.

- **"recognition, enjoyment or exercise... of human rights and fundamental freedoms"**: This phrase links the definition directly to the broader body of international human rights law. It affirms that the goal is to ensure men can fully realise their existing rights—to life, family, health, safety, and work—on an equal footing with women.
- **"in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field"**: This ensures the definition is all-encompassing. Discrimination can occur anywhere, from laws passed in parliament to unwritten rules in a workplace, cultural stereotypes in the media, or biases within the justice system.

Practical Examples of Discrimination

Based on the definition in Article 1, discrimination against men and boys would include:

- **Political/Legal:**
 - Laws requiring **compulsory military conscription for men only**, treating male life as expendable for the state in a way that female life is not.
 - Judicial systems where men receive **harsher criminal sentences** than women for the same crimes, suggesting a disparity in how their liberty is valued.
 - Family court systems that operate with a presumptive bias against fathers in **child custody cases**, impairing their right to a family life.
- **Economic:**
 - National retirement systems that set a **higher retirement age for men**, denying them equal access to social security benefits.

- Workplace policies that provide extensive paid maternity leave but offer minimal or no paid **paternity leave**, restricting a father's opportunity to bond with his child and reinforcing unequal caregiving roles.
- **Social/Health:**
 - A systemic lack of shelters, funding, and support services for **male victims of domestic violence**, effectively excluding them from protection.
 - Public health campaigns and research funding that overwhelmingly prioritise women's health issues while **neglecting male-specific or male-prevalent health crises**, such as prostate cancer or higher suicide rates.
 - Cultural narratives and media reporting that refer to civilian casualties as "women and children," which renders male victims invisible and **nullifies the recognition** of their suffering.

**Article 2 Commitment to Eliminating Discrimination Against Men and Ensuring
Gender Equality in Legislation and Practice.**

States Parties condemn discrimination against men (including sex-based obligations and neglect) in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against men 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 if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realisation of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination and prejudice, by commission, omission/neglect or implication, against men and boys;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of men on an equal basis with women and to ensure, through competent national tribunals and other public institutions, the effective protection of men against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against men and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against men by any person, organisation or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against men (including intentional or unintentional double standards that negatively impact men);

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against men or lead to judicial and penal disparities disproportionately experienced by men.

(h) To ensure legislative symmetry in penal law, such that if specific offenses are created to address gender-motivated hatred or violence against women (such as misogyny or femicide), equivalent offenses shall be created to provide equal protection for men and equal accountability for perpetrators, regardless of gender.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article serves as the **action-oriented core** of the Convention. While Article 1 defines discrimination, Article 2 outlines the comprehensive obligations of States to actively combat it. It moves beyond mere condemnation to a binding commitment, requiring governments to use all available tools—from constitutional amendments to specific sanctions—to proactively dismantle discrimination against men in law and in practice. It establishes that inaction, or **neglect**, is itself a form of discrimination and compels States to ensure that both public authorities and private entities uphold the principle of gender equality.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Clause (a): To embody the principle of equality:** This requires making gender equality a fundamental, legally binding principle at the highest level, such as in a national constitution. This ensures that all other laws and policies must align with this core value.
- **Clause (b): To adopt legislative... measures, including sanctions:** This is the enforcement mechanism. It obligates States to pass laws that explicitly prohibit discrimination against men and to impose penalties for violations. Crucially, it includes discrimination by "**omission/neglect**," targeting situations where men's needs are ignored (e.g., lack of domestic violence shelters or specific health programs).
- **Clause (c): To establish legal protection:** This guarantees that men have practical ways to seek justice when they face discrimination. It means creating accessible courts, tribunals, and other public institutions that can effectively hear their cases and provide remedies.

- **Clauses (d) & (e): To refrain from... and eliminate discrimination:** These clauses establish a two-pronged responsibility. The government and all its branches must not discriminate themselves. Furthermore, the government must take active steps to stop discrimination perpetrated by private individuals, companies, and organizations.
- **Clause (f): To modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices:** This is a call for a proactive audit of the entire legal and social system. States must identify and get rid of any existing laws or even unwritten customs that create "double standards that negatively impact men".
- **Clause (g): To repeal all national penal provisions:** This specifically targets the criminal justice system. It demands the removal of any laws or legal practices that lead to "judicial and penal disparities disproportionately experienced by men," such as unequal sentencing guidelines.
- **Clause (h): To ensure legislative symmetry in penal law:** This clause serves as a critical safeguard to ensure that the fundamental principle of equality before the law, established in Article 3, is strictly applied within the criminal justice system. It addresses the trend of creating specific, gender-based criminal offenses that protect one sex but not the other. The purpose is not to prevent the protection of women but to universalize that protection, ensuring that laws targeting gender-motivated hate and violence are applied symmetrically to protect men and hold all perpetrators equally accountable. It prevents the creation of a legal hierarchy of victims, where violence against one gender is treated as a more serious or distinct category of crime than identical violence against another.
- **"Legislative symmetry":** This is the core concept. It means that the legal framework must be balanced. If a state decides that gender-based animus is an aggravating factor

or a specific crime, that legal standard must apply regardless of the victim's or perpetrator's sex. It prohibits a "one-way street" approach to justice.

- **"if specific offenses are created...":** This clause respects national sovereignty. It does not force any state to create new categories of crime like "femicide" or "misogyny". However, it mandates that *if* a state chooses to go down this path for one gender, it is legally obligated by this convention to provide an equivalent legal framework for the other.
- **"equivalent offenses":** This means the creation of parallel legal provisions that recognize, prosecute, and penalize the gender-motivated hatred or killing of men to the same degree as that of women. It ensures the law targets the *motive* (gender-based hate) universally, rather than selectively protecting a single group from that motive

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Constitutional and Legal Reform:** Amending the national constitution to explicitly guarantee equal rights and responsibilities regardless of sex. This would be followed by passing an "Equality Act" that outlaws sex-based discrimination in all sectors and includes clear sanctions for non-compliance.
- **Judicial Review:** Mandating a national review of all criminal sentencing laws to identify and reform provisions that result in men receiving demonstrably harsher sentences than women for comparable crimes.
- **Abolition of Discriminatory National Service:** Repealing all laws that enforce compulsory military conscription for men only, thereby ending a state-sanctioned practice of gender-based obligation.

- **Family Law Overhaul:** Legislating new family court guidelines that abolish any implicit or explicit preferences for mothers in custody disputes and establish a rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting. This would also involve repealing any provisions that create unequal financial burdens on men after divorce.
- **Equal Access to Victim Support:** Enacting legislation that requires any domestic violence service or shelter receiving state funding to provide equal and accessible services to male victims, thereby remedying discrimination through neglect.
- **Government Accountability Audits:** Requiring all government departments (e.g., Health, Education, Justice) to conduct and publish regular audits of their policies to ensure they are providing equitable services and outcomes for men and boys.
- **Symmetrical Hate Crime Legislation:** If a nation's laws are updated to classify crimes motivated by misogyny as a specific form of hate crime, then those laws must be written to also include crimes motivated by misandry (hatred of men), ensuring equal protection from gender-based hatred.
- **Parity in Homicide Laws:** If a state legislates femicide as a distinct crime to recognize the gender-motivated killing of women, it must simultaneously introduce a parallel legal category for the gender-motivated killing of men, ensuring that the act of killing a person because of their sex is treated with equal legal gravity for all victims.
- **Equal Accountability in Law Enforcement:** Mandating training for police and prosecutors to recognize and document evidence of gender-based animus against male victims. This ensures that cases are investigated and prosecuted equitably, preventing a situation where gender-motivation is only considered relevant when the victim is female.

Article 3: Ensuring Legal Equality

1. States Parties shall accord to men equality with women before the law.
2. States Parties shall accord to men, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of women and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give men equal rights in family and criminal law and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.
3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of men shall be deemed null and void.
4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.
5. The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

Following the definition of discrimination in Article 1 and the state's commitment to action in Article 2, this article establishes the non-negotiable principle of **equality before the law** as the primary mechanism for realizing those commitments. It serves as the legal bedrock upon which the specific rights in subsequent articles are built. Its purpose is to dismantle systemic biases within the justice system that can lead to unequal outcomes based on sex. It ensures that men have the same legal capacity, are treated with the same impartiality in court procedures, and are afforded the same rights in critical areas like family and criminal law. This article is a direct mandate to correct documented disparities, from harsher sentencing to disadvantages in custody disputes, ensuring that justice is administered without prejudice.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Paragraph 1: "States Parties shall accord to men equality with women before the law."**
 - **Commentary:** This is the foundational principle of the article. It establishes that sex should not be a factor in how any law is written, interpreted, or applied. It serves as the ultimate standard against which all legal processes must be measured.
- **Paragraph 2: "...in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of women... In particular... in family and criminal law..."**
 - **Commentary:** This clause addresses the practical application of legal equality. It ensures men have the same rights to enter contracts, own property, and, crucially, have their arguments and rights weighed equally in **family law** (like

child custody) and **criminal law**. It demands that men be treated as equally competent parents and as individuals deserving of the same presumption of innocence and fair procedure as women in all court proceedings.

- **Paragraph 3: "...all contracts and... private instruments... restricting the legal capacity of men shall be deemed null and void."**
 - **Commentary:** This is a protective clause that prevents any private agreement or contract from legally stripping a man of his rights. It reinforces the idea that a man's fundamental legal standing cannot be signed away or negated by non-governmental arrangements.
- **Paragraph 4: "...the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons..."**
 - **Commentary:** This clause guarantees fundamental personal liberties, ensuring that no gender-based restrictions can be placed on a man's freedom to travel, live, or work where he chooses.
- **"Paragraph 5: "...the right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life."**
 - **Commentary:** This clause secures men's equal opportunity in cultural and social spheres as a fundamental civil right. It ensures that state support, funding, and access to these activities are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Criminal Justice Reform:** Mandating a comprehensive review of all national criminal sentencing guidelines to identify and eliminate disparities that result in men receiving harsher sentences than women for similar crimes.
- **Family Law Reform:** Enacting legislation that establishes a **rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting** in all child custody cases, shifting the legal starting point from a primary caregiver model to one that values both parents' involvement equally.
- **Domestic Violence Procedure Reform:** Implementing mandatory, evidence-based training for law enforcement and judicial officers to counteract the assumption of male guilt in domestic disputes and to ensure male victims are recognized and treated with the same seriousness as female victims. This training should focus on ensuring due process, recognizing male victimhood, and preventing gender-based assumptions from influencing investigations and legal proceedings.
- **Legal Recourse for Paternity Fraud:** Creating clear legal frameworks that allow men to disestablish paternity upon the discovery of misattributed parentage, thereby absolving them of future financial obligations and providing recourse.
- **Strengthening Protections Against False Accusations:** Enacting or strengthening laws that provide for legal consequences against individuals who are proven to have made malicious and knowingly false accusations in legal proceedings, ensuring due process is protected for the accused.

Article 4: Ensuring Bodily Autonomy, Integrity, and Freedom from Exploitation

1. States Parties shall guarantee the fundamental right of men and boys to bodily autonomy and integrity on a basis of equality with women. States shall take all appropriate legislative and social measures to protect this right from infringement by state, institutional, or private actors.

2. States Parties shall protect the bodily integrity of male minors by prohibiting any medically unnecessary, permanent modification of their genitalia. Such procedures must be deferred until the individual is of sufficient age and maturity to provide fully informed consent. All actions in this regard shall be guided by the principles of informed consent and the preservation of bodily integrity.

3. States Parties shall recognize and protect men as potential victims of violent crime at rates equal to women. This includes ensuring that law enforcement, victim support services, and public awareness campaigns are designed to address the high rates of male victimization and that male victims receive equal protection and support.

4. States Parties shall affirm the principle that men's bodies are not to be treated as disposable for the benefit of the state or society. This reinforces the prohibition on discriminatory, male-only military conscription and obligates the state to take all appropriate measures to mitigate risks and enhance protections for men in hazardous occupations.

5. To give effect to this principle, States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of sex-based exploitation, including the compulsory and discriminatory use of men for national security, social protection, or hazardous labour, such as discriminatory national service and military conscription.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article establishes the fundamental and inalienable right of men and boys to **bodily autonomy and integrity**. Its purpose is to legally protect a man's sovereignty over his own physical self, applying this principle to its most significant violations. The article provides a framework to combat issues ranging from the non-consensual modification of boys' bodies to the societal expectation that men's lives are expendable. It moves from establishing the core right to mandating state action against the deep-seated cultural norms that treat male bodies as objects for societal use, as inherently less vulnerable, or as instruments for state security.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Paragraph 1: Guarantee of a Fundamental Right:** This clause sets the overarching principle that bodily integrity is a universal human right that applies equally to men.
- **Paragraph 2: Right to be Free from Non-Consensual Genital Modification:** This specifically applies the principle of bodily integrity to minors, mandating that any permanent, medically unnecessary genital procedure on a boy be deferred until he can provide his own **informed consent**.
- **Paragraph 3: Recognition as Victims of Violent Crime:** This paragraph directly confronts the social stereotype of men as being exclusively perpetrators, rather than victims, of violence. It obligates the state to provide men with **equal protection and care**.
- **Paragraph 4: Affirmation Against Male Disposability:** This is a powerful clause targeting the societal concept of "male expendability". It frames male-only

conscription and the over-representation of men in dangerous jobs not just as discrimination, but as violations of a man's fundamental right to his own body.

- **Paragraph 5: Obligation to Suppress Exploitation:** Building directly on the principle in Paragraph 4, this clause provides the enforcement mechanism. It reframes practices like male-only conscription not as a civic duty, but as a form of **sex-based exploitation** that the state must actively suppress. This makes clear that inaction is not an option.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Protecting Children's Bodily Integrity:** Enacting specific legislation that prohibits medically unnecessary, non-consensual, and permanent genital modification of male minors, deferring any such decision until the individual can provide informed consent.
- **Abolishing Male-Only Conscription:** Repealing all laws that require only men to register for or serve in the military, thereby ending a state-sanctioned practice of gender-based exploitation. States would either make military service voluntary for all or apply conscription laws equally to all genders.
- **Enhancing Workplace Safety as a Right:** Implementing and rigorously enforcing advanced safety regulations in hazardous, male-dominated industries. This would be framed not just as an employment issue but as the state's duty to protect its citizens' right to bodily integrity from occupational dangers.
- **Reforming Victim Support Services:** Mandating that all state-funded victim support services, including domestic violence and sexual assault crisis centers, are equally accessible and equipped to support male victims. This includes funding public awareness campaigns to destigmatize male victimhood.
- **Equal Protection Training for Law Enforcement:** Integrating mandatory training modules for police to recognize and respond appropriately to male victims of all

forms of violence, ensuring that their reports are taken seriously and that they are not met with skepticism or bias.

Article 5: Suppressing Exploitation and Male Disposability

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of **sex-based exploitation**, including the compulsory and discriminatory use of men for national security, social protection, or hazardous labour. This includes discriminatory practices of national service and military conscription.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

As a direct application of the right to bodily autonomy guaranteed in Article 4, this article addresses one of its most severe and institutionalized violations: **the systemic exploitation of male lives**. It confronts the deeply ingrained societal practice of treating male lives as expendable for the "greater good". This article reframes the compulsory use of men for dangerous roles—particularly military conscription and hazardous labor—not as a civic duty, but as a form of gender-based exploitation that the state has a duty to suppress. Its purpose is to dismantle the legal and cultural mechanisms that compel men to serve as protectors at the cost of their own safety, well-being, and bodily autonomy.

Breakdown and Commentary

The article's core mandate is "to suppress all forms of sex-based exploitation, including the compulsory and discriminatory use of men for national security, social protection, or hazardous labour". This language is intentionally strong, reframing these practices not as obligations but as fundamental human rights violations.

- **"Sex-based exploitation"**: This refers to the systemic channeling of men into roles where their bodies and lives are used for the benefit of the state or society. It argues that when a state compels **only one sex** into life-threatening situations, it is engaging in a form of severe discrimination and exploitation.
- **"National security"**: This directly targets **compulsory, male-only military service**. It identifies the practice of forcing men, but not women, to risk their lives for the state as a primary example of sex-based exploitation.

- **"Social protection, or hazardous labour":** This identifies the broader societal expectation for men to perform the most dangerous jobs (e.g., firefighting, mining, construction, fishing) that keep society functioning. It recognizes that the disproportionate rate at which men suffer workplace fatalities is not merely a matter of individual choice but a systemic issue rooted in gendered expectations of male risk-taking and disposability.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Abolishing Male-Only Conscription:** Repeal all laws that require only men to register for or serve in the military. States would be required to either make military service entirely voluntary for all citizens or apply any conscription laws equally to all genders without discrimination.
- **Enhancing Workplace Safety in High-Risk Industries:** Implement and rigorously enforce advanced safety regulations in male-dominated, hazardous occupations. This includes funding research into mitigating occupational risks and providing better health support for workers in these fields, framed as the state's duty to protect citizens from exploitation.
- **Challenging Cultural Narratives of Male Disposability:** Implement public education campaigns that challenge the societal expectation that men must be protectors and providers at any cost. These campaigns would promote a culture that values men's lives and well-being as ends in themselves, not as resources for the protection of others.
- **Reforming Emergency and Disaster Response Protocols:** Review and amend national disaster response protocols to ensure that aid and rescue efforts are

distributed based on vulnerability and need, not on gendered stereotypes like the
"women and children first" paradigm, which can treat male lives as more expendable.

Article 6: Ensuring Equal Rights and Responsibilities in Marriage and Family

Relations for Men and Women

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against men in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital or relationship status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights; the same rights to assess for opt out of parent responsibilities, the right to test for paternity assurance.

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount, while ensuring each parent is not inherently disadvantaged because of their sex;

(g) Men are afforded the same reproductive rights as women to determine when they will have children. Men have a right to relinquish all parental rights and responsibilities related to unwanted pregnancies and births.

(h) Men have a right to know of the existence of their biological children, and to seek paternity testing to verify the relation to children believed or asserted to be theirs.

(i) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(j) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

(k) The right to legal and financial recourse in cases of misattributed paternity. Where paternity testing has definitively disproven a man's biological relation to a child for whom he was legally and financially responsible, States Parties shall ensure clear legal pathways exist. These pathways shall allow the man to be absolved of all future financial and legal responsibilities for the child and to seek financial restitution for prior support payments and other direct costs incurred under the false presumption of paternity.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

3. Males are afforded equal protection from relationship aggression of all forms, including physical, psychological, emotional, familial, social, legal, reputational, and unjust parental alienation. States demonstrate a similar commitment to ensure the safety of all affected by family violence, irrespective of their gender; and are vigilant to ensure males rights for relational safety are equally protected and supported.

4. In the case of the dissolution of the relationship, that post-relationship obligations are fair and equitable, and do not impose unequal obligations to support one partner without equivalent reciprocated requirements, provisions, expectations, or burdens on the other.

(a) Males are afforded fair and equitable treatment in the division of property after the dissolution of relationships. Prenuptial agreements are enforceable ensuring the protection of the interests of both parties.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article is a comprehensive mandate to ensure **complete equality for men in all aspects of marriage and family relations**. Its purpose is to dismantle discriminatory laws and social customs that disadvantage men as husbands, partners, and fathers. It establishes equal rights and responsibilities not only during a marriage but also at its dissolution. Uniquely, this article extends to secure **men's reproductive rights**, the right to protection from all forms of domestic abuse, including parental alienation, and the right to fair treatment in financial settlements. It seeks to create a legal framework where fatherhood is valued equally to motherhood and where men's safety and autonomy within the family are fully protected.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Paragraph 1(d) & 1(f): Equal Rights and Responsibilities as Parents:** This is a cornerstone of the article, affirming that fathers have the same rights and duties as mothers in all matters relating to their children, regardless of marital status. It explicitly states that the children's interests are paramount while ensuring that neither parent is inherently disadvantaged because of their sex. This directly challenges legal systems or biases that may favour one parent over the other in custody, guardianship, or adoption matters.
- **Paragraph 1(e), (g), & (h): Men's Reproductive Rights and Paternal Certainty:** This section is a significant and specific expansion of rights. It grants men the right to co-decide on the number and spacing of children and, crucially, a right to **relinquish parental rights and responsibilities for unwanted pregnancies**. It also establishes a man's right to know of his biological children and to **seek paternity testing** to verify

parentage, directly addressing issues of paternity fraud. These provisions aim to grant men a measure of reproductive autonomy comparable to that of women.

- **Paragraph 3: Equal Protection from Relationship Aggression:** This clause broadens the understanding of domestic violence to include not just physical harm but also **psychological, emotional, social, legal, and reputational aggression**, with a specific mention of **unjust parental alienation**. It mandates that States demonstrate an equal commitment to ensuring the safety of all victims, irrespective of gender, thereby obligating the creation of support systems for male victims who are often overlooked.
- **Paragraph 4: Financial Equity upon Dissolution:** This paragraph addresses the economic consequences of a relationship breakdown. It demands that post-relationship financial obligations, such as alimony, are **fair, equitable, and do not impose unequal burdens** without reciprocated requirements. It also calls for the equitable division of property and confirms that prenuptial agreements should be enforceable to protect the interests of both parties.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Family Law Reform:** Legislating a **rebuttable legal presumption of equal shared parenting** in all child custody cases to ensure both parents are on an equal footing from the start. Alimony laws would be reformed to be gender-neutral and time-limited, based on actual need rather than traditional roles.
- **Establishing Male Reproductive Autonomy:** Creating a legal process for "parental surrender," allowing a man notified of a pregnancy to formally and irrevocably relinquish all future parental rights and financial responsibilities within a set

timeframe. Enshrining in law a man's right to compel a DNA test to confirm paternity in legal disputes.

- **Combating Domestic Violence and Alienation:** Passing specific legislation that formally defines parental alienation as a form of psychological child abuse and a key factor in determining the best interests of the child in custody disputes. Mandating that state funding for domestic violence services be allocated equitably to establish shelters and support programs for male victims.
- **Ensuring Financial Fairness:** Amending divorce laws to ensure that the division of assets is fair and that spousal support is not awarded in a way that creates long-term dependency or an unfair financial burden on either party. Upholding the legal validity of prenuptial agreements to allow couples to determine their own financial arrangements.

**Article 7: Eliminating Gender-Based Prejudices and Promoting Shared Parental
Responsibilities**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the vulnerability or the dangerousness, the emotional stoicism or deficiency, or deservingness or undeservingness of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles or perceptions of men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of paternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article targets the root causes of gender discrimination by addressing the **deep-seated social and cultural beliefs** that perpetuate inequality. It moves beyond legal prohibitions to focus on changing hearts and minds. Its goal is to dismantle harmful stereotypes about both men and women and to formally recognize parenting as an equal, shared responsibility.

Breakdown and Commentary

Clause (a): Modifying Social and Cultural Patterns

"To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct... to achiev[e] the elimination of prejudices... based on the idea of the vulnerability or the dangerousness... of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles..."

Commentary: This clause is about actively reshaping the unwritten rules of society. It requires States to challenge and change the everyday assumptions and biases that limit both men and women. It directly confronts stereotypes that portray men as inherently dangerous or aggressive, and women as inherently vulnerable, as well as the expectation that men must be stoic, disposable protectors. This prejudice is a significant barrier preventing men from seeking mental health support and being seen as fully capable and nurturing partners and parents. It is also crucial to challenge "soft" prejudices, such as the common cultural and media portrayal of fathers as incompetent or "babysitting" caregivers. While often presented humorously, this "bumbling dad" stereotype diminishes the value of fatherhood, discourages paternal engagement, and subtly reinforces the discriminatory idea that child-rearing is not a man's natural domain.

Practical Examples of Measures:

- **Educational Reform:** Reviewing and revising national school curricula, textbooks, and teaching materials to eliminate stereotyped portrayals of gender. This includes featuring men in nurturing and caring professions (like nursing and early childhood education) and challenging historical narratives that exclusively glorify male aggression.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Funding media campaigns that portray positive and diverse models of masculinity. This could include advertisements and shows that depict fathers as competent and engaged caregivers, men openly discussing their mental health, and boys being encouraged in artistic and empathetic pursuits.
- **Media Responsibility Guidelines:** Working with media regulators and organisations to develop guidelines that discourage the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes, such as the automatic portrayal of men as perpetrators and women and children as the only victims in conflict reporting.
- **Training for Professionals:** Implementing mandatory training for police, judges, and social workers to counteract biases that may lead them to assume a man is the aggressor in a domestic dispute or that a father is less capable as a caregiver.

Clause (b): Family Education and Shared Responsibility

"To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of paternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing... of their children..."

Commentary: This clause aims to institutionalise the value of fatherhood and make shared parenting the societal norm. It frames paternity not just as a biological fact but as a

vital **social function** with benefits for children, families, and society as a whole. It insists that the responsibility for raising children is fundamentally shared between both parents.

Practical Examples of Measures:

- **Inclusive Antenatal and Postnatal Support:** Reforming healthcare services to treat fathers as integral partners from pregnancy onward. This includes actively inviting and engaging fathers in prenatal classes, birthing plans, and pediatric appointments, rather than treating them as accessories.
- **Co-Parenting Education Programs:** Establishing state-supported programs for separating or divorcing parents that teach effective co-parenting strategies and emphasize the child's right to a meaningful relationship with both parents, helping to prevent parental alienation.
- **School Engagement Policies:** Mandating that schools and childcare facilities have policies to include both parents in all communications, meetings, and emergency contact lists by default, countering the tendency to exclusively contact the mother.
- **Promoting Fathers' Groups:** Providing grants and support for community-based peer support networks where fathers can share experiences and learn from one another about parenting, relationships, and health in a supportive environment.

Article 8: Ensuring Equal Educational Opportunities

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against men in order to ensure to them equal rights with women in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of male student drop-out rates and the reversal of systemic male underachievement at all levels of education, and the organization of programmes for boys and men who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in learning environments that are supportive and encouraging for both sexes, free from pedagogical approaches, curricula, or disciplinary practices that may alienate, disadvantage, or be hostile to male students;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to support career planning, leadership mentoring, family and life skills;

(i) The right to non-discriminatory assessment criteria and discipline procedures.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article is one of the most comprehensive in the Convention, designed to address and eliminate systemic educational disadvantages faced by boys and men from pre-school through to higher and continuing education. Its purpose is twofold: first, to guarantee **equal access** to all educational resources, from curricula and scholarships to quality of teaching staff. Second, it mandates proactive measures to address specific areas where boys are falling behind, such as **higher dropout rates**, and to dismantle the **gender stereotypes** in the educational system that limit their life choices and potential. The ultimate goal is to create an educational environment that fosters the full development of all students by being equally responsive to the distinct challenges faced by both sexes.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Clauses (a) and (b): Equal Access to Resources:** These clauses form the foundation of educational equality, ensuring that boys have the same access as girls to every type of school, vocational program, curriculum, and examination. This is about removing all formal barriers to entry and participation.
- **Clause (c): The elimination of any stereotyped concept:** This is the cultural core of the article. It requires States to actively revise textbooks, school programs, and teaching methods to challenge limiting ideas about the roles or value of men. This includes combating stereotypes that discourage boys from pursuing careers in nurturing professions like teaching or healthcare, or from excelling in arts and humanities.
- **Clause (f): The reduction of male student drop-out rates:** This clause is a direct policy mandate to address a documented crisis in many countries. It acknowledges

that simply providing access is not enough if boys are leaving the system prematurely. It obligates States to research the causes and implement targeted programs to keep boys engaged in education.

- **Clause (i): The right to non-discriminatory assessment criteria and discipline procedures:** This addresses subtle but significant biases within the classroom. It targets the concern that boys may be graded or disciplined more harshly than girls for similar work or behavior, ensuring that evaluation and school rules are applied fairly and equitably.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Curriculum and Textbook Reform:** Launching a national initiative to review and revise educational materials at all levels to ensure they feature positive and diverse male role models, including men in caring and non-traditional professions, and eliminate gender stereotypes.
- **Targeted Support and Mentorship:** Creating and funding national programs aimed at reducing male dropout rates, which could include mentorship from successful men, alternative vocational training paths, and academic support tailored to boys who are struggling.
- **Incentive Programs for Underrepresented Fields:** Establishing scholarships, grants, and public awareness campaigns to encourage men to pursue higher education and careers in fields where they are significantly underrepresented, such as early childhood education, nursing, and social work.
- **Teacher Training on Gender Bias:** Implementing mandatory training for educators on recognizing and countering unconscious biases in grading and discipline. This

would also include training on teaching methods that effectively engage different learning styles common among boys.

- **Gender-Inclusive Gender Studies:** Ensuring that gender studies programs in schools and universities treat both sexes on an equal basis, examining the privileges and challenges faced by both men and women without promoting prejudice.
- **Equitable School-Based Health Services:** Providing school-based mental health resources that are designed to be accessible and appealing to boys, helping to overcome the social stigma that often prevents them from seeking help.

**Article 9: Ensuring Equal Employment Rights and Protections for Men,
Including Paternity Leave and Workplace Safety**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against men in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment, including the removal of application that intentionally or unintentionally discriminates against men.

(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, risk, hours worked, experience, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave; a right to access retirement benefits at the same age as women.

(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against men on the grounds of marriage or paternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures: (a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of paternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce paternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to men in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

(e) To provide workplaces free from demonstrating practices and workplace training that promotes harmful stereotyping and prejudice against men and boys.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article is designed to guarantee men's full and equal rights in the economic sphere, addressing discrimination throughout the entire employment lifecycle. Its purpose is to secure not only **equal opportunity** in hiring and promotion but also **substantive equality** in working conditions, pay, and benefits. It places a special focus on dismantling barriers related to fatherhood by mandating **paternity leave** and protecting against family-status discrimination. Furthermore, it uniquely acknowledges the physical risks disproportionately faced by men in the workforce by demanding enhanced **workplace safety** and protection in hazardous jobs.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Clause 1(d): The right to equal remuneration:** This clause expands the concept of "equal pay" to be more comprehensive. It demands equal treatment for work of equal **value, risk, hours worked, and experience**, providing a more nuanced framework that addresses the realities of different job types and the specific contributions and dangers men may face in their roles.
- **Clause 1(e): The right to social security... at the same age as women:** This is a direct and unambiguous clause targeting a clear form of legal discrimination present in some countries' pension systems. It affirms that a man's right to retirement and social support must be on a basis of complete parity with women.
- **Clause 1(f) & 2(d): The right to protection... and to provide special protection:** This dual focus on safety is a critical component. It acknowledges that men are

overrepresented in the most dangerous occupations and mandates that States must provide not only general health and safety protections but also **special, targeted measures** for work proven to be harmful.

- **Clause 2(b): To introduce paternity leave:** This is a foundational provision for modern, shared parenting. By mandating paid paternity leave, it structurally supports a father's right and responsibility to be involved in early child-rearing, challenges traditional gender roles, and ensures men do not have to choose between their career and their family.
- **Clause 2(e): To provide workplaces free from... harmful stereotyping:** This clause addresses the cultural environment of the workplace. It requires States to ensure that workplaces and associated training (such as diversity and inclusion programs) do not promote prejudice or negative stereotypes against men and boys, safeguarding their dignity and ensuring a respectful work environment.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Equal Parental Leave Legislation:** Enacting laws that mandate paid **paternity leave** that is equal in length, compensation, and job protection to maternity leave, establishing shared parenting as a national standard.
- **Workplace Safety Initiatives:** Creating and funding a national agency or program focused on improving safety standards and providing better health support in male-dominated, high-risk industries like construction, mining, fishing, and logging.
- **Retirement Age Equalization:** Passing immediate legislation to amend any national social security or pension laws that require men to work longer or reach a higher age than women to receive full retirement benefits.

- **Review of Hiring and DEI Practices:** Establishing government guidelines to ensure that corporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives do not result in hiring or promotion practices that discriminate against qualified male candidates. This includes reviewing training materials to eliminate anti-male prejudice.
- **Support for Working Parents:** Investing in and developing a national network of affordable and high-quality childcare facilities to support all working parents in balancing their family and work responsibilities.

Article 10: Ensuring Equal Access to Health Care and Domestic Violence

Support for Men

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against men in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, to provide access to appropriate health care services.

2. Health care offers services are both directly and indirectly non-stigmatising of men, treat them with the same human dignity as offered to women.

3. Health care services provided, and research conducted, are on an equitable and needs basis for men and women. Men's health needs are prioritised no less than women. Service barriers are identified and removed to enhance access.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph I of this article, States Parties shall ensure men have equal access to health services to reduce the disparity in mortality between men and women.

5. States Parties shall design, fund, and implement national suicide prevention strategies with a specific focus on the disproportionately high rates of suicide among men and boys, addressing the unique social and psychological factors that contribute to this crisis.

6. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against men in the area of domestic violence supports and responses, ensuring men and women are treated fairly and equally.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article directly confronts the critical, often-neglected areas of men's health and safety. Its purpose is to eliminate systemic discrimination in two key fields: **healthcare access** and **domestic violence support**. It mandates that States move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach to wellbeing and actively create healthcare systems that are non-stigmatizing and responsive to the specific needs of men. Crucially, it obligates States to tackle the mortality gap between men and women and to provide fair and equal protection and support for male victims of domestic violence, challenging the societal blind spot that often leaves them without recourse.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Paragraph 2: Health care offers... are both directly and indirectly non-stigmatising:** This clause goes beyond simply providing services. It requires that the *culture* of healthcare be transformed to treat men with the same dignity as women. This addresses the significant barrier created by social expectations of male stoicism, which often prevents men from seeking help, particularly for mental health issues.
- **Paragraph 3: Health care services provided, and research conducted, are on an equitable and needs basis:** This is a demand for resource parity. It requires that funding for medical research and public health services be allocated based on the actual health needs and outcomes of both men and women, ensuring that men's health is not a lower priority.
- **Paragraph 4: Ensure men have equal access to health services to reduce the disparity in mortality.** This provides a clear, outcome-focused objective. It obligates States to implement targeted health strategies aimed specifically at closing the life

expectancy gap between men and women, acknowledging it as a fundamental issue of equality.

- **Paragraph 6: eliminate discrimination against men in the area of domestic violence supports:** This is a groundbreaking clause that legally recognises men as potential victims of domestic violence who are deserving of equal support. It requires States to ensure police, courts, and social services treat all victims fairly, dismantling the biased assumption that men can only be perpetrators.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **National Men's Health Strategy:** Creating and funding a comprehensive national health policy focused on addressing the leading causes of premature death in men, with specific targets for reducing suicide rates and deaths from heart disease.
- **Equitable Research Funding:** Mandating that government medical research grants be allocated equitably to address major male-specific health issues like prostate and testicular cancer at levels commensurate with their impact.
- **Accessible Mental Health Services:** Establishing and funding mental health services and clinics specifically designed to be accessible and non-stigmatizing for men, including targeted suicide prevention programs.
- **Equal Access to Domestic Violence Shelters:** Passing legislation that requires all state-funded domestic violence services to provide equal and accessible shelter and support for male victims, or to fund dedicated services for men.
- **Training for Law Enforcement and Judiciary:** Implementing mandatory training for police officers, judges, and social workers to ensure they recognize and respond appropriately and without bias to male victims of domestic violence.

Article 11: Ensuring the Rights and Social Integration of Men in Crisis and Social Isolation

1. States Parties shall recognize the particular vulnerabilities faced by men experiencing crisis, social isolation, and marginalization, including those affected by homelessness, displacement, long-term unemployment, widowhood, and other forms of social fragmentation.
2. States shall commit to collecting and publishing sex-disaggregated data on these issues to ensure the scale of these male-prevalent problems is visible and addressed by public policy.
3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against men in these situations and to ensure, on a basis of equality, that they have access to necessary support and opportunities for social reintegration. In particular, States shall ensure such men have the right:
 4. (a) To have access to adequate crisis support, including a sufficient and equitably funded network of emergency housing and shelters for single men; (b) To benefit from targeted community and social integration programs, such as mentorship schemes and peer support networks, designed to combat isolation and foster a sense of belonging; (c) The right to not be discriminated against on the basis of sex for any public services, including social welfare programs, unemployment benefits, public housing, disaster relief, and other state-provided safety nets. States Parties shall ensure that eligibility criteria, levels of support, and the design of such services are equitable and do not, by intent or effect, neglect the needs of or create barriers for men; (d) To access tailored and non-stigmatizing public services, particularly in the areas of mental health, suicide prevention, addiction treatment, and vocational retraining; (e) To receive equitable consideration and support in situations of

natural disaster, conflict, or other emergencies, ensuring humanitarian aid is distributed according to need, without gender-based neglect and challenging cultural paradigms that treat male lives as more expendable.

5. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including public education campaigns, to combat social stereotypes and stigma against men experiencing homelessness, unemployment, or social isolation, and to promote a culture that values their wellbeing and facilitates their full participation in society.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article addresses the acute and often overlooked vulnerabilities of men who exist on the margins of society, either through sudden crisis or chronic social isolation. Its purpose is to make the invisible struggles of homeless men, displaced men, and socially fragmented men a formal human rights concern. It obligates States to move beyond neglect by actively *identifying the scale of these problems through data*, ensuring *equitable access to crisis support systems* like shelters, and fostering *social reintegration* through community-based programs. Ultimately, it aims to dismantle both the practical barriers and the social stigma that prevent marginalized men from receiving support and re-engaging with society.

Recognizing Vulnerabilities and Collecting Data

The foundational clauses of this article legally recognize that men face specific, often severe, challenges related to homelessness, displacement, and social isolation. The mandate to collect and publish *sex-disaggregated data* is a crucial tool to combat official ignorance and public indifference. It forces the state to acknowledge the reality that men constitute a large majority of the homeless population and to make this disparity a basis for policy action.

Guaranteeing Specific Rights

The article then outlines the practical, rights-based measures required to address these vulnerabilities:

- **Right to Crisis Support:** This directly addresses the critical shortage of *emergency housing and shelters for single men*, demanding that this basic safety net be equitably funded and sufficient.

- **Right to Social Integration:** This focuses on proactive, long-term solutions by promoting programs like mentorship or peer support, recognizing that isolation is a root cause of many crises.
- **Right to Non-Discriminatory Public Services:** Crucially, this extends beyond acute crisis support to guarantee equal access to *all state-provided safety nets*. By including social welfare, unemployment benefits, and public housing, it obligates the State to ensure its general support systems are designed and implemented equitably.
- **Right to Tailored Services and Equitable Aid:** This ensures that public services, especially *mental health and addiction treatment*, are tailored to be accessible and effective for this demographic. It is also a vital provision for emergency situations, challenging the "women and children first" paradigm to ensure that humanitarian aid in disasters is distributed based on *need, not gender*. This requires moving past the stereotype of male disposability to a principle of equal human value in all crisis response protocols.

Combating Social Stereotypes and Stigma

The final clause addresses the cultural dimension of the problem. It recognizes that men experiencing homelessness or unemployment are often stigmatized as failures or dangers. The article requires States to undertake *public education campaigns* to challenge these harmful prejudices, fostering a more compassionate and supportive society that views these men as citizens in need of help, not judgment.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **National Homelessness Strategy:** Developing and funding a national strategy with a specific focus on the causes and solutions for male homelessness, informed by the collected sex-disaggregated data.
- **Equitable Shelter Funding:** Enacting legislation that mandates government funding for crisis accommodation be allocated proportionally to the demographic needs of the homeless population, ensuring an adequate supply of shelter beds for single men.
- **Support for Community Initiatives:** Providing grants and public support for community-based organizations like the Men's Shed movement, mentorship programs for at-risk young men, and support groups for widowers and unemployed men to combat social isolation directly.
- **Humanitarian Aid Reform:** Amending national disaster response protocols and international aid policies to ensure that needs assessments are gender-inclusive and that aid distribution is based on vulnerability, not on stereotypical assumptions about who needs protection.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launching media campaigns that portray the human stories of homeless and isolated men, aiming to increase public empathy and challenge the stereotypes that create barriers to them receiving help.

**Article 12: Ensuring Full Development and Equal Rights for Men Across All
Sectors**

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures to identify, acknowledge, and address, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of men, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with women.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

Having addressed specific domains of discrimination in the preceding articles, this article serves as the **proactive and constructive core of the Convention**. Its purpose is to obligate States to move beyond simply removing barriers and to actively create the conditions necessary for men's full development and advancement across all sectors. It requires a holistic approach, ensuring that all societal structures are assessed and shaped to support men in reaching their full potential and enjoying their human rights in practice, not just in theory.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **"in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields":**
This phrase highlights the comprehensive scope of the article. It mandates that States look beyond legal frameworks to address the real-world conditions that affect men's lives and opportunities.
- **"identify, acknowledge, and address":** This creates a clear, three-step obligation. States cannot remain passive; they must first actively research and collect data to identify areas of male disadvantage, then formally acknowledge these issues in public policy, and finally, take concrete action to address them.
- **"ensure the full development and advancement of men":** This is the ultimate goal. It is not merely about achieving statistical parity but about fostering an environment where men can develop intellectually, emotionally, and socially, enabling them to contribute fully to society and lead fulfilling lives.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Economic Development:** Establishing vocational training and retraining programs to help men transition out of declining industries or enter fields where they are underrepresented, such as healthcare and early childhood education.
- **Social Advancement:** Funding and promoting community-based initiatives, such as mentorship programs for boys without father figures or peer support networks for men facing social isolation, unemployment, or widowhood.
- **Cultural Development:** Supporting public media campaigns and educational programs that present positive, diverse, and nuanced portrayals of masculinity, challenging restrictive stereotypes that can limit men's emotional expression and life choices.
- **Political Action:** Requiring government departments of health, education, and justice to develop and publish specific strategies and targets for improving male outcomes in areas where they lag, such as life expectancy, educational attainment, and suicide rates.

**Article 13: Temporary Special Measures for Gender Equality and Protection of
Paternal Rights.**

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting paternal rights shall not be considered discriminatory.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article provides the legal and policy framework for States to take **proactive steps** to correct historical and systemic disadvantages faced by men and boys. It serves two distinct but related functions:

1. It authorises **temporary affirmative action** measures to accelerate the achievement of *de facto* (actual, in-practice) equality for men in areas where they lag behind.
2. It affirms that special measures designed to **protect and secure paternal rights** are fundamental and not discriminatory.

This article is crucial because it allows states to move beyond simply banning discrimination and actively work to create a level playing field.

Breakdown and Commentary

Clause 1: Temporary Special Measures for Accelerating Equality

"Adoption by States Parties of **temporary special measures** aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality... shall not be considered discrimination... these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved."

Commentary: This clause is the mechanism for affirmative action. It acknowledges that sometimes, treating everyone "identically" is not enough to achieve genuine equality if one group is starting from a significant disadvantage.

- **"Temporary Special Measures":** These are targeted policies designed to give a temporary boost to men in specific areas where they are underrepresented or

disadvantaged. The key word is **temporary**. They are not meant to be permanent fixtures but are tools to be used until a fair balance is achieved.

- **"De Facto Equality"**: This refers to equality in reality, not just in law (*de jure*). For example, a country might have laws giving men and women equal rights to university education (*de jure* equality), but if men's university enrollment is drastically lower, there is no *de facto* equality.

Practical Examples of Temporary Measures:

- **Education**: Launching targeted scholarship programs, mentorship schemes, or recruitment campaigns to encourage men and boys to enter fields where they are significantly underrepresented, such as primary school teaching, nursing, social work, or psychology. These programs would be phased out once male participation reaches a balanced level.
- **Mental Health**: Implementing a time-limited, high-funding national campaign specifically focused on destigmatising mental health issues for men and connecting them with services to urgently address the disproportionately high male suicide rate.
- **Employment**: Creating pilot programs that offer incentives for companies to hire and train men for roles in caregiving sectors.

Clause 2: Special Measures for Protecting Paternal Rights

"Adoption by States Parties of special measures... aimed at **protecting paternal rights** shall not be considered discriminatory."

Commentary: This clause is distinct from the first because it addresses a fundamental right rather than a temporary disparity. The protection of a father's relationship

with his child is not a "temporary" goal but a permanent one. These measures are designed to correct systemic biases that often treat fathers as secondary or "less essential" parents.

Practical Examples of Measures to Protect Paternal Rights:

- **Family Law Reform:** Legislating a **rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting** in all child custody cases. This shifts the legal starting point from a "primary caregiver" model (which often defaults to the mother) to one that values both parents' involvement equally from the outset.
- **Streamlined Paternity Establishment:** Creating simple, non-adversarial legal processes for unmarried fathers to be formally and immediately recognised as a child's legal parent with full rights and responsibilities, such as by signing the birth certificate with the mother's consent.
- **Parental Alienation Laws:** Enacting specific legislation that formally defines and recognizes parental alienation as a form of psychological child abuse and a critical factor in determining the best interests of the child during custody disputes.
- **Equal Paternity Leave:** Mandating that paid paternity leave be equal in length and compensation to maternity leave, structurally reinforcing the equal importance of a father's role in early child development.

Article 14: Eliminating Discrimination in Political and Public Life

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against men in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to men, on equal terms with women, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article guarantees men's fundamental right to be active and equal participants in the civic and political governance of their country. Its purpose is to ensure that their voices, perspectives, and concerns are represented at all levels of decision-making, from local councils to national government. While overt legal barriers to men's participation are rare in most nations, this article addresses the more subtle social or institutional biases that may discourage their engagement and affirms their right to contribute to the formulation of public policy.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **"eliminate discrimination against men in the political and public life"**: This clause recognizes that discrimination can be subtle. It can include societal prejudice against men who advocate for male-specific issues or the systemic exclusion of men's perspectives from policy discussions on topics like family, health, and education.
- **"participate in the formulation of government policy"**: This is a critical element. It means that men's experiences must be considered when governments create laws and policies. It ensures that issues disproportionately affecting men (e.g., workplace fatalities, homelessness, suicide) are not overlooked in the public agenda.
- **"participate in non-governmental organizations and associations"**: This protects the freedom of association and is vital for grassroots advocacy. It ensures that men's rights organizations and community support groups can form, operate, and contribute to public discourse without facing prejudice or undue restrictions. This is especially important given the current lack of official governmental bodies focused on men's rights.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Inclusive Policy Consultations:** Mandating that government bodies, when formulating policy on family law, healthcare, and education, must actively consult with and consider submissions from a diverse range of stakeholders, including fathers' rights groups and men's health organizations.
- **Protecting Civil Society:** Upholding the right of non-governmental organizations that advocate for the welfare and rights of men and boys to receive fair consideration for public funding and to participate freely in public debate.
- **Balanced Representation on Public Bodies:** Ensuring that appointment processes for governmental boards, commissions, and advisory committees are free from gender bias and that the bodies themselves reflect a diversity of perspectives, including those pertinent to men's issues.
- **Freedom of Political Expression:** Protecting the right of male citizens and public figures to raise awareness about and advocate for issues affecting men and boys without facing institutional censure or social stigmatization.

**Article 15: Ensuring Equal Representation and Participation of Men in
International Organizations to Combat Discrimination**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to men, on equal terms with women and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their interests by Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations in challenging discrimination against men and boys.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article addresses the critical issue of **global representation**. Its purpose is to ensure that men's voices and perspectives are included in international forums where human rights and gender equality are debated and defined. It recognizes that without dedicated representation, men's specific vulnerabilities and experiences of discrimination risk being overlooked or ignored by international bodies. This article obligates States to ensure men have the same opportunity as women to represent their government's interests and to participate directly in the work of international organizations that are shaping global norms and policies on gender.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **"ensure to men, on equal terms with women"**: This establishes the core principle of parity. It asserts that delegations to international bodies and participation in global human rights work should not be dominated by one gender's perspective.
- **"the opportunity to represent their interests by Governments at the international level"**: This clause focuses on official government representation. It means that when countries send delegates to the United Nations or other international conferences on human rights, they must ensure that men are given a fair opportunity to be part of these delegations, preventing a situation where men's issues are absent from the discussion.
- **"participate in the work of international organizations"**: This broadens the scope beyond official government roles to include involvement in the operational work of organizations like UN Women, the World Health Organization, or various human rights committees.

- **"in challenging discrimination against men and boys"**: This phrase is key as it gives a specific mandate to this representation. It's not just about presence, but about actively participating in the specific work of identifying and combating the forms of discrimination that affect males. This directly addresses the current institutional void where no UN body is specifically dedicated to the rights of men.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Establishing a UN Body for Men**: Actively lobbying for and supporting the creation of a United Nations entity, analogous to UN Women, that is dedicated to researching and promoting the rights and wellbeing of men and boys. Such a body would provide the institutional platform necessary for the work described in this article.
- **Balanced Delegations**: Adopting national policies that require government delegations to international human rights conferences and committees to be gender-balanced, ensuring that perspectives on men's issues are included in discussions and policy-making.
- **Funding and Supporting Male Advocacy**: Providing government funding and support for non-governmental organizations that advocate for men's rights on the international stage, enabling them to participate in UN sessions and contribute to reports from international human rights bodies.
- **Nominating Men to Human Rights Committees**: Proactively nominating qualified male candidates to serve on international human rights treaty bodies and committees, ensuring that the bodies tasked with interpreting and enforcing international law have a balanced understanding of gender-based discrimination.

**Article 16: Ensuring Equal Nationality Rights for Men and Women, Including
Rights Related to Marriage and Children**

1. States Parties shall grant men equal rights with women to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the wife during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the husband, render him stateless or force upon him the nationality of the wife.

2. States Parties shall grant men equal rights with women with respect to the nationality of their children.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

This article's purpose is to establish **absolute equality between men and women in all matters of nationality and citizenship**. It ensures that a man's citizenship status is independent and cannot be negatively affected by marriage to a foreign national. Critically, it also guarantees a father's equal right to confer his nationality upon his children. This article dismantles discriminatory laws that have historically privileged one parent's citizenship over the other, affirming that nationality is a fundamental right for all individuals, regardless of their sex or marital status.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Clause 1: "States Parties shall grant men equal rights with women to acquire, change or retain their nationality."**
 - **Commentary:** This clause establishes the core principle of individual and autonomous nationality rights. It directly targets laws where a man's citizenship could be jeopardised or automatically changed upon marrying a foreign spouse. It protects men from being rendered stateless or forced to adopt their wife's nationality against their will, securing their identity as independent citizens.
- **Clause 2: "States Parties shall grant men equal rights with women with respect to the nationality of their children."**
 - **Commentary:** This is a crucial provision for ensuring paternal rights and preventing statelessness in children. It combats laws in some countries that make it more difficult for fathers than for mothers to pass on their citizenship,

particularly to children born abroad or out of wedlock. It affirms that a father's link to his child is as fundamental as a mother's in determining the child's national identity.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Equal Citizenship Transfer:** Amending nationality laws to ensure that fathers can transmit their citizenship to their children born abroad under the exact same conditions as mothers.
- **Rights of Unmarried Fathers:** Enacting legislation that automatically grants unmarried fathers the same right as mothers to confer nationality upon their children, removing any discriminatory administrative or legal hurdles.
- **Fair Spousal Citizenship:** Reforming immigration and naturalization laws to ensure that the process for a foreign spouse to acquire citizenship is identical, regardless of whether they are married to a male or female citizen.
- **Equal Adoption Rights:** Guaranteeing in law that single male adopters have the same right as single female adopters to pass their nationality on to internationally adopted children.
- **Statelessness Prevention:** Implementing legal frameworks that explicitly grant children the right to acquire their father's nationality if they would otherwise be stateless, ensuring this protection is equal to that provided through the mother.

Article 17: Eliminating Institutional and Social Prejudice Against Men and Boys

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to identify and eliminate social prejudice against men and boys where it is generated and reinforced by public institutions and societal discourse.

To this end, States Parties shall undertake, in particular:

(a) To encourage all forms of media to portray a fair, balanced, and diverse representation of men and boys, and to actively counter narratives that frame men and boys as inherently predatory, aggressive, or untrustworthy, such as by disproportionately identifying the gender of male refugees to instill fear. States Parties shall take measures to combat practices that devalue male life by rendering male victims invisible, such as the common reference to civilian casualties as exclusively "women and children," and the use of dehumanizing terms like "fighting-age males" which work to obscure the deaths of civilian males, and instead promote language that recognizes the equal humanity of all victims.

(b) To ensure that educational curricula and academic disciplines, including gender studies, treat both sexes on an equal basis, examining the respective challenges and privileges of each without promoting views that encourage prejudice against men and boys.

(c) To review government policies, communications, and public awareness campaigns to identify and reform any language or underlying assumptions that are based on harmful stereotypes or that perpetuate prejudice against men.

Supplementary material

Purpose of the Article

As a concluding mandate, this article targets the **institutional sources of the prejudices** that fuel many of the specific forms of discrimination detailed throughout this Declaration. While other articles address discriminatory acts and outcomes, this article confronts the powerful institutions—media, academia, and government itself—that create, legitimize, and perpetuate the harmful stereotypes at the root of the problem.

Breakdown and Commentary

- **Paragraph 1: Identifying and Eliminating Prejudice:** This clause establishes a state's duty to look beyond individual biases and focus on prejudice as a systemic issue embedded in public institutions and discourse. It shifts the responsibility from simply reacting to prejudice to actively dismantling the systems that perpetuate it.
- **Paragraph 2(a): Media Representation:** This directly addresses the media's powerful role in shaping social attitudes. It calls for an end to one-dimensional portrayals of men and specifically targets the practice of rendering male victims invisible, such as by reporting civilian casualties as only "women and children". This practice is identified not as a mere oversight but as a form of prejudice that devalues male life.
- **Paragraph 2(b): Academic and Educational Fairness:** This clause addresses prejudice within the very institutions meant to foster objective knowledge. It requires that educational curricula, especially in fields like gender studies, offer a balanced examination of the issues facing both sexes. The goal is to ensure that academia serves as a tool for understanding, not as a source of politically motivated prejudice against any group.

- **Paragraph 2(c): Government Accountability:** This turns the critical lens onto the State itself. It obligates the government to conduct an internal audit of its own policies, public statements, and campaigns. It demands the removal of any language or assumptions based on harmful stereotypes, ensuring that the government leads by example in promoting fair and unbiased treatment for all its citizens.

Practical Examples of Measures

- **Media Responsibility Guidelines:** Developing or working with media regulators to establish guidelines that promote balanced gender portrayals and discourage the erasure of male victims in reporting on crises, conflict, and crime.
- **Curriculum Review for Educational Equity:** Establishing independent oversight bodies or university ombudsman roles tasked with reviewing educational curricula, particularly in publicly funded institutions, to ensure they are free from gender-based prejudice and adhere to principles of scholarly objectivity.
- **Government Communications Audit:** Mandating a regular "gender bias audit" of all government publications, websites, and public health campaigns to identify and replace stereotypical language and imagery with inclusive, gender-neutral content.
- **Funding for Diverse Media Content:** Creating public grants or incentives for film, television, and other media projects that present diverse, positive, and nuanced portrayals of men and boys, challenging traditional and harmful stereotypes.