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**Support for the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
Discrimination Against Women**

The Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) has led several efforts to ensure that women and girls (inclusive of transgender, gender nonbinary, and anyone female identifying) have equal access and opportunity across the County. From the establishment of the County Commission for Women in 1975, to the creation of the County Women and Girls Initiative (WGI) in 2016, the Board has taken tangible actions using an intersectional lens to ensure the County creates a foundation of equity as an employer, service provider, and community and business partner.

Additionally, over the past year, the Board has adopted several groundbreaking motions that positively impact gender equity, even while the motions were not singularly focused on gender. For example, the outcomes of the Youth Justice Workgroup include recommendations to address the school-to-prison pipeline, which heavily impacts girls of color, and girls with involvement in the foster and child welfare systems. The Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative emphasizes racism as a public health issue, recognizing that within the County, Black women face disparities in healthcare and negative outcomes such as higher rates of infant mortality compared to other groups.

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Similarly, the Human Relations Commission (HRC) organizes against hate acts, which are reported overwhelmingly by women, to 211 via the County's *L.A. vs Hate* program. The outcomes of each of these efforts will have real and immediate effects for women, especially marginalized women, across the County.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and entered into force in 1981. Since then, it has been ratified by more than 180 countries worldwide. The CEDAW provides a universal definition of "discrimination against women," stating that it is "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." More broadly, the CEDAW brings attention to a range of issues concerning the human rights of women, and sets out a comprehensive framework for challenging the various forces that have created and sustained gender inequality within political, cultural, social, economic, and family life.

Nations that ratify the CEDAW are mandated to condemn all forms of discrimination against women, and to ensure equality for women in the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural arenas. While the United States signed the CEDAW in 1980, it is among only six United Nations member states worldwide that have not yet ratified the treaty, and it is one of only two countries that have signed but not ratified the CEDAW. While the County has not formally adopted the CEDAW, much of the County's ongoing work, and the work of the WGI, aligns with the CEDAW. Here are only a few

examples:

- The recent town halls hosted by the WGI around the impacts of COVID-19 on women and girls align with Article 7, which seeks to encourage women's participation in political and public life.
- The County report “Building Bridges: How Los Angeles County Came Together to Support Children and Youth Impacted by Commercial Sexual Exploitation,” published on November 23, 2020, highlights the groundbreaking work the County has done over the past decade to support youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, which directly aligns with Article 6, aimed at taking appropriate measures to suppress all forms of trafficking and exploitation of women.
- The County’s long-standing commitment to a diverse workforce and creation of innovative programs to provide job opportunities for women and girls aligns with Article 11, which calls for all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment and recognizes the right to work as a human right. In partnership with the WGI, the County created a guide and subsequent training around promoting gender equity in recruitment and hiring, found [here](#), and will continue to administer an Employee Climate Survey every two years, with a specific emphasis on gender equity in the workplace.

A summary overview of each of the CEDAW articles can be found through this [link](#).

While the CEDAW was initially intended for adoption and implementation by nations, many local entities have followed suit. *Cities for CEDAW*, a campaign that launched in 2014, is a coalition of local governments that have passed or are working to

pass CEDAW ordinances or resolutions in their local jurisdictions. More broadly, *Cities for CEDAW* seeks to enhance local efforts to improve the human rights of women and girls. The City and County of San Francisco were the first in California to pass an ordinance adopting the principles of the CEDAW in 1998, and since then a handful of other cities and counties in the state and nation have joined, including the City of Los Angeles. If the County were to follow suit, it would become the largest local entity in the United States to have adopted the principles of the CEDAW.

There is a continuing need for the County to protect the human rights of women, and to therefore locally support the principles of the CEDAW. Adoption of the CEDAW principles at the County level will help promote equity in health care, economic development, educational opportunities, and employment for women. As the County's commitments to women and girls' equity continues to progress and expand, now is the time for the County to formally integrate the CEDAW principles into our local law and policy.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Affirm and declare that Los Angeles County recognizes that the international adoption and ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has resulted in significant advancement for women and girls around the world, including access to education; measures taken to combat sex slavery, domestic violence, and trafficking of women and girls; improved health care services, including lifesaving care during pregnancy and childbirth; and economic advances, including securing loans and obtaining the right to own or inherit property;

2. Recognize, affirm, and declare that the principles espoused in the CEDAW are fully consistent with Los Angeles County's values and actions, including the County's demonstrable commitment to ending inequitable gender outcomes and improving the quality of life for women and girls in the County;
3. Recognize, affirm and declare that the County supports the CEDAW principles;
4. Instruct County Counsel, in consultation with the Women and Girls Initiative, the Human Relations Commission, the Commission for Women, and other County partners as County Counsel deems necessary, to research the feasibility of amending the County Code to adopt the operative principles of the CEDAW, and report back, in writing, to the Board within 90 days.

S:TO/Support for the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women