

The principal international legal instrument designed to protect the rights of women is the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, and to date has been ratified by 96 countries including Canada, where the Convention entered into force in January 1982.

Canada is also seeking to improve the status of women by integrating women in the process of development. The Canadian International Development Agency has taken the lead in this area. As well, Canada is the second largest contributor to the UN Development Fund for Women, which serves as both a source of policy advice on women's issues within the UN system and as a funding agent for innovative projects designed to meet the needs of women.