



October 30, 2023

Janica Puisto
Human Rights Officer
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Dear Ms. Puisto,

On behalf of the International Human Rights Clinic of Santa Clara University School of Law (SCU IHRC), please find a joint response to your [request for input](#) under Human Rights Council resolution 51/12 on Local Government and Human Rights.

This submission highlights the following actions taken by local city and county governments in and within various counties of California to promote and protect human rights:

1. **Adoption of a CEDAW Ordinance** in Santa Clara County, California, USA in May 2023, following the issuance of gender equity guidance by the Santa Clara County CEDAW Task Force in November 2021, through its final report and recommendations to ensure the application of a gender and human rights lens throughout County operations.
2. **Adoption of a CEDAW Ordinance** in San Diego County, California, USA in June 2022.
3. **Adoption of a CEDAW Ordinance** in Los Angeles County, California, USA in November 2021.
4. **Adoption of a CEDAW Ordinance in the City of San Jose** in Santa Clara County, California, USA in December 2017.
5. Final Report of the **California Task Force on Reparations for Slavery**, providing recommendations for a comprehensive set of measures that the State of California should undertake, submitted in July 2023.

With regard to the first item, the International Human Rights Clinic at Santa Clara University provided input and technical support to promote the adoption of Santa Clara County's CEDAW ordinance, in collaboration with the County's Board of Supervisors, Office of Women's Policy, and Commission on the Status of Women.

With regard to the other items, the Clinic has received information directly from the local government officials carrying out these initiatives, as provided herein. We have also had the privilege of witnessing a growing and fruitful exchange of information among jurisdictions that have adopted CEDAW ordinances and believe that this emerging practice will further contribute



to the effective and innovative implementation of international human rights norms by local government entities.

In all cases, we commend the leadership of these institutions in promoting the incorporation of international human rights standards into their operations and recognize the sustained need for enhanced capacity building and additional guidance to support local governments in continuing to undertake and effectively implement these important initiatives. We appreciate the opportunity to share these recent developments with the Office of the High Commissioner.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "FR", is written over the text "In solidarity,".

Francisco J. Rivera Juaristi
Director, International Human Rights Clinic
Associate Clinical Professor, School of Law
Santa Clara University

Attachments: (1) Santa Clara County CEDAW Ordinance, (2) Santa Clara County Board Policy on CEDAW Principles, (3) Santa Clara County CEDAW Ordinance Implementation Plan, (4) Santa Clara County CEDAW Task Force Combined Final Reports, (5) Los Angeles County CEDAW Ordinance, (6) San Diego County CEDAW Ordinance, (7) City of San Jose CEDAW Ordinance, and (8) California Task Force on Reparations for Slavery Final Report to the California State Legislature.

Submission regarding the “Call for Inputs: UN Human Rights Council Resolution 51/2 on Local Government and Human Rights”

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Submitted on October 30, 2023

I. Introduction

In its resolution 51/12 on Local Government and Human Rights, the Human Rights Council asked the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to convene an expert meeting and prepare a report on “enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work.”¹ In its [call for inputs](#),² OHCHR requested civil society to submit information on initiatives taken to incorporate human rights in local government administration.

This submission seeks to provide information about several recent, promising initiatives carried out by local governments in California, the United States. The following information is a summary of actions taken by and between civil society organizations, academic institutions, and local city and county governments in and within Santa Clara County (SCC), San Diego County, Los Angeles County, and the City of San Jose in California, the United States, to incorporate human rights into local governance. These examples focus primarily on local government efforts to incorporate and implement the principles of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), with the exception of the brief update provided on the final recommendations of the California Task Force on Reparations for Slavery.

The United States is one of only a few countries in the world that have not ratified CEDAW.³ In light of the federal government’s failure to ratify CEDAW, local governments and civil society have promoted local measures aimed at incorporating CEDAW into local law and practice. The ensuing “[Cities for CEDAW](#)” movement, a grassroots effort that provides resources to local women’s organizations and municipalities to incorporate the treaty within their city, county or state, is an important component of a broader campaign that seeks local recognition and implementation of international human rights law in the U.S.⁴ [There are approximately](#) 57 cities and counties in the U.S. that have adopted CEDAW resolutions or proclamations, and, at the time of this writing, at least 15 have adopted measures that have the force of local law, such as ordinances.⁵

¹ UN Human Rights Council, Resolution 51/12, “Local government and human rights,” A/HRC/RES/51/12 (Oct. 6, 2022).

² *Id.*, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Call for Inputs on Human Rights Council Resolution 51/12, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2023/call-inputs-human-rights-council-resolution-5112-local-government-and-human>.

³ United Nations, Ratification Status of CEDAW, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Treaty=CEDAW&Lang=en; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw>.

⁴ Cities for CEDAW, Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, <http://citiesforcedaw.org/>.

⁵ *Id.*, Cities for CEDAW, Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, <https://citiesforcedaw.org/cedaw-cities/#open>.



Additionally, the [CEDAW Challenge Team](#) has worked on incorporating CEDAW into local governance by asking local government officials to pledge their support for CEDAW and gender equity within their jurisdictions.⁶ These efforts have built momentum to adopt measures aimed at incorporating and implementing CEDAW principles at the local government level.⁷ Although not discussed in this report, it is important to note that the [City and County of San Francisco](#)⁸ and the [City of Berkeley](#)⁹ have adopted CEDAW measures and taken strides to implement CEDAW principles as well. The following examples of Santa Clara County, San Diego County, LA County, and the City of San Jose, highlight some of the most recent work done in California to this end.

In addition to the county- and city-level CEDAW measures discussed in this submission, it is worth noting that the California state legislature has also been considering the adoption of a [state law](#) to implement CEDAW principles at the state level.¹⁰ However, California advocates have identified several potential barriers to the passage of this CEDAW bill. These challenges, in addition to those inherent in the local CEDAW implementation measures described below, suggest that resources from the UN, such as a roster of gender equity consultants; examples of best practices, success stories, and localized action plans from other jurisdictions; or materials that adapt the guidance provided by the CEDAW Committee in its General Recommendations to advise local governments on CEDAW implementation and its guiding principles, would be useful to further support this work in California and other local jurisdictions worldwide.

II. Adoption of a CEDAW Ordinance in Santa Clara County

Santa Clara County (SCC) recently adopted an ordinance to implement CEDAW in its operations, in fulfillment of an ongoing commitment to local implementation of human rights and promotion of gender equity.¹¹ As described herein, adoption of the CEDAW ordinance represents the most recent step in a years-long effort to accomplish these goals. Accordingly, this section provides a brief summary of SCC's efforts leading up to the adoption of the ordinance, as well as an overview of the ordinance itself and updated information on the implementation process thus far.

⁶ SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Bremau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ch. 33, sec. 33A.3 (Apr. 1998). Note that San Francisco was the first local jurisdiction in the United States to adopt a CEDAW ordinance.

⁹ CITY OF BERKELEY, CAL., MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 13 DIVISION 2 ch 13.20, sec. 13.20.040 (2012).

¹⁰ California Assembly Bill 549 (May 2023, held under submission), <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/AB549/id/2733906>.

¹¹ Santa Clara County CEDAW Ordinance (May 2023), Attached as Annex 1.

SCC is located in the Bay Area of California, south of San Francisco, and is known as the home of Silicon Valley. The county is one of the most populous in the United States, with an estimated population of almost 2 million.¹² In addition to the actions highlighted below, SCC has also demonstrated its leadership as a human rights county by becoming the first county in the United States to establish an Office of LGBTQ Affairs, in addition to establishing an Office of Disability Affairs; Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention; Office of Labor Standards Enforcement; Office of Immigrant Relations; Office of Women's Policy; a dedicated Language Access Unit; and an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging; all organized within the Division of Equity and Social Justice. It was also one of the first local jurisdictions in the U.S. to pass a sanctuary policy limiting cooperation between County law enforcement and federal immigration authorities, and it has recently launched a new Office of Children and Families Policy.

In December 2017, SCC adopted a temporary CEDAW Ordinance¹³ as a result of a nearly three-year process that included input and participation from multiple civil society, academia, and government stakeholders.¹⁴ The ordinance authorized the creation of a CEDAW Task Force with a three-year mandate¹⁵ to review County programs and services and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors with the goal of ensuring that the County utilizes a gender and human rights lens throughout its operations.

The CEDAW Task Force made the following priority recommendations¹⁶:

- Housing: “Create affordable, accessible, and safe housing solutions for women, emphasizing measures to address homelessness as a result of gender-based violence.”¹⁷
- Economic and Security Development: “Gender equity and economic self-sufficiency for women and girls by 2030.”¹⁸
- Justice Involved Women and Girls: “Zero incarceration for girls and gender expansive youth by 2024.”¹⁹
- Gender-Based Violence: “Ensure a continuum of culturally responsive policies, services and support that prioritize survivors’ wellbeing from crisis to long-term sustainability.”²⁰

¹² United States Census Bureau, Quick Facts: Santa Clara County, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/santaclaracountycalifornia/PST045222>.

¹³ Santa Clara County 2017 CEDAW Ordinance, <http://sccgov.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=4&ID=167981>.

¹⁴ One major impetus for this process was the provision of information about CEDAW and the possibility of local measures to implement the treaty’s core principles in local government operations to key actors within the County government. In this case, the SCU IHRC provided this information, but this example indicates the value of these kinds of capacity-building resources for the promotion of local government implementation of human rights.

¹⁵ Note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CEDAW Task Force was not able to complete the full scope of work initially envisioned, including the development of recommendations on gender equity in healthcare. SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Breneau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023).

¹⁶ Compiled report of Santa Clara County CEDAW Task Force Recommendations, Annex 4.

¹⁷ Santa Clara County CEDAW Task Force Priority Recommendations, pg. 3.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

- Women in Leadership:
 - “Provide and promote culturally relevant educational workshops, trainings, and mentoring to women and girls, who are historically underrepresented in civic leadership, in an effort to cultivate a pipeline for women and girls to secure leadership positions in government, nonprofit, education, and business sectors.”²¹
 - “Launch a culturally relevant countywide awareness campaign directed to the local business sector by promoting partnership with business and community organizations and highlighting the benefits of pay equity and the contribution of women in leadership roles in business.”²²

These recommendations were the impetus for the County to reconsider a more permanent CEDAW commitment.²³ Once the Task Force concluded its work, the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (SCC CSW), an appointed body that advises the Board of Supervisors on the promotion of gender equity, issued a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in mid-2022 that they adopt a permanent CEDAW Ordinance.²⁴ Over the course of about one year, the SCC CSW worked in its advisory capacity in partnership with County Administration to support the County in developing a comprehensive CEDAW Ordinance that compiled the strongest language from CEDAW ordinances in other jurisdictions, including LA County, San Diego County, the City of Berkley, and the City and County of San Francisco, and adapted it to the priorities and specific context of SCC, drawing on the previous work of the CEDAW Task Force.²⁵ The SCU IHRC provided support in the drafting process as well.

On May 2, 2023, the SCC Board of Supervisors passed and adopted a [CEDAW Ordinance](#) to “ensure that . . . the County implements the CEDAW principles and institutionalizes regular and ongoing gender-based analysis of County operations, departments, agencies, services, and programs.”²⁶ The County aims to seamlessly incorporate CEDAW principles into its role as a service provider, employer, and community and business collaborator, giving priority attention to gender equity in the following areas: the criminal legal system; economic development; education and women’s leadership; gender-based violence and harassment; healthcare; housing and homelessness; political and civic engagement; environmental justice and climate change; and transportation, library services, parks and recreation, and environmental health services.²⁷

²¹ *Id.* at pg. 4.

²² *Id.*

²³ SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Bremeau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023).

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ SANTA CLARA, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE-A DIVISION A18 ch.8, sec. 154 (2023).

²⁷ *Id.* at sec. 156.



The Board of Supervisors concurrently adopted a [policy](#)²⁸ to advance the implementation of the CEDAW ordinance. This implementation policy directs the County to conduct a baseline intersectional gender equity analysis, regularly revisit and refine intersectional gender equity assessments, and develop a comprehensive Countywide action plan for intersectional gender equity as well as individual division-level intersectional gender equity action plans.²⁹ The ordinance places responsibility for implementation on the highest level of the County administration, the Chief Executive Office.

For the initial stages of implementation, the Chief Executive Office has directed the Office of Women’s Policy (OWP) to develop an implementation plan and timeline, which OWP presented to the Board of Supervisors on September 28, 2023.³⁰ The SCC CSW, with input from SCU IHRC, will remain engaged in at least the first phase of the implementation process, where the County will develop a scope of work to engage external consultants or a specialized team with expertise in gender-based analysis to develop an operational implementation framework and conduct a baseline assessment of intersectional gender equity at all levels of the County’s operations.³¹

In subsequent phases, the responsibility for the work will shift to designated County staff for its ongoing execution. In accordance with general principles of transparency and accountability, the SCU IHRC and SCC CSW will continue to advocate for the incorporation of community input into all implementation phases. The implementation plan also leaves open whether every County division will need to develop an individual intersectional gender equity action plan or whether only “priority” divisions will do so; this question is one where guidance from the UN would be helpful to local governments seeking to implement CEDAW principles. Similarly, although the ordinance was passed in May 2023, the County has yet to find a consultant as of September 2023.³² A roster of qualified consultants and a list of preferred qualifications from the UN would support the County in identifying qualified consultants to move the implementation process forward in a timely and effective manner.

²⁸ County of Santa Clara, Board of Supervisors Policy Manual, Chapter 3, pp. 3-162 to 3-164 (Updated Aug. 1, 2023), available at https://boardclerk.sccgov.org/sites/g/files/exjcpb656/files/bos-policy-manual/BOSPolicyCHAP3_2.pdf. Attached as Annex 2.

²⁹ *Id.*, see also SANTA CLARA, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE-A DIVISION A18 ch.8, sec. 157 (2023).

³⁰ Santa Clara County Committee on Children, Families, and Seniors, Agenda Packet for the Public Meeting on September 28, 2023, “Update on Implementation of CEDAW Principles,” pp. 230-233, <http://sccgov.iqm2.com/citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=13772&Inline=True>. Attached as Annex 3.

³¹ *Id.*

³² SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Bremau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023).



III. Adoption of a CEDAW Ordinance in San Diego County

San Diego County, situated in Southern California along the U.S. border with Mexico, is the second most populous county in California.³³ The county is home to a thriving military presence, with several naval and marine bases, as well as a growing technology and biotech industry.³⁴

On June 9, 2022, San Diego County adopted a [CEDAW Ordinance](#) “to implement the principles underlying the CEDAW to achieve gender equity and eradicate discrimination against women and girls within the County.”³⁵ In spite of significant public debate and resistance to the use of a gender-inclusive definition of women and girls in the draft ordinance,³⁶ San Diego County was able to adopt an ordinance in less than three years due to the strong leadership of its [Commission on the Status of Women and Girls](#).³⁷

The San Diego CEDAW Ordinance integrates the CEDAW principles into the County's role as a service provider, employer, and community and business partner in the following areas: economic development; criminal legal system; political and civic engagement; healthcare; gender-based violence and harassment; housing and homelessness; and transportation, library services, parks and recreation, and environmental health services.³⁸

The San Diego County ordinance also calls for the County’s [Office of Equity and Racial Justice](#) to develop a Five-year Countywide Intersectional Gender Equity Action Plan, with assistance from the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, to “analyze policies and procedures on a countywide level.”³⁹ Following a baseline intersectional gender analysis, all County departments, offices, programs, boards, commissions, and operational units are directed to create individual Intersectional Gender Equity Action Plans, to be updated biannually, with the Chief

³³ San Diego County Health and Human Services, Demographics, https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/statistics_demographics.html.

³⁴ San Diego County, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for San Diego County (Sept. 2022), <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/cao/osia/docs/SanDiegoCountyCEDSSept2022.pdf>.

³⁵ SAN DIEGO, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 3 DIVISION 2 ch. 8.3, sec. 32.832, Attached as Annex 6.

³⁶ *See, e.g.*, Deborah Sullivan Brennan, San Diego Union Tribune, “Scores protest county ordinance on discrimination against women because of transgender language” (May 10, 2022), <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/politics/story/2022-05-10/cedaw>.

³⁷ SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Breneau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023). The San Diego Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is an appointed body that advises the San Diego County Board of Supervisors “to take action to identify the needs and problems of women and girls in the County that are affected by public policy decisions; and furthermore, to eliminate the practice of discrimination and prejudice on the basis of sex within the County.” SD County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, About, <https://www.sdstatusofwomenandgirls.org/about>.

³⁸ SAN DIEGO, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 3 DIVISION 2 ch. 8.3, sec. 32.832.

³⁹ *Id.* at sec. 32.833.

Administrative Officer recommending budget allocations to fund their implementation and potential future gender analyses, whether internal or external.⁴⁰

Since the adoption of the ordinance, San Diego County has focused on developing the necessary materials to hire a gender equity consultant to carry out their CEDAW implementation process.⁴¹ To do so, the County has engaged in a collaborative, public process to develop a Request for Proposals and a scope of work.⁴² This process has involved County staff, the San Diego Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, and consultation with the public, making it a particularly robust and transparent example of this type of effort.⁴³ In addition to the resources mentioned above, UN guidelines on how to conduct this type of consultation and scoping effort in a manner that accords with human rights principles would be helpful to other jurisdictions seeking to follow this important example. Going forward, the County would benefit from additional funding and resources to support the integration of the ordinance into the framework of the County operations.

IV. Adoption of a CEDAW Ordinance in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County, located in Southern California, is the most populous county in the United States,⁴⁴ and fifty-one percent of the county's residents are women and girls.⁴⁵ Its economic significance, cultural diversity, and global influence make it a dynamic and influential region not only in the United States but on the world stage.⁴⁶ Los Angeles County stands as the largest county government in the nation, delivering programs and services to a population of 10 million residents through a workforce of over 100,000 employees spread across 38 different departments.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Breneau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023). *See also* San Diego Union Tribune, Parisa Ijadi-Maghsoodi (then Vice-Chair of the SD County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls), "Opinion: San Diego County is crafting a gender equity policy to uplift women and girls. You can help." (Mar. 7, 2022), <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/story/2022-03-07/gender-equity-cedaw>.

⁴² SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Breneau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023). *See also* San Diego Union Tribune, Parisa Ijadi-Maghsoodi (then Vice-Chair of the SD County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls), "Opinion: San Diego County is crafting a gender equity policy to uplift women and girls. You can help." (Mar. 7, 2022), <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/story/2022-03-07/gender-equity-cedaw>.

⁴³ SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Breneau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023).

⁴⁴ LA County, About LA County, <https://lacounty.gov/government/about-la-county/about/>.

⁴⁵ LA County Board of Supervisors, Motion creating the Women and Girls Initiative (Dec. 13, 2016).

⁴⁶ For more information, see the LA County Economic Development website, <https://economicdevelopment.lacounty.gov/>.

⁴⁷ LA County By the Numbers, <https://lacounty.gov/by-the-numbers/>.



With the support of the [Los Angeles County Women and Girls Initiative](#) (LACWGI)⁴⁸ and the [International Justice Clinic](#) of the University of California, Irvine School of Law, on November 30, 2021, the LA County Board of Supervisors adopted a [CEDAW Ordinance](#) to “implement the principles underlying the CEDAW to promote gender equity and address discrimination against women and girls within the County.”⁴⁹ The International Justice Clinic was instrumental in the [introduction of CEDAW principles](#) to the LA County Board of Supervisors.⁵⁰ The City of Los Angeles had also [adopted CEDAW principles](#) 18 years prior, which set a foundation for the County to build upon.

With adoption of the ordinance, the CEDAW principles are now integrated in the “County’s role as a service provider, employer, and community and business partner and must apply to women and girls of all identities.”⁵¹ To this end, the County will “promote gender equity and address discrimination against women and girls in the County[]”⁵² in the following areas: economic development, education, housing and homelessness, gender-based violence and harassment, health care, justice-impacted women, and voting and civil engagement.⁵³

The ordinance has helped to support and solidify the gender equity work that the LACWGI had already begun.⁵⁴ To implement the ordinance, LA County has created a County-wide [Gender Impact Assessment](#) (GIA) program that is tied to the compensation of the managers in each County department.⁵⁵ The County has also directed LACWGI and their team of gender equity consultants “to train all County departments in Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) and develop clear gender equity goals, strategies, and metrics in the areas of external services, workforce, leadership, and family-friendly practices.”⁵⁶ The training aims to increase enthusiasm of the department heads by explaining the benefits their departments would receive by increasing inclusivity and a balanced workforce that reflects gender equity.⁵⁷ These goals are now

⁴⁸ The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established the Women and Girls Initiative on December 13, 2016 “to create a gender equity agenda for Los Angeles County and unify departments in examining the systemic issues that lead to inequitable gender outcomes.” LA County Chief Executive Office, Women and Girls Initiatives, <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/wgi/>. The Initiative is housed within the County’s Chief Executive Office (CEO). The 2016 Board motion gave the Initiative an initial term of five years, but it was extended for an additional 2 years in 2022 and is currently set to sunset in 2024. Similar initiatives typically sunset after two to four years of operation or are absorbed into the CEO. SCU IHRC Interview with Alisa Williams, Women and Girls Initiative, LA County Chief Executive Office (Sept. 18, 2023).

⁴⁹ LOS ANGELES, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 13 DIVISION 13, 13.120.040 (2021), Attached as Annex 5.

⁵⁰ SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Bremeau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023).

⁵¹ LOS ANGELES, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 13 DIVISION 13, 13.120.040 (2021).

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ SCU IHRC Interview with Nancy Bremeau, Founder of the CEDAW Challenge Team (Sept. 18, 2023).

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ LA County WGI, County of Los Angeles Gender Impact Assessment Program Reference Material, p. 1 (Aug. 2023). *See also* LA County Board of Supervisors, Motion on Los Angeles County Gender Impact Assessment Implementation (Nov. 15, 2022).

⁵⁷ SCU IHRC Interview with Alisa Williams, Women and Girls Initiative, LA County Chief Executive Office (Sept. 18, 2023).



embedded in LA County’s annual performance cycle for Management Appraisal and Performance Plans (MAPPs) directly impacting compensation,⁵⁸ and department leaders must report back on gender equity goals annually.⁵⁹ These innovations have increased staff investment in the gender impact assessment and intersectional gender equity action planning process and implementation.⁶⁰

LA County has made all GIA training documents and board motions available to any organization seeking to advance gender equity and equality in their workforce and local community,⁶¹ which is an invaluable resource for other local jurisdictions seeking to implement CEDAW principles in their operations. The UN could support local government implementation of human rights standards by creating a clearinghouse for this kind of resource.

V. Adoption of CEDAW Ordinance in the City of San Jose

The City of San Jose, California is located in the heart of Silicon Valley in Northern California and is the state’s third-largest city.⁶² Known for its thriving tech industry and innovation, San Jose is home to numerous tech giants and startups, contributing significantly to the region’s economic vitality.⁶³

On December 19, 2017, the San Jose City Council unanimously voted to adopt a CEDAW Ordinance, styled as a Women’s [Bill of Rights](#)⁶⁴ to direct the County to incorporate CEDAW principles to proactively combat gender-based discrimination and bias in housing, employment, education, community services, and related domains.⁶⁵ It also identifies economic development and violence against women and girls as areas of priority focus.⁶⁶ The ordinance directs the City to “conduct gender analyses, . . . to determine what, if any, City practices and policies should

⁵⁸ SCU IHRC Interview with Alisa Williams, Women and Girls Initiative, LA County Chief Executive Office (Sept. 18, 2023).

⁵⁹ LA County Board of Supervisors, Motion on Los Angeles County Gender Impact Assessment Implementation (Nov. 15, 2022).

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ SCU IHRC Interview with Alisa Williams, Women and Girls Initiative, LA County Chief Executive Office (Sept. 18, 2023).

⁶² U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts About San Jose City, CA, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanjosecitycalifornia/PST045222>.

⁶³ Visit San Jose: Technology, <https://www.sanjose.org/things-to-do/technology>.

⁶⁴ SAN JOSE, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 2 ch. 2.08, part 49, https://library.municode.com/ca/san_jose/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT2AD_CH2.08BOBUCO_PT49WOBIRI_2.08.4940GEANACPL, Attached as Annex 7.

⁶⁵ SAN JOSE, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 2 ch. 2.08, part 4920.

⁶⁶ *Id.*



change to implement the principles of CEDAW.”⁶⁷ Additionally, it envisions individual City departments developing gender action plans to carry out necessary changes.⁶⁸

The ordinance calls on the [San Jose Human Services Commission](#) to carry out gender equity assessments and training activities while maintaining oversight of overall implementation of the ordinance, including by individual City departments.⁶⁹ However, this implementation structure poses an institutional challenge due to the fact that the San Jose Human Services Commission was disbanded on February 15, 2022.⁷⁰ However, the City created a new [Office of Racial Equity](#) in 2020 and is exploring the potential integration of intersectional gender equity action planning and implementation into these ongoing efforts.⁷¹ Jurisdictions seeking to incorporate intersectional gender equity work with related efforts to achieve racial equity would benefit from UN guidance on potential approaches, tools, and frameworks.

VI. Final Report of the California Task Force on Reparations for Slavery

As the IHRC noted in an April 2023 [submission](#) to OHCHR,⁷² California established a [Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans](#) that concluded its work in June 2023.⁷³ The Task Force worked for two years to provide the California State Legislature with comprehensive recommendations on the appropriate reparations for slavery due to African Americans living in California, and they submitted their final recommendations on June 29, 2023.⁷⁴

In 2020, the California State Legislature passed legislation ([AB 3121](#)) establishing the Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans, with a Special Consideration for African Americans Who are Descendants of Persons Enslaved in the United States (Task Force or Reparations Task Force).⁷⁵ The purpose of the Task Force was: (1) to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans; (2) to recommend appropriate ways to

⁶⁷ SAN JOSE, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 2 ch. 2.08, part 4920.

⁶⁸ SAN JOSE, CAL., CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 2 ch. 2.08, part 4940.

⁶⁹ *Id.* at part 4930.

⁷⁰ City of San Jose, Human Services Commission,

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/office-of-the-city-manager/administration-policy-and-intergovernmental-relations/human-services-commission-formally-hrc>.

⁷¹ City of San Jose, Office of Racial Equity, Applying Racial Equity,

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/office-of-the-city-manager/racial-equity/racial-equity-resources/applying-racial-equity>.

⁷² In response to a [call for inputs](#) related to Human Rights Council resolution 47/21.

⁷³ California State Legislature, Cal. Gov’t Code sec. 8301 et seq., AB 3121 (2020),

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB3121.

⁷⁴ California Office of the Attorney General, AB 3121: Reparations Task Force, The California Reparations Report, <https://oag.ca.gov/ab3121/report>.

⁷⁵ Reparations Task Force Members, State of California Department of Justice, <https://oag.ca.gov/ab3121/members>.



educate the California public of the Task Force's findings; and (3) to recommend appropriate remedies in consideration of the Task Force's findings.⁷⁶

As noted in our previous submission, AB 3121 charges the Reparations Task Force with studying reparations proposals “with a special consideration for” the descendants of enslaved Black people living in California and is not meant to create a program in lieu of one from the federal government.⁷⁷ Additionally, the legislation instructs the Task Force to propose recommendations that “comport with international standards of remedy for wrongs and injuries caused by the state, that include full reparations and special measures, as understood by various relevant international protocols, laws, and findings.”⁷⁸

The Task Force held multiple public meetings in areas across California to receive witness testimony and discuss important issues to be addressed in its recommendations.⁷⁹ Accordingly, the Task Force's final recommendations to the state legislature are rooted in international standards for reparations for human rights violations as well as extensive testimony and fact finding into the harm caused by slavery and its legacies in California.

The attached [Final Report](#) provides the Task Force's full analysis, key findings, as well as its comprehensive recommendations to the California state legislature for the design and implementation of a state reparations program that comports with international standards for remedying human rights violations.⁸⁰

VII. Conclusion

As outlined in this report, multiple local government bodies within California are making important strides to implement human rights principles and norms into local governance. Santa Clara County, San Diego County, Los Angeles County, and the City of San Jose represent some of the most recent, focused efforts to incorporate CEDAW principles into local government initiatives to center intersectional gender equity in their work. Similarly, the California Task Force on Reparations carefully wove together its well-researched understanding of international principles relating to reparations for human rights violations with the lived reality of the legacies of slavery for African American Californians. This report seeks to congratulate these bodies for

⁷⁶ *Id.*

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ California State Legislature, AB 3121, Art. 2(b)(3)(A) (2020), https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB3121. Attached as Annex 8.

⁷⁹ Sophie Austin, California residents await key decisions by reparations task force, PBS News, Mar. 4, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/california-residents-await-key-decisions-by-reparations-task-force>.

⁸⁰ California Office of the Attorney General, AB 3121: Reparations Task Force, The California Reparations Report, <https://oag.ca.gov/ab3121/report>.



their important work and to encourage them to continue moving with energy, dedication, and urgency to continue implementing these essential initiatives.

Similarly, this report offers these examples as a concrete illustration of the ongoing need for enhanced capacity building and additional guidance to support local governments in implementing human rights principles in their operations. As these exciting cases demonstrate, resources from the UN, such as a roster of gender equity consultants; examples and guidelines on best practices, success stories, and localized action plans from other jurisdictions; or materials that adapt the guidance provided by the CEDAW Committee in its General Recommendations to advise local governments on CEDAW implementation and its guiding principles, would be useful to further support this work in California and other local jurisdictions.

Annexes:

1. Santa Clara County CEDAW Ordinance (May 2023)
2. Santa Clara County Board Policy on CEDAW Principles (April 2023)
3. Santa Clara County CEDAW Ordinance Implementation Plan (September 2023)
4. Santa Clara County CEDAW Task Force Combined Final Reports (November 2021)
5. Los Angeles County CEDAW Ordinance (November 2021)
6. San Diego County CEDAW Ordinance (June 2022)
7. City of San Jose CEDAW Ordinance (December 2017)
8. California Task Force on Reparations for Slavery Final Report to the California State Legislature (July 2023)