

Child-friendly version of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Article 1

All **peoples** have the right to self-determination – that is, to decide their own destiny. This includes being able to decide what political, economic, social, and cultural systems they want to have and to control their natural wealth and **resources**.

Peoples: Nations or groups of people that feel part of a community because they share similarities such as language, history, ethnicity, culture and/or territory, and who are entitled to make their own decisions about things that affect them.

Resources: money, material (including materials that come from nature), people, land, information, scientific knowledge, technology and other assets that governments have access to.

Article 2

Governments must do all that they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Covenant. Where governments are not able to give effect to all of everyone's rights straight away, then governments must do everything they can to do so as quickly and as efficiently as possible. This includes making the laws needed to give effect to those rights. Governments must use all of the money and other resources that they have access to in order to push forward rights enjoyment over time. They must also work together with other governments to do this.

All people have all these rights, **no matter who they are**, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a man or a woman or a boy or a girl. No person should be treated unfairly for any reason.

Countries that have fewer resources than others can sometimes provide less protection for some of the rights under the Covenant to foreigners in those countries.

All children enjoy these rights no matter if they have a disability, if they are young or old, if they are sick or well, if they are rich or poor, no matter who they may be attracted to or their gender.

Article 3

These rights must be **enjoyed equally** by women, men, girls and boys.

Article 4

The government can sometimes limit rights but only in a small number of specific situations: where the limits are set out in law, where the limits do not undermine Covenant rights, where the limits are needed to support a fair and just society, and where they are needed to protect the rights of other members of society



Article 5

Nothing in this Covenant can be used as an excuse for governments or people to harm the rights of other people.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to work. This means that everyone must be able to search for and do work that they have freely chosen. Governments must help people who do not find such work with education and training.

Article 7

Everyone has the right to fair and good work conditions. This includes the right to be paid fairly and the right to be safe at work. People who do the same work should be paid the same. Women must be paid the same as men. Everyone should be promoted on the basis of their experience and skills. Everyone has the right to rest, relax, and have paid holidays.

Article 8

Everyone has the rights to join and to form organisations of workers (trade unions) who come together to fight for fair pay and good working conditions. The government must not interfere with what worker organisations are doing. Everyone has the right to stop work when they are not being treated fairly.

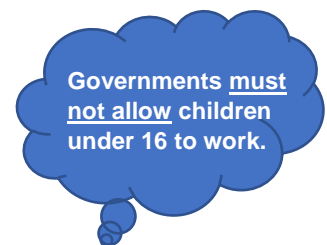
Article 9

Governments must make sure there is a system in place (a social security system) that provides money or other support to help people who need it. This can be for a number of reasons, for instance where people are not able work, where they have had an accident or where they do not have enough money to support themselves and their families.

Article 10

Governments must give special protection and help to the family, especially mothers and children. No one should be forced to marry someone they do not want to marry. Mothers must be given special protection before, during and after having had babies. This includes leave and enough money for a decent life. Children must be given special help regardless of who their parents are or what form their family takes.

Governments must protect children and young persons from exploitation (being taken advantage of) and ban any work that is dangerous to them. Governments must **set an age** below which children must not work.





Article 11

Everyone has the right to a decent life for themselves and their family. Everyone has the rights to good food, clothing and housing. Everyone has the right to be free from hunger. Everyone has the right to a quality of living that gets better over time. Governments must work towards making these rights real for everyone, including by working with other governments.

Article 12

Everyone has the right to the best healthcare possible. Governments have to take steps to make sure fewer babies die, both before and after birth. Governments should work to improve the environments in which people live and work so that these do not hurt their health. Governments have to do what is needed to prevent, control and treat diseases.

Article 13

Everyone has the right to an education. People's education should help them fully develop their personalities and understand their value as people. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights and differences. It should help them to take part in the society that they live in and to live peacefully. Primary education should be free and governments must make sure that all children attend primary school.

Secondary and higher education should be available to everyone and, as time passes, should be made free. People who have not finished primary education must be able to access other forms of education. Governments must develop systems of schools and make sure that teachers have good work conditions which improve over time. Governments must let parents choose any school for their children as long as that school provides a good education. People are free to set up places that offer education as long as the education provided/given is of a good standard.

Article 14

If, when a government agrees to follow the standards set out in the Covenant, primary education is not free and not all children attend primary school, then the government has two years to make a plan and to set a deadline to make sure all children can (and do) access free primary education.

Article 15

Everyone has the rights to participate in cultural activities, to benefit from the results of scientific progress, and to own any idea or design that they came up with.

Articles 16-24

These articles explain how governments, different United Nations bodies and other organisations work to make sure all peoples enjoy all their rights.



University of
Nottingham
Human Rights Law Centre

FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG



German Institute
for Human Rights

Drafting Group of the
United Nations Committee
on Economic, Social and
Cultural Rights



Article 25

Nothing in the Covenant can be used to limit the right of all peoples to enjoy and use their natural wealth and resources freely.

Article 26-31

These articles explain how governments agreed to follow the standards set out in the Covenant and how changes can be made to the Covenant. It also makes clear that when a government has signed up to the Covenant, then it applies to all parts of that country and to all government decision-makers.