

## CEDAW Fact Sheet



Dorothy I. Height  
(1912-2010)

*"Ratifying CEDAW remains among the unfinished business of the Civil Rights movement."*

- - Dorothy I. Height  
April 13, 2010

### ABOUT CEDAW

CEDAW – The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women – is a landmark international agreement that affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women around the world. CEDAW is a practical blueprint for each country to achieve progress for women and girls.

CEDAW strengthens the United States as a global leader in standing up for women and girls. In countries that have ratified CEDAW, women have partnered with their governments to improve the status of women and girls, and as a result have changed laws and policies to create greater safety and opportunity for women and their families. CEDAW can make a difference for women and girls, specifically to:

- Reduce sex trafficking & domestic violence
- Provide access to education & vocational training
- Ensure the right to vote
- End forced marriage & child marriage & ensure inheritance rights
- Help mothers and families by providing access to maternal health care
- Ensure the right to work & own a business without discrimination

The CEDAW agreement was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and entered into force in 1981. Almost all countries have ratified CEDAW - 187 out of 193 countries. Only six have not ratified including the United States, Sudan, Somalia, Iran, and two small Pacific Island nations (Palau and Tonga).

The American public strongly supports the principles and values of equality, fairness, education, and basic human rights. In the United States, the CEDAW treaty has been voted on favorably twice on a bipartisan basis by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (the Committee that typically reviews and votes on international treaties before they are considered by the full Senate), but the CEDAW treaty has never been brought to the Senate floor for a vote. Ratification of a treaty requires two-thirds of the Senate (67 out of 100 Senators) to vote for it.

Presidents Reagan, Bush, Clinton achieved the ratification of similar agreements on torture, genocide and race discrimination. Ratification of CEDAW would continue America's proud bipartisan tradition of promoting and protecting human rights.