



World AIDS Day

2009 Theme: Universal Access and Human Rights



Dear Advocate,

Thank you for joining us this year in celebrating World AIDS Day (WAD) 2009. Given this year's theme of universal access and human rights, we're very excited to bridge World AIDS Day (Dec 1) and Human Rights Day (Dec 10) with a **10,000 signatures in 10 days** campaign, mobilizing Americans to advocate for U.S. ratification of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2010.

CEDAW is the most comprehensive document of international law on women's rights and is a powerful tool in addressing the structural inequalities that make women especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Since being adopted by the United Nations in 1979, CEDAW has been ratified by all but 8 members of the United Nations: Iran, Qatar, Palau, Nauru, Tonga, Somalia, Sudan, and the United States. To commemorate both WAD and Human Rights Day, we will work to fight the feminization of AIDS by expanding US commitment to women's rights.

There are a variety of opportunities to join this national movement, such as:

1. Mobilize the health professional student and faculty communities to urge the US to ratify CEDAW as a step forward in protecting women's rights (and health). PHR is doing this in partnership with a number of organizations so it will be opened to a greater national movement. *Our challenge to each PHR chapter: collect 100 signatures of support for CEDAW from your community!*
2. Host educational events on campuses nationwide on women, HIV, and the human rights context/approach.
3. Organize an in-district meeting with your Senator to personally deliver the signatures you collected and urge him or her to support CEDAW.

We hope that you and your organization are able to use the resources in this toolkit these to reach out to students and deans, draw in supporters, and educate members of your community. This is just the beginning of this campaign: In mid-November, we will provide you with the necessary hands-on tools and sign-on website the link to collect signatures of support for CEDAW, as well as resources to set up district meetings with your senators.

As you look through this toolkit and envision your school's involvement in WAD, please feel free to contact either your Regional Chapter Mentor or me with any questions you may have.

Take care,

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World AIDS Day Contents:

1. Factsheet 1- "Improving Women's Health through Respecting Women's Rights: CEDAW as a Tool against AIDS"
2. Factsheet 2- "The Convention to Eliminate All Form of Discrimination Against Women" "
3. A map handout showing the United States and the other non-ratifying U.N. Members
4. External readings and references, which you and your group may find valuable in educating yourselves, gathering support, and brainstorming ideas for action
5. A CEDAW Timeline
6. Quotes on the movement for US ratification of CEDAW
7. Guide to Planning an Event, and other links to organizing guides
8. CEDAW Glossary: Understanding Terminology



Improving Women's Health by Respecting Women's Rights: CEDAW as a Tool against AIDS

The most vexing and intolerable dimension of the pandemic is what is happening to women. Gender inequality is driving the pandemic, and we will never subdue the gruesome force of AIDS until the rights of women become paramount in the struggle.

-Stephen Lewis, Keynote Speech at International AIDS Conference, Toronto

I. Introduction: Women and AIDS: Why CEDAW Matters

- Women account for about 50% of people living with HIV world-wide and the numbers are growing. In sub-Saharan Africa, women account for more than 60% of those who are living with HIV. The social and economic inequities faced by women make them particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection.
- Globally, far too many women lack access to education about HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, face stigmatization if found to be HIV-positive, have little or no access to prenatal care, and lack the economic and social agency to make decisions about their sexual behavior.
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the most comprehensive document of international law on women's rights and is a powerful tool in addressing the structural inequalities that make women especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.
- Since being adopted by the United Nations in 1979, CEDAW has been ratified by all but 8 members of the United Nations: Iran, Qatar, Palau, Nauru, Tonga, Somalia, Sudan, and the United States.

In Article 1, CEDAW defines discrimination against women as "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."

II. Health

- Women all over the world lack access to basic healthcare or experience gender-based discrimination that prevents them from utilizing access.
- In Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, only 40% of pregnant women go to a health facility to give birth. Many of the women who choose not to seek maternal healthcare cite the disrespectful attitudes of health practitioners. In countries where programs for the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of AIDS exist, fear of stigma and reluctance to be tested prevent the vast majority of eligible women from participating.
- CEDAW contains numerous rights and stipulations which address women seeking and accessing healthcare such as measures to eliminate discrimination against women in health (Article 12), the right to prenatal care and family planning (Article 12) and the rights of women in rural areas to accessible healthcare (Article 14).

III. Education

- Education has proven to be an invaluable tool in fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS and for promoting health and well-being.

- Almost half of recent global AIDS incidence has been among people under 25 years old. Many of these cases could be prevented through education.
- In Kenya, a comprehensive national HIV/AIDS education program in high schools has helped reduce incidence by 50% over the last decade. In Nigeria, a 10 week sex education trial program affected significant, measurable change in students' knowledge about and attitude towards sexuality and health.
- Education is also linked to a decrease in maternal mortality and vertical transmission as well as an increase in the ability to make positive decisions about one's health. Globally, the gender gap in education means that many girls will not be sent to school and provided critical information.
- Article 6 in CEDAW obligates states to provide equal access to education regardless of gender. This obligation includes both formal schooling and educational information provided to ensure health and well-being, family planning, and so on.

IV. Economic Equality

- The economic disempowerment of women worldwide is an important mediating factor vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Studies show that women who lack access to economic opportunities are at higher risk of HIV/AIDS and are more likely to be sexually exploited and are less likely to have the agency to negotiate safer sexual practices.
- A study in Kenya demonstrated that higher gender inequality between young women and adult men was strongly correlated to HIV infection.
- HIV/AIDS also perpetuates poverty and the disempowerment of women, who often must serve as caregivers. In India, the financial burden on households with HIV-positive members was 82% of the income for people at the lowest fifth of income levels and 20% for those in the highest.
- Article 11 of CEDAW obligates states to provide equal economic opportunity and remuneration to women. Furthermore, Article 6 requires appropriate measures to end traffic in women and the exploitation of sex workers.

V. Domestic Issues

- Lack of marital rape laws and civil disempowerment of married women prevents women from negotiating safer sex in marriage, even in the face of infidelity. For some women, suggesting condom use can raise accusations of promiscuity or of having AIDS, which can potentially mean expulsion from the family, loss of inheritance and stigma within the community.
- In 2005, about 33% of married clients tested in VCT centers in Uganda were HIV-positive. Over 90% were unsure of their partner's HIV status. Furthermore, the proportion of men who reported having more than one sexual partnership was 37%, almost three times that of women.
- The U.N. and other major organizations have pointed out the disproportionate risk for HIV that married women all over the world face. In some areas of the world, married women are more likely to be infected than unmarried women.
- Articles 15 and 16 of CEDAW establish the obligation for women to enjoy equal rights in marriage and family relations, as well as civil equality. These rights include the right to enter into marriage out of free choice, freedom of movement, equality in the responsibilities of parenthood, and the right to own property.



The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) A Fact Sheet

CEDAW is the most comprehensive women's rights treaty in the world, acknowledging the political, civil, economic, cultural, and social rights of women. The treaty creates international gender equality standards, to which 186 countries have agreed, excluding the United States of America, Iran, Nauru, Palau, Somalia, Sudan, and Tonga.

CEDAW considers discrimination against women to be "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex" (Article 1). The Convention addresses a woman's right to:

- Legal representation and protection
- Education both academic and recreational, as well as resources to allow for effective learning
- Work, to pursue employment opportunities of one's choice; maternity leave with pay and employers special consideration and equal treatment of women at work during pregnancy
- Health care
- Individual autonomy in matters of nationality and movement, including the right to live free from forms of physical violence such as domestic violence and rape.

Why SHOULD the United States Ratify CEDAW?

- CEDAW's definition of discrimination sets a universal standard
- Women would have equal economic rights in financial matters such as mortgages, bank loans, and salary
- A woman would not be inhibited from achieving her academic potential by gender biased educational policy
- US laws against violence and discrimination against women would be strengthened
- The US would be acknowledged as a credible world leader of human rights

CEDAW Making Change: Real world examples of policies and initiatives that improve the lives of women and girls

Refer to sources, "Human Rights For All" edited by Leila Rassekh Milan, and UNIFEM's "Bringing Equality Home" edited by Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, for more information.

IMPROVING WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS:

- Brazil, Columbia, Uganda, and South Africa have made constitutional changes that reflect the equal rights of women, disallowing discrimination based on gender; over twenty state parties to CEDAW have modified or adopted laws and policies to reflect human rights standards that are gender neutral
- In Nepal, a Supreme Court case sought to overturn a law that severely restricted a daughter's ancestral property entitlements; as CEDAW is considered national law in

- Nepal, this case has led to ongoing discussion about the status of women's human rights
- San Francisco adopted the principles of CEDAW in 1998; CA state law and policy was subsequently reviewed to identify and eliminate discrimination against women
 - After the ratification of CEDAW, many legal cases have been brought to high courts on the grounds of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, seeking a ruling that upholds CEDAW standards of women's human rights

IMPROVING WOMEN'S WORKING CONDITIONS:

- Calling upon its international obligation to honor the equal rights of women, Australia passed national legislation against sexual harassment in the workplace
- Countries such as Germany, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the UK, the Philippines and Guatemala have modified employment laws to allow for improved maternity leave and child care provisions

ADVOCATING FOR BETTER GIRLS' EDUCATION:

- Slovenia and Switzerland have created new school admission policies to increase access for girls
- India's Integrated Child Development Services plan conceived in 1975 acknowledges the systematic discrimination of young girls and has developed a childcare program that became universalized in 1997 to cater to both girls and boys

STOPPING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

- Columbia and Uganda have worked to advocate against domestic violence by either creating laws to protect female victims of violence or by using state funds to support social programs and campaigns
- Costa Rican courts can lawfully order an abusive spouse to leave his home while providing economic assistance to support the family; heightened sensitivity to victims of sex crime, has led to training programs and especially designated women officials to deal with investigations

IMPROVING STANDARDS AND ACCESS OF HEALTH CARE:

- In 1992, the Colombian government issued the "Health for Women, Women for Health" policy, recognizing health as a human right's issue and worthy of a gendered perspective
- The Philippines has created a Maternal Health Care Program for women
- Argentina, Australia, and Mexico have created programs to increase the standard of health care for indigenous and migrant women

Full Text of CEDAW: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>



Which of these things is not like the other?

Sudan, Tonga, Palau, Nauru, Iran, Somalia...*United States?* The US has the dubious distinction of being one of only seven United Nations member states (out of 192) who have failed to ratify the *Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*.

CEDAW, which was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1979, is the premier document in international law dealing with women's rights. CEDAW addresses a diverse array of women's rights and human rights issues including equality in civil, social, political and economic life, protection from sexual violence, and reproductive freedom.

It is imperative that we ratify CEDAW and demonstrate that we are serious about our obligations to the international community and to women worldwide.

This year, in celebration of World AIDS Day and Human Rights Day, let your senator know that it's time for the United States to ratify CEDAW and get serious about women's rights worldwide.

Get Smart for World AIDS Day: External Readings and References

To gear up for your school's involvement in World AIDS Day, here are a few introductory factsheets on CEDAW and U.S. Ratification. Use these as articles for discussion groups, addendums to relevant course reading, informational handouts during tabling or events, etc. These serve as a great way to familiarize yourself, your chapter, and your peers with what CEDAW is and how the United States can join the international community in supporting women's rights:

- The American Bar Association's Information on and Summary of CEDAW at: http://www.abanet.org/irr/cedaw_foldover.html
- Amnesty International's CEDAW Factsheet and Common Myths at: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/violence-against-women/ratify-the-treaty-for-the-rights-of-women-cedaw/page.do?id=1108216>
- Amnesty's CEDAW and Maternal Health Factsheet at: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/violence-against-women/ratify-the-treaty-for-the-rights-of-women-cedaw/page.do?id=1108216>
- The Working Group on Ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women's Factsheet at: http://www.womenstreaty.org/facts_home.htm
- The UN's special CEDAW 30th Anniversary website at: <http://www.unifem.org/cedaw30/>

For a more in-depth read, check out these sites:

- Official CEDAW Site with the Full Text of CEDAW at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>
- U.N. CEDAW Committee Webpage at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/index.htm>

If you're wondering how exactly CEDAW and the global AIDS pandemic relate:

- UNIFEM's free booklet on CEDAW and AIDS, *Turning the Tide* at: <http://www.genderandaids.org/downloads/topics/TurningTheTide.pdf>
- UNAIDS Global Coalition on Women and AIDS at: <http://www.unaids.org/en/Partnerships/Global+Coalition+on+Women+and+AIDS/default.asp>

Finally, check out some of PHR's material on the feminization of the pandemic:

- *Epidemic of Inequality: Women's Rights and HIV/AIDS in Botswana & Swaziland* at: <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/report-2007-05-25.html>
- Health Rights=Healthy Women Platform at: <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/hiv-aids/issues/health-rights-healthy-women.html>
- *Halting the Feminization of AIDS: Lessons from Kenya* at: <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/hiv-aids/lessons-from-kenya.html>

Understanding CEDAW: A Timeline

- **1946:** The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is established as a sub-commission of the Commission on Human Rights
- **1979:** CSW creates the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- **July 1980:** President Jimmy Carter signs CEDAW and submits it to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to begin the ratification process
- **1980-1990:** Under the Reagan and Bush Senior Administrations, the treaty stalls in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- **1990:** The Senate Foreign Relations Committee holds a hearing about CEDAW
- **1993:** The United States announces its intention to ratify CEDAW at the UN World Conference on Human Rights
- **1994:** Clinton Administration expresses support of CEDAW; CEDAW passed in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 13-5; despite the Committee's recommendation for ratification, a group of conservative senators put a hold on the treaty, preventing it from passing in Senate and reverting it back to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where it stalled
- **1995:** The United States makes a commitment to ratify CEDAW by 2000 at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women
- **1996:** Many state legislatures have already passed resolutions supporting CEDAW; this year marks the first whereby state counties and cities start to pass pro-CEDAW resolutions
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- **1998:** San Francisco becomes the first city to adopt a CEDAW ordinance, undergoing a critical gender analysis of all government activities to implement new policies that reflect non-discriminatory practices in public life
- **2002:** Bush Administration takes an initial position in support of CEDAW, calling it is "generally desirable"; under the chairmanship of Joe Biden D-DE and with growing Congressional support, CEDAW passes in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 12-7; it is never debated in Senate
- **2002-2008:** Stalls between the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the State Department for the review of "Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations"
- **March 2009:** President Obama sends CEDAW to the State Department where the document will be reviewed with the 2002 Senate Foreign Relations Committee's RUDs by an Interagency Working Group
- **Pending:** CEDAW will be discussed and voted on in the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee under the leadership of Senator Barbara Boxer D-CA
- **Pending:** Upon passing, CEDAW will be sent to debate in the full Senate Foreign Relations Committee, headed by Senator John Kerry D-MA
- **Pending:** Granted approval from the Committee, CEDAW will be sent to Senate where it needs 67 votes in favor of ratification to pass

For the first time since 2002, CEDAW is on route to the Senate where a passing vote will lead to US ratification.

Quotes

Use these quote to educate yourself and your peers and to use in outreach and media efforts during World AIDS Day.

"For even as we face extraordinary challenges as a nation, we cannot — and we will not — put aside issues of basic equality."

-President Obama, Oct. 10, 2009, Speech at the Human Rights Campaign Dinner

<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/obamas-speech-at-the-human-rights-campaign-dinner/>

"This Assembly's Charter commits each of us, and I quote - "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women." Among those rights is the freedom to speak your mind and worship as you please; the promise of equality of the races, and the opportunity for women and girls to pursue their own potential; the ability of citizens to have a say in how you are governed, and to have confidence in the administration of justice...There are basic principles that are universal; there are certain truths which are self evident - and the United States of America will never waiver in our efforts to stand up for the right of people everywhere to determine their own destiny."

-President Obama, Sept. 23, 2009, UN General Assembly Address

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a9ee6d6e-a853-11de-9242-00144feabdc0.html>

"Violence against women is an issue I personally care deeply about, and it is one of the many areas where I believe that we are at a critical point to make a real and significant difference...I am here to tell you that this Department of Justice and this administration are committed to ensuring that these issues are elevated in importance in matters of policy and funding resources...We at the Department share your vision where men, women, boys, girls and communities can live in a world without fear of physical or sexual violence in our homes, in our relationships, and in our communities."

-Tom Perrelli, Associate Attorney General of the US Department of Justice, Address at the Office on Violence Against Women National Rural Conference, Oct. 14, 2009

<http://www.usdoj.gov/aag/speeches/2009/aag-speech-091014.html>

"As Secretary of State, I view these issues [discrimination and violence against women] as central to our foreign policy. Not as adjunct or auxiliary, or in any way lesser than all of the other issues we have to confront... And it will be my hope to persuade more governments... that we cannot have a free, prosperous, peaceful, progressive world if women are treated in such a discriminatory and violent way."

-Hilary Clinton, Secretary of State Confirmation Hearing, Feb. 5, 2009

<http://boxer.senate.gov/news/releases/record.cfm?id=308007>

"I am very grateful to our new Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator John Kerry, for allowing me to focus part of my efforts on the worldwide status of women... This new subcommittee assignment offers a tremendous opportunity to shine the light of day on a very overlooked issue. Too often, we turn our eyes away as women are persecuted, abused and treated as second-class citizens. But even the most conservative historians have noted that when women are given the freedom to live up to their full potential, society as a whole flourishes. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Congress and with Secretary Clinton to stamp out violence against women in the world...No woman or girl should ever have to live in fear or face persecution for being born female."

-Senator Barbara Boxer, D-CA, Feb. 5, 2009

<http://boxer.senate.gov/news/releases/record.cfm?id=308007>

Plan An Event

A successful event takes planning, organization, timing, and follow-up. Use this guide for tips on how to produce an effective event.

Brainstorm

Events are most effective when they advance your chapter's overall strategy; they provide great opportunities to recruit members, raise awareness, educate, promote advocacy, and raise funds or materials for the specific issues your chapter has chosen as a focus. Events can also be effective ways of attracting media attention, influencing policymakers, and promoting dialogue on your issue. Agree on your objectives before planning an event.

- After agreeing on your objectives, establish SMART goals. The outcome of your event should be:
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Achievable/Ambitious
 - Relevant
 - Time-bound (deadlines)

- Events can lead to direct action aimed at a social or policy change. If you intend to incorporate an action component, establish specific success objectives. Examples of Success Objectives -
 - Written letter from each chapter member
 - Published letter to the Editor, Op-Ed (or other publicity)
 - Action by Member of Congress (or other elected official)
 - Forming a coalition

Successful events require resources. Take a moment to explore what resources may be in reach. Here are a few possibilities (see *Know Your Resources* for more information):

Within your PHR chapter	In your community	From PHR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer, writing, or art skills ▪ Media contacts ▪ Connections with businesses ▪ Commitment to the issue ▪ Personal knowledge and/or experiences with the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local relevant institutions ▪ Local businesses ▪ Supportive faculty ▪ Nearby NGOs and other organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PHR Toolkit ▪ PHR videos & reports ▪ PHR staff ▪ Nearby PHR chapters ▪ www.physiciansforhumanrights.org

Assign Tasks

- Create a timeline with a breakdown of tasks (recruitment, materials, publicity, media, general, etc). Work *backwards* from the due date of each task to ensure all the components come together in timely fashion.
- Plan out your volunteer needs. You will need people to cover the program, recruitment, registration, set-up, folder-stuffing, copying, greeting media, audio-visual set-up, photographer, etc.
- Delegate responsibilities clearly. If you have enough volunteers, set up work teams. Make event planning fun and express the importance of each person's contribution.
- Check in regularly with your event team to provide support and ensure they meet their goals and timelines.

Build an Audience & Publicize Your Event

- Set a target number of people you hope will attend the event. Make it an ambitious but reachable goal. Consider whether you are looking for sheer numbers and/or certain people, e.g., health professional students, policymakers, the general public.
- The law of halves: Consider that you will reach about half of the people you call or email. Of the people you talk to or reach by email, about half of those will express interest, and about half of those people will actually come. This means that if you want 100 people, 200 have to say yes. For 200 to have said yes, you must have reached 400 people, and sent out emails or tried calling about 800.

Consider the Four C's when recruiting prospective attendees: Connect with people in a friendly way; provide the Context of the event and importance of issue; ask for a Commitment; and Common ground (relate the issue or event to the invitee.)

- Start wholesale (group emails/mailings), and end up retail (individual emails, calls, and meetings). Nothing beats individual contact!
- Recruit others to recruit for you. Utilize links from other websites and include event notices in others' newsletters and emails.
- Publicize your event widely!
 - Consider: fliers, listserves, tabling, announcements in class, Facebook/Myspace/Twitter, banners in public spaces, letters to the editor of school paper, announcements in publications, Evite at evite.com, presentations at club meetings, advertising on T-shirts, public service announcements on your local radio station, and ask faculty to announce your event during class.

Supply Check

- Reserve a venue well in advance; try to find a good fit for your event (parking, price, size, neighborhood, convenience).
- Ask everyone presenting at the event what they need ahead of time (slide projector, power point, etc).
- Be sure the message and appearance of any materials reflect your objectives and are appropriate for your audience. (Very important: see the guidelines for use of the PHR logo or check with Danielle before producing materials!) Give yourself enough time for design, printing, distribution, and transporting materials to the venue prior to the event. Do a separate plan/timeline just for materials.
- Have a sign-in sheet to collect names and contacts of the attendees.

Collecting Petition Signatures

It is important to raise awareness about the issue. Setup a booth in your dining hall or campus center and teach fellow students by distributing postcards, flyers and answering questions. Collect signatures before and after your classes. Attend relevant groups' meetings to speak and collect signatures. Make a competition out of with, with the petitioner with the most signatures winning a prize. Also, you can hold a rally in a busy area on campus, such as outside a library or campus center, being sure to give passers-by an opportunity sign on in support of the issue.

For more details on planning for World AIDS Day, visit our online guides:

Plan an Event-

<http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/students/toolbox/plan-an-event.html>

Host a Speaker- <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/students/toolbox/host-a-speaker.html>

Publicize - <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/students/toolbox/publicize.html>

Collaborate- <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/students/toolbox/collaborate.html>

CEDAW Glossary: Understanding Terminology

Refer to the United Nations Treaty Collection, <http://untreaty.un.org/English/guide.asp>, for more information

Accession: is another way to express ratification, which is when a state agrees to become a party to a treaty already signed by other states

Contracting States: "refers to States and other entities with treaty-making capacity which have expressed their consent to be bound by a treaty where the treaty has not yet entered into force or where it has not entered into force for such States and entities"

Conventions: in a generic sense, a convention like a treaty can refer to all international agreements; more specifically, a convention refers to a formal multilateral treaty with a large number of parties, whereby it is recognized as a "source of law, apart from international customary rules and general principles of international law"

Parties/Signatories: refers to states and all other entities with treaty-making capacity that have expressed consent to be bound by a treaty where the treaty is already in force

Protocol: refers to a less formal agreement than a treaty or convention; different types of protocols exist such as: a Protocol of Signature, an Optional Protocol, a Protocol based on a Framework Treaty, a Protocol to amend, and a Protocol as a supplementary treaty

Treaties: used as a common, generic term to refer to all agreements that are binding by international law

RUDs: "Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations"

Reservations: a declaration made by a state "by which it purports to exclude or alter the legal effect of certain provisions of the treaty" in the state's domestic application of the treaty

Memoranda of Understanding: sets out modified operational arrangements within the context of an international agreement

Declarations: when states declare their "understanding" of an issue or specific interpretation of a section of a treaty; declarations clarify the state's position; they do not have any legal effect on the treaty

What is the significance of RUDs?

RUDs have the ability to seriously curb the realization of an international treaty's purpose. Generally, RUDs are attached when domestic law does not support the provisions of the international law or when a state wishes to clarify its interpretation of its responsibility to be legally bound by a provision. RUDs undermine the significance of an international treaty by allowing for a state to modify its legal commitment to uphold the treaty. The RUDs attached to CEDAW by the United States are currently under review by an interagency working group in the State Department and can be found at, http://www.womenstreaty.org/facts_treatysummary.htm.