

CEDAW: Some Myths & Facts

-- sovereignty	CEDAW is a 'non-self-executing' treaty, meaning that legislation to implement any treaty provision would come before the H & S the same as any other bill. The CEDAW Committee's formal 'conclusions' are only recommendations about how countries can move forward on women's equality. No changes in US domestic law would be required for US to be in treaty compliance.
-- discrimination	It would not authorize any lawsuit not already allowed under US Law. The terms resemble those of CERD the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Racial Discrimination, which the US ratified in 1994—with no resulting flurry of frivolous lawsuits.
-- traditional family	Treaty does not seek to regulate family life. It only urges Governments 'to adopt education & public info programs to eliminate prejudices & current practices that hinder the full operation of the principle of the social equality of women.' Article 5 is closely linked to the elimination of violence agnst women. It urges public info programs, which are now fairly commonplace in US.
-- women in armed combat	There is no reference in the treaty to women in the military or women in combat. In 1997, the CEDAW Committee report urged 'full participation of women in the military in decision-making, negotiations and peace-making to take note of the effect upon women & families of military decisions in times of conflict.'
-- the Koran	When Libya ratified the Convention it expressed reservations about article 2 which calls for an end to all legal forms of discrimination against women. The Comm questioned Libya's reservation and called upon L to explain why the Resvtn, which prevents women from attaining full institutional equality, is still intact. Despite this the Comm noted positive developments, such as admission of women to the judiciary, restricting polygamy, & setting the min age for marriage.
-- abortion	The US State Dept has concluded that CEDAW is 'abortion neutral'. Abortion is a crime in several State parties to CEDAW such as Rwanda & Ireland. The Comm has complained that women in Ireland do not have sufficient access to reproductive health services, & has recommended that the Gov't improve family planning services & the availability of contraception. The Comm has also repeatedly expressed its concerns about the high rate of abortions in the Russian Federation, Belarus, Sri Lanka, Estonia, & other countries. 'As far as the Convention is concerned, abortion was not a part of women's reproductive rights.'
-- sex education in schools	In Romania, the Comm urged a systematic inclusion of sex education in the schools because of the high rates of abortion & maternal mortality.
Reference:	CEDAW: The Treaty for the Rights of Women, 2004, Compiled by L. Milani, S. Albert, & K. Purushotma