

# PUBLIC FORUM

## on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

**Wednesday,  
March 31, 2004  
7 – 9 p.m.**

at the Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence  
220 Main St., Northampton (next to City Hall)

### Speakers:

**Janice Raymond, Ph.D.**, co-executive director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, an NGO with the United Nations

**Laura H. Roskos, Ph.D.**, visiting scholar at Suffolk University and coordinator, Massachusetts CEDAW Initiative Center for Women's Health and Human Rights

**Connie Chow**, member, Women's Rights Program Steering Committee of Brookline/Boston Chapter of Amnesty International and coordinator of Massachusetts CEDAW project

**Betty Jane Bourdon**, vice president, Zonta International

**Mayor Mary Clare Higgins**, member, Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and president, Massachusetts Mayors Association

**Dr. Gregory S. Prince, Jr.**, president, Hampshire College

**For more information**, call 413-268-9241, e-mail [Northampton@ZontaDistrict1.org](mailto:Northampton@ZontaDistrict1.org) or visit [www.zontadistrict1.org/northampton\\_ma/cedawforum.html](http://www.zontadistrict1.org/northampton_ma/cedawforum.html).

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Peace and Justice Committee  
of the Northampton  
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of Western Massachusetts

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Zonta Club of Northampton Area in conjunction with the Peace and Justice Committee of the Northampton U. U. Society and the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts.

**Zonta International**, a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the United Nations founded in 1919, has a membership of 33,000 in 67 countries around the world. Its mission is "to improve the status of women worldwide."

#### What is CEDAW?

Adopted by the United Nations in 1979, CEDAW was seen as a way to provide a universal standard for, and to guarantee women's rights that were not previously subject to international standards. The treaty aims to end all forms of discrimination against women and achieve equality between the sexes in all fields of civil, political, social, economic and cultural life.

#### Who has ratified CEDAW?

As of 10 December 2003, 175 countries —over 90 percent of the members of the United Nations— have ratified the CEDAW treaty. Countries that have not include Micronesia, Iran, United Arab Emirates and ... the United States of America!

#### What is CEDAW's status in the U.S.?

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed the treaty, thereby indicating the United States' intent to ratify the Convention and informally agreeing to abide by the provisions in the treaty while it awaits ratification. CEDAW failed to come to the full Senate floor for over 20 years. In July 2002, the treaty was voted out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It is currently on the Senate's calendar and waiting to be put on the agenda for a vote. In order for the treaty to be ratified in the United States, 2/3 of the Senate must vote in favor of ratification. No action is required from the House of Representatives.

#### Why should you care?

The United States has long been considered a leader in the area of human rights. Ratifying CEDAW sends the message that the United States puts a high value on women's human rights. Failure to ratify the treaty may damage the United States' position on advocating for women's rights in other parts of the world.

#### What can you do?

Learn more, and make use of the advocacy table at the forum to join a letter-writing campaign to your senator.