

RATIFY WOMEN!

CEDAW: THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY



**A NOW Activist Leader's Guide to Passing the
United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of
Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

Dear NOW Leaders,

As of early 2010, the United States is one of only seven countries that has failed to sign the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

In fact, *three decades* have gone by since President Carter signed the women's rights treaty ... and the Senate has still failed to RATIFY WOMEN. Two times the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has voted to send CEDAW to the Senate floor, but a vote has never occurred because ratifying women hasn't been "considered a priority."

It is shameful. It is shameful that women do not yet have a constitutional guarantee of equality. It is shameful that our democratically elected Senate has not yet ratified a non-binding treaty expressing a commitment to prohibiting discrimination in politics, law, employment, education, health care, commercial transactions and domestic relations -- particularly when CEDAW could help bridge the gap until a constitutional amendment is adopted. It is shameful that these facts are not leading the news every day and driving elections at every level of government.

Grassroots, community-level activism can change that. Of particular importance is raising awareness. We must educate, and also *listen to and incorporate* the concerns of women who may not yet understand how strongly declarations of women's rights as human rights can improve their lives.

NOW will continue to send alerts, statements and petitions from the National Action Center; please read on for suggestions of **how you can help mobilize your community**. You'll find fact sheets, suggested actions, and even recommended books and movies -- appropriate for International Women's Day, Women's History Month or any day of the year.

RATIFY WOMEN!

CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the most complete international agreement on basic human rights for women and was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1979. To date, 185 countries have ratified CEDAW. Even though the U.S. helped draft the treaty, it is the only industrialized country left to ratify.

Read the treaty here: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- CEDAW is the most comprehensive international agreement on the basic human rights of women and girls.
- U.S. ratification would lend weight to the treaty and the principle that human rights of women are universal across all cultures, nations and religions and worthy of being guaranteed through international human rights standards
- Until the U.S. ratifies CEDAW, it can neither credibly demand that others live up to their obligations under the treaty, nor that it is a leader in the global human rights community.

WHAT CEDAW HAS HELPED ACHIEVE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

- Reducing the sexual enslavement and trafficking of women and girls
- Securing basic legal recourse to women and girls against violence and abuses of their human rights
- Freeing access to primary education and health care where it had previously been denied
- Saving lives during pregnancy and childbirth
- Acknowledging the basic right to own and inherit property, including helping to secure essential development loans to poor women

WHAT THE SENATE MUST DO: RATIFY WOMEN!

CEDAW can be ratified with a two-thirds majority of the Senate (at least 67 votes). Women have already waited 30 years. **Demand President Obama and the Senate RATIFY WOMEN! by prioritizing and passing CEDAW without restrictions.**

RATIFY WOMEN!

LIES AND FACTS: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

The radical right has been spread quite a few lies about the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), often because of its opposition to women's rights. Here are facts to replace some of the more common lies.

LIE: CEDAW PROMOTES ABORTION

FACT: CEDAW is silent and neutral on abortion. CEDAW leaves it to each country to determine policies and laws that may or may not recognize women's fundamental right to abortion.

MYTH: CEDAW LEGALIZES PROSTITUTION

LIE: CEDAW does not legalize prostitution. The CEDAW committee, which is strictly advisory in nature, has urged some countries such as China, where women and girls have been trafficked or coerced into prostitution, to *de-criminalize* prostitution so that women can come forward without fear of prosecution as criminals, thereby decreasing instances of human trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and violence against women. This is not legalizing prostitution.

LIE: CEDAW DOES NOT ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

FACT: CEDAW clearly addresses violence against women with its focus on eliminating the trafficking of women as sex slaves, its emphasis on access to legal protections and education, and its foundation against discrimination. Discrimination is an important element of violence; once unequal relationships are established, it becomes much easier to abuse the “lesser” person. Obstacles to justice – including in some countries, discounting or giving less credence to the testimony of women – prevent the prosecution of perpetrators of rape and other forms of violence against women. Many global studies have concluded that ensuring the education of girls, which CEDAW promotes, helps reduce instances of violence in the future.

LIE: THE CEDAW COMMITTEE COULD IMPOSE POLICIES ON THE U.S.

FACT: The CEDAW committee is strictly advisory in nature. In fact, by not ratifying CEDAW, the U.S. is prevented from participating in CEDAW committee proceedings, which builds partnerships among nations to end human rights abuses and promote the health and well being of women and girls around the world. The U.S. will be in a better position to share best practices and policy recommendations with other countries by participating in the treaty process.

Women have already waited 30 years for the radical right to stop lying about CEDAW. Enough is enough. **Demand President Obama and the Senate RATIFY WOMEN! by prioritizing and passing CEDAW without restrictions.**

RATIFY WOMEN!

DROP ALL RUDs: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

As the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is neither binding nor self-executing, there is no reason to undermine the women's rights treaty with disabling Reservations, Understandings or Declarations (RUDs). The various RUDs that have already been proposed convey a clear lack of commitment to ending discrimination against women and specifically claim no responsibility for the U.S. to undertake efforts to expand maternity leave, improve access to health care services for women, or take more effective efforts to address sex-based pay discrimination, among other objectives that would promote women's equality.

Read a thorough analysis of possible CEDAW RUDs prepared by Martha Davis, Professor of Law; Co-Director, Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy, Northeastern University School of Law (for identification purposes only), here:

http://www.nowfoundation.org/issues/global/cedaw_rdu_analysis.pdf

RATIFYING CEDAW IS A PLEDGE TO DO THE RIGHT THING FOR WOMEN

- Take concrete action to improve the status of women in the U.S. and around the world
- Take measures to ensure that women enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Establish judicial procedures to ensure the effective protection of the rights of women
- Take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by individuals, organizations and enterprises
- Submit national reports every four years on actions taken to comply with the treaty's pledge to protect and promote the rights of women and girls in the U.S.

Read the NOW Foundation article *Don't Be Deceived: Only A "Clean" CEDAW Should Be Ratified* here: <http://www.nowfoundation.org/issues/global/083109cedaw.html>

Women have already waited 30 years for our country to commit to upholding our basic human rights in a non-binding treaty. To attach unnecessary RUDs to limit (or erode) women's rights is unacceptable. **Demand President Obama and the Senate RATIFY WOMEN! by prioritizing and passing CEDAW without restrictions.**

RATIFY WOMEN!

GLOBAL SUCCESS: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has led to tremendous changes around the world. In agreeing to ratify CEDAW, countries agree to take concrete action to improve the status of women and girls.

WHAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE DONE AFTER RATIFYING CEDAW

- Turkey changed laws to raise marriageable age to 17, allow women to keep maiden names, work outside the home and keep their own wages without permission from their husbands
- Honduras created policies to make agricultural training and loans available to women farmers
- Austria amended policies for maternity protection and paternity leave
- Cambodia created a women's ministry
- Canada created an institute to address health disparities between women and men
- Uganda created and funded programs to reduce domestic violence
- Israel allocated funding to mammograms
- Argentina developed a program to prevent teen pregnancy and care for teen mothers, especially homeless teen mothers
- Botswana overturned a law giving citizenship to children of men married to foreigners but not to children of women married to foreigners
- Germany, Guatemala, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom, and many other countries, improved maternity leave and child care for women working outside the home

Women in the U.S. also stand to benefit greatly under CEDAW ratification. Though the U.S. played an important role in helping to draft the women's rights treaty, we are the only industrialized country that hasn't ratified it. Women in our country have already waited too long — 30 years. **Demand President Obama and the Senate RATIFY WOMEN! by prioritizing and passing CEDAW without restrictions.**

RATIFY WOMEN!

LOCAL SUCCESS: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has led to tremendous changes around the world. In agreeing to ratify CEDAW, countries agree to take "all appropriate measures" to ensure the full development and advancement of women in all arenas.

While several local states, counties and cities have passed resolutions urging U.S. ratification, the city of San Francisco was the first U.S. city to adopt an ordinance obligating itself to the principles of CEDAW. We can assume that the expansion of justice for women in San Francisco under CEDAW strongly suggests what could happen in our entire country upon ratification.

WHAT THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO HAS SEEN AFTER RATIFYING CEDAW

- Harsher sentences for domestic violence were adopted
- More women and men with families began working for the city after the implementation of new flexible work schedules
- The Department of Public Works decreased the distance between streetlights after taking women's safety into consideration
- The Department of Juvenile Justice has started gender-specific programming and hired a girls' advocate
- The Fire Department, Police Department and Port Authority are now all led by women

Women in the U.S. stand to benefit greatly under CEDAW ratification. Though the U.S. played an important role in helping to draft the women's rights treaty, we are the only industrialized country that hasn't ratified it. Women in our country have already waited too long — 30 years.

Demand President Obama and the Senate RATIFY WOMEN! by prioritizing and passing CEDAW without restrictions.

RATIFY WOMEN!

PROMOTING PEACE: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

“Clearly the nature of war has changed. It is being fought in homes and communities – and on women's bodies in a battle for resources and in the name of religion and ethnicity.”

--Noeleen Heyzer, former Executive Director of UNIFEM

Drafted in 1979, The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) predates UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the landmark international human rights law drafted in 2000. CEDAW also works towards sustainable peace.

HOW CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE DISPROPORTIONATELY HURTS WOMEN

Violence against women dramatically escalates in conflict-affected societies. Gender-based discrimination plays a key role in making women vulnerable to gender-based violence. Misogynistic attitudes devalue and objectify women. In times of war women's bodies are raped assaulted to communicate threats and perpetuate attempted genocide on entire communities.

CEDAW's provisions encourage countries to adopt laws and policies that protect women from many of the atrocities committed against women in times of war, including: torture; sexual assault and rape; intentional infection of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; forced pregnancy; forced prostitution and trafficking; displacement; economic deprivation; exploited labor; and forced domestic servitude.

HOW CEDAW PROMOTES PEACE

- Promoting gender equality and the elimination of gender-based discrimination, which creates space for women to actively and equally participate in rebuilding their communities and nations
- Promoting the protection of women from gender-based violence and sexual assault, including but not limited to their use as weapons of war, by creating stronger punishments
- Promoting the participation of women in decision-making, increasing the likelihood that priorities, perspectives and needs of women are addressed in matters of sovereignty

CEDAW promotes not only women's empowerment, but also a foundation for peace and justice around the world. Women in the U.S. and around the world have already waited 30 years for the world's superpower to sign onto this important treaty. **Demand President Obama and the Senate RATIFY WOMEN! by prioritizing and passing CEDAW without restrictions.**

What You Can Do - Make CEDAW A Priority

1. Write President Obama

Although Secretary of State Clinton is a strong champion, we must urge President Obama take a leadership role to signal to Congressional leaders that he wants CEDAW ratified. As there is no cabinet-level office on women's rights to lobby at this time, you are strongly encouraged to include pressure on the president in all of your organizing efforts. Use the NOW website to send e-mails to the White House. Handwritten letters are also encouraged.

2. Lobby your Senators

Target members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee first, urging them to hold hearings and vote to move a ratification measure to a floor vote. Next is an important educational effort with all other Senators, even those who you expect to be on the other side of the issue. They need to hear from you how important the women's rights treaty will be to improving the lives of women and girls in this country. You are encouraged to take all of the following actions:

a. Request meetings at both local offices.

Ask when your Senators will be in town, and request meetings with each of them. If you are unable to meet in person with a Senator, ask to meet with a staff person dealing with foreign relations. Bring several NOW members with you if you can.

"I'm a leader in the local chapter of the National Organization for Women, and I'm here on behalf of the millions of women and girls in the United States.

CEDAW is a treaty that addresses the basic human rights of women. It has proven to be an effective tool in

reducing violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world. For example, after ratifying CEDAW, Estonia took measures to stop trafficking of women and girls and Vietnam granted women equal rights to land-use titles. This women's rights treaty has also helped to improve access to education and health care, and secure basic legal recourse to women and girls against violations and abuses of their human rights.

Though the U.S. played an important role in helping to draft the women's rights treaty, we are the only industrialized country that hasn't ratified it. Overall, our country is now one of seven that have not ratified CEDAW, placing us in the company of Sudan, Somalia, Iran, Nauru, Palau and Tonga.

The U.S. should embrace CEDAW and the principle that women's rights are human rights. We have waited more than 30 years and can't delay this any longer. Until we ratify CEDAW, we can't credibly demand that others live up to their obligations to protect human rights.

The treaty is non-binding and simply declares that the U.S. is willing to take measures to improve the status of women and eliminate discrimination against women. Therefore, there should be no restrictions, or RUDs, attached to CEDAW.

CEDAW has always enjoyed bipartisan support but has never come before the full Senate for a vote. I urge you to support the women's rights treaty and work toward full Senate ratification."

b. Issue public statements on your Senators' responses.

Include that information in a blog, issue press releases and write letters to the editor. Even if your Senators aren't taking firm stands to support or oppose, it's important to let the community know that you are taking action on this issue. It holds Senators accountable.

3. Educate your community about CEDAW

Intentional and visible community-level action and education is required to shore up the support required to ratify CEDAW. If your Senator takes a stand on CEDAW, hold a "thank you" rally and/or protest outside local offices or at your state capitol.

Awareness events are both fun and help to build a larger activist base to work with you:

- Organize a movie night with snacks at local meeting centers
- Give a short information speech about CEDAW and allow for questions
- Reach out to high schools, community colleges and universities and ask to speak with classes and human rights groups

Bring copies of the fact sheets in this kit and invite those who attend to take action with you.

4. Rally on or around International Women's Day (March 8) or Women's History Month

Rallies can have the dual purpose of building support and informing the community. Make sure to have fact sheets available for those who have questions. Inform your members about what CEDAW is and how it can be ratified. Any highly visible location is appropriate ... only you know the best locations in your community. You can also publicize your rally in a letter to the

editor or press release, as well as on Twitter and Facebook. End your event by screening one of the films suggested in this kit.

Here are some ideas for homemade signs:

- a. CEDAW: Women's Rights are Human Rights!
- b. CEDAW: End Discrimination Against U.S. Women
- c. U.S. = Leaders in Human Rights? Prove It With CEDAW!
- d. RATIFY CEDAW! RATIFY WOMEN!

4. Let National NOW help support and publicize your actions.

If you are holding a CEDAW event, let us know so we can help you publicize it. If you are interested, we may be able to help connect with volunteer callers to boost attendance and/or try to send a National NOW officer to your event to help you boost attendance.

After you hold an event, send us pictures and reports and we'll help publicize your results as well. It's absolutely critical for our leaders to help demonstrate that the time for ratification is now. For assistance, please contact National NOW Action Vice President Erin Matson, at vpaction@now.org or 202-628-8669 x125.

RATIFY WOMEN!

WEBSITES: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

In addition to the NOW RATIFY WOMEN! campaign website (www.ratifywomen.org) and information available on the NOW Foundation website (www.nowfoundation.org), there are several websites we recommend to you.

<http://cedaw30.wordpress.com/>

www.womenstreaty.org

http://www.endabuse.org/userfiles/file/Maternal_Health/cedaw.pdf

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/iwraw/cedaw.html>

<http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/cms/images/stories/downloads/2009/30YearsofCEDAW-AReport.pdf>

<http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/article/takeaction/resourcecenter/872.html> (LGBT issues and CEDAW)

www.awid.org (Association for Women's Rights and Development)

www.globalfundforwomen.org (Global Fund for Women)

<http://www.globalwoman-magazine.com/> (Global Woman Magazine)

www.urgentactionfund.org (Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights)

www.coloredgirls.org (Women of Color Resource Center)

RATIFY WOMEN!

BOOKS: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

A Border Passage: From Cairo to America – A Women’s Journey – Leila Ahmed

Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial and Feminist World – editors Uma Narayan, Sandra Harding

Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third World Feminism (Thinking Gender) – Uma Narayan

Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity – Chandra Talpade Mohanty

The Feminist Philosophy Reader – Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo

The Gendered Society – Michael Kimmel (“Spanning the World” pp.52-71; “The Gender of Violence” pp. 264-288).

Genital Cutting and Transnational Sisterhood: Disputing U.S. Polemics – James, Robertson – editors;

Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights – Carol Gould

Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide – Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women? – Cohen, Howard, Nussbaum – editors

Persepolis – Marjane Satrapi

Population Policies Reconsidered – Sen, Germaine and Chen – editors

Rethinking Sexual Harassment – Brant, Too – editors

Stolen Lives: Twenty Years in a Desert Jail – Malika Oufkir

Women and Human Development: the Capabilities Approach – Martha Nussbaum

RATIFY WOMEN!

ARTICLES: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

“Abortion and Islam: Policies and Practice in the Middle East and North Africa”; Leila Hessini; *Reproductive Health Matters* http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=998448

“Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminists Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies”; Oyeronke Oyewumi; *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* <http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/gender/OYEWUMI.pdf>

“From Office Ladies to Women Warriors? The Effect of the EEOL on Japanese Women”; Jennifer Fan; *UCLA Women’s Law Journal* <https://litigation-essentials.lexisnexis.com/webcd/app?action=DocumentDisplay&crawlid=1&doctype=cite&docid=10+UCLA+Women's+L.J.+103&srctype=smi&srcid=3B15&key=a2d6adec4b2980daa9e9b2535dba4900>

“Global Feminism and Transformative Identity Politics”; Alison Weir; *Hypatia* <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/hypatia/summary/v023/23.4.weir.html>

“Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color”; Kimberle Crenshaw; *Stanford Law Review* <http://www.wcsap.org/Events/Workshop07/mapping-margins.pdf>

“The Global Universal Caregiver: Imagining Women’s Liberation in the Third Millennium”; Alison Weir; *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118666574/issue?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>

The Southern Journal of Philosophy Supplement – special issue on global feminist ethics and politics <http://philosophy.memphis.edu/sjp/vol46sup.html>

“Women and Work: The Capabilities Approach”; Martha Nassbaum; *The Little Magazine* <http://www.littlemag.com/martha.htm>

“Women, Sexuality, and Social Change in the Middle East and the Maghreb”; Pinar Ilkcaracan; *Social Research* http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2267/is_3_69/ai_94227140/

RATIFY WOMEN!

FILMS: CEDAW WOMEN'S RIGHTS TREATY

Peace and Human Rights

BEYOND BELIEF (USA, 2007, 90 minutes)

Powerful story of two soccer moms living in the suburbs of Boston until tragedy strikes when they lose their husbands in the September 11th events at the World Trade Center. Instead of revenge, they support one another to dedicate themselves to empowering Afghan widows whose lives have been ravaged by decades of war, poverty and oppression. An unlikely kinship and sisterhood with widows halfway around the world. Truly moving and remarkable. Directed by Beth Murphy. Distributed by Principle Pictures. www.principlepictures.com

CEDAW: THE SECRET TREATY (USA, 2008, 30 minutes)

This documentary sheds a light on some of the injustices against women in the US and the world and how the US ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) would serve as a blueprint to address them. Produced and directed by the Feminist Majority Foundation's Lorraine Sheinburg. www.store.feminist.org

LO QUE LME TOCO VIVIR /THE LIFE I GOT TO LIVE (USA, 2008)

A film by Veronica Barrera. This film recounts Seattle resident Alicia Barrera's life growing up in rural Chile and the dramatic turn the lives of all Chileans took on September 11, 1973. With her husband wounded the day of the coup, and later imprisoned and tortured by the Pinochet regime, Barrera's story unfolds as one common, yet often untold, experience lived by thousands of women who suffered, struggled, and persevered in the face of extended family rejection, a wider public paralyzed by fear, the terrorist brutality of a CIA-funded dictatorship, and the alienation of political exile. With contributions from an international array of photojournalists, artists, and musicians, *Lo que Me Tocó Vivir -The Life I Got to Live*, both personalizes the political lens and widens the narrative scope of ineffable memories created in the struggle for human rights. In Spanish. Distributed by the filmmaker at veronb@u.washington.edu

PEACE X PEACE: WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINES (USA, 60 minutes, 2003)

Directed by Lisa Hepner and Patricia Smith Melton, and narrated by Jessica Lange, *Peace by Peace* profiles women in Afghanistan, Argentina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi and the U.S. who are building the foundations for sustainable peace with justice. An emotionally-charged film that provides an exclusive view of the world through the eyes of ten strong, determined, and compassionate women, who are transforming both their communities and themselves in a new culture of peace. www.peacexpeace.org

PRAY THE DEVIL BACK TO HELL (USA, 2008/2009 60 or 72 minute DVD versions)

Chronicles the remarkable story of the courageous Liberian women who came together to end a bloody civil war and bring peace to their shattered country. Thousands of women – ordinary mothers, grandmothers, aunts and daughters, both Christian and Muslim – came together to pray for peace and then staged a silent protest outside of the Presidential Palace. Armed with only their white T-shirts and the courage of their convictions, they took on the warlords and nonviolently forced a resolution during the stalled peace talks. A story of sacrifice, unity and transcendence, the film honors the strength and perseverance of the women of Liberia. Inspiring, uplifting, and most of all motivating, it is a compelling testimony of how grassroots activism can alter the history of nations. Producer Abigail Disney, Director Gini Reticker Distributed by Fork Films www.praythediabacktohell.com

REGRET TO INFORM (USA, 1998, 72 minutes)

A rare women's perspective on war, in which two women widowed by the Vietnam War -- Vietnamese translator Xuan Ngoc Nguyen and US filmmaker Barbara Sonneborn -- travel through Vietnam looking at the heritage of the war and its impact on them and on other women. Nominated for a US Academy Award as Best Documentary. www.pbs.org

WHITE RAINBOW (USA, 2006, 60 minutes)

Inspired by true events is the story of Priya (*Sonali Kulkarni – Bride and Prejudice*), a beautiful, affluent young woman widowed and left to fate. Alone in a land of extreme contrasts, she seeks peace in the “City of Widows”, but instead of finding solace, Priya finds a cruel world filled with brutality. Despondent, she meets three remarkable women and together they embark on a journey of empowerment as they fight for the rights of the widows of India in the ultimately hopeful and uplifting story. Directed by Dharan Mandrayar and produced by Linda Mandrayer. www.whiterainbow.com

Political Leadership and Participation

THE CIRCLE/Dayereh (Iran/Italy/Switzerland, 2000, 91minutes)

Banned in his native Iran, Jafar Panahi's The Circle is set almost entirely on the busy streets of Tehran--a place where women are restricted by numerous laws, including a repressive dress code. The beginning of the film focuses on two women who have been given temporary leave from prison and have no intension of returning. The film shifts from one woman to another as this eye-opening tale circles back on itself. Their world is one of constant surveillance, bureaucracy and age-old inequalities. But this stifling world cannot extinguish the spirit, strength and courage of the circle of women. Iranian cinema at its best and most politically aware. Discontinued by original distributor, but DVD copies at www.amazon.com

CUBA MIA: PORTRAIT OF AN ALL-WOMEN'S ORCHESTRA (Cuba, 2005, 85 minutes)

Ten talented and beautiful musicians, playing the harmonies of Cuban soul, demonstrate the power of music to cross boundaries. This story of the musicians of the all-woman Camerata Romeu is filled with dazzling faces and fiery performances that astonish and delight. By turns funny, angry, lyrical and moving, CUBA MIA takes us behind the scenes as ten dedicated musicians juggle a fierce rehearsal schedule with boyfriends, girlfriends, grandparents and children, offering a slice of Cuban life seldom seen on the world's screens.

This award-winning (CINE Golden Eagle, Chicago Film Festival, World Music Festival) was directed by Cecilia Domeyko, creator of Code Name: Butterflies (www.codenamebutterflies.org) and dozens of films capturing the Latina/o experience in the US and Latin America.

www.accentmediainc.com

EARTH (India/Canada, 1996, 101 minutes), **FIRE** (India/Canada, 1998, 104 minutes), **WATER** (Canada, 2005, 114 minutes)

Known as her Elements Trilogy, all of these feature films are written and directed by Indian born and Canadian Deepa Mehta. Fire was the first Indian film to address lesbian love and portray positive homosexual relationships on screen. Earth is narrated by a 12 year old India girl with polio about the division of India at the time of partition in 1947. Water, written and directed by Mehta, is set in India in 1938, brings forth the lives of Indian widows living in an ashram. All of Deepa Mehta's exquisite films come from a deep feminist sensibility and have provoked riots, protests and much consciousness-raising in India and worldwide. www.zeitgeistfilms.com

HABLEMOS DEL PODER /TALKING OF POWER: Gender, Race and Power in Revolutionary Venezuela (Great Britain, 2005, 62 minutes)

Women's roles and leadership in the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela: from the Hills of Caracas to the banks of the Orinoco, the grassroots Venezuelan people tell how they are changing our world! Neoliberalism increases women's workload. Who suffers most, who works most when health services are privatized? Women, mothers... The highest participation in the Missions: women. Social Security for housewives is a constitutional mandate (Article 88).

Produced by the Global Women's Strike. www.globalwomenstrike.org

LADIES FIRST (USA, 2004, 58 minutes)

Powerful documentary on women's leadership in Rwanda filmed 10 years following the bloody genocide where it is estimated that 800,000 were killed in 100 days. Rwandan women are leading their country's healing process and taking it into a different future. Women are playing a remarkable role in politics and leading role in business as they have achieved political gender balance with the largest parliamentary majority in the world. Profiling women on the forefront of change, Ladies First also reveals the challenges for Rwanda as they re-build a sustainable peace between the majority Hutus and minority Tutsies. www.pbs.org/WNET.org/wideangle

OSAMA (USA, 2003, 90 minutes) One of the first feature films to be made after the US invasion of Afghanistan. Unflinching and true story of 12 young girl in Afghanistan and impact of the Taliban on her life. To save her family, she must pose as a boy and embarks on a terrifying and confusing journey to keep the Taliban from discovering her real gender identity. Golden Globe award winner for 2004 Best Foreign film. www.sonystyle.com

NO LOGO: Brands, Globalization and Resistance (USA, 2003 40 minutes) Best selling author ([The Shock Doctrine](#)) Naomi Klein's ground breaking analysis on the rise of international branding and the anti-corporate movements it inspired. Distributed by Media Education Foundation www.mediaed.org

RISING ABOVE: WOMEN OF VIETNAM (USA, 1996, 50 minutes)

A documentary about the role of women in the war against France and the US, Vietnamese women fought alongside men as equals, negotiated the peace accords and later in the highest levels of the new government. But after 30 years of the signing of the peace agreement, a number of forces are conspiring to relegate women once again to the role of second class citizens. www.bullfrogfilms.com

Health & Reproductive Rights

LOVE LABOR LOSS (USA, 2005, 15 minutes)

Throughout the developing world, a relatively unknown childbearing injury called "obstetric fistula" has left over two million women both physically and socially debilitated. A documentary film follows the compelling journey of five women in Niger, West Africa, to reclaim dignity after the tragedy of childbirth. With Music by Zap Mama. Also full length feature documentary format. Distributed by the filmmaker Lisa Russell at www.lovelaborloss.com

MADE IN INDIA

A documentary film that tells the human experiences behind the phenomena of "outsourcing" surrogate mothers to India. The film shows the journey of an infertile American couple, an Indian surrogate and the reproductive outsourcing business that brings them together. Weaving together these personal stories within the context of a growing international industry, "Made in India" explores a complicated clash of families in crisis, reproductive technology, and choice from a global perspective. Co-Directors/Producers, Rebecca Haimowitz & Vaishali Sinha. www.madeinindiamovie.com

MOOLADE (Senegal/France/Burkina Faso/Cameron/Morocco, 2004, 120 minutes)

Feature film which vibrantly and poignantly depicts the struggles of women in modern Africa by Senegalese director Ousmane Sembene (the founder of African cinema). [Moolaade](#) addresses the subject of female genital cutting, a common practice in a number of African nations, especially sub-Saharan Africa. The film strongly argues against this practice and features a village woman who uses moolaade (protective magic) to protect a group of girls. She is opposed by some of the villagers who argue for female circumcision, which they call "purification". Powerful look at impacts of globalization and clash with values of tradition. Only distribution is through www.amazon.com or www.netflix.com

MOTHERLAND AFGHANISTAN (USA, 73 minutes, 2006)

A film about maternal and reproductive human rights issues in Afghanistan—currently, one in seven Afghan women dies in childbirth); “Afghanistan today has the second highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world. After nearly thirty years of war and occupation, the nation's medical system has been devastated and its doctors and other medical personnel are poorly trained. Afghans hoped that the U.S. invasion in October 2001, which initially routed the Taliban regime, would bring improvements in women's health and education, but the rights of Afghan women to adequate healthcare are still denied.” <http://www.frif.com/new2006/afgh.html>

NO ESTAS SOLA I AM NOT ALONE

No Estás Sola dvd with English subtitles. It was produced by Catholics For a Free Choice and we have full screening rights to use it as we was filmed in Colombia prior to legal abortion. But it is used in clinics all over Latin America and it's a good to tool to have around. We have full screening rights and a copy is at the NOW Action Center Resource Library. (www.now.org)

ROSITA (USA, 2003, 58 minutes)

A documentary by award-winning filmmakers Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater (Silver Docs, Latin American Film Festival in London, Cinefestival in San Antonio), *Rosita* traces a young girls' journey from innocent victim to unwitting victor. When a nine-year old Nicaraguan girl becomes pregnant as a result of a rape, her parents -- illiterate campesinos working in Costa Rica -- seek a legal abortion to save their only child's life. Their quest pits them against the governments of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, the medical establishment and the Catholic Church. When their story gains international media attention, the repercussions ripple across Latin America and Europe. "This film is not just for the activists in the reproductive rights movement, it is for all who work in social justice and who work to defend our human rights." - Sylvia Hernandez, ED, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Rights. Distributed by www.bullfrogproductions.com

SALUD!! To Your Health! (USA, 2006, 93 minutes) A powerful film about conflicting values and the urgency of ensuring the universal right to health care. Beautifully filmed in Cuba, South Africa, The Gambia, Honduras and Venezuela, *Salud!* reveals the human dimension of the worldwide health crisis and the central role of international cooperation in addressing glaring inequalities. The film examines the remarkable case of Cuba, a cash-strapped country with what the BBC calls “one of the world’s best health systems”, and accompanies some of the 28,000 Cuban health professionals now serving in 68 countries. *Salud!* invites us to explore new paths to making health a global birthright, wiping out the diseases of poverty. Directed by Academy Award winner Connie Field ([Rosie the Riveter](#)) and produced by Gail Reed. www.saludthefilm.net

Violence Against Women and Girls

BORDERTOWN (USA, 2008, 114 minutes)

Feature film story of life on the border between the United States and Mexico, based on the tragic account of hundreds of women working in American-owned factories who have been brutally raped and murdered in Juarez, Mexico. Based on true events. Featuring Jennifer Lopez, Antonio Banderas and Martin Sheen. Directed by Oscar Nominee (*El Norte*) Gregory Nava. Distributed by TH!NK Film. www.thinkfilmcompany.com

BORDER ECHOS/Ecos De Una Frontera (USA/Mexico, 72 minutes, 2003)

A powerful documentary that tells the story of the killings of girls and women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, through the eyes of investigative reporter Diana Washington Valdez. The film, in English, chronicles the chilling story of the deaths that Amnesty International called "Intolerable Killings" in its 2003 report on Ciudad Juarez. Some victims were as young as 5 and 6 years old, and the majority of the victims were teenagers and young women. Although numerous suspects are in custody, activists and families of victims believe the Mexican authorities have not solved most of the crimes. The film explains why the murders are likely to continue. Produced by Lorena Mendez-Quiroga, Border Echos: The Truth Behind the Juarez Murders also provides previously unreported and shocking details about the murders. Distributed by Peace at the Border Films. <http://www.borderechoes.com/>

DARFUR DIARIES (USA, 2005, 55 minutes)

The conflict about the human rights atrocities in the Darfur region of Sudan serves as the ongoing narrative in the film, but the focus is on the people who are living through – what has been termed a ‘genocide.’ Through the voices of refugees, displaced persons, and in particular women and children, who are always among the most vulnerable in any conflict situation, this film seeks to provide space for the marginalized victims of atrocities to speak and to engage with the world. The film presents the Darfurians the filmmakers met (refugees and displaced peoples, civilians and fighters resisting the Sudanese government, child soldiers, teachers, students, parents, children and community leaders) as people whose lives, homes, safety and rights deserve to be protected vigilantly as a fundamental human right.” Distributed by Cinema Libre Studio. <http://www.darfurdiaries.org/>

FINDING DAWN (Canada, 2006, 73 minutes)

Horror film about violence against Aboriginal women in Canada; 500 women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada over the past thirty years. This is an epic journey into the dark heart of Native women’s experience in Canada. From Vancouver’s skid row, where more than 60 women are missing, we travel to the “Highway of Tears” in northern British Columbia, and onward to Saskatoon, where the murders of Native women remain unresolved. Finding Dawn illustrates the deep historical, social and economic factors that contribute to the epidemic of violence against Native women in this country. Directed by acclaimed Metis filmmaker Christine Welsh and distributed by Women Make Movies. www.wmm.com

KILLER'S PARADISE (U.K./USA/Canada, 2006, 83 minutes)

Since 1999, more than 2,000 women have been murdered in Guatemala, with numbers escalating every year, yet lawmakers and government officials turn a blind eye. Powerful and uncompromising, Killer's Paradise uncovers an emotionally wrenching human rights tragedy, while exposing an inept judicial system that allows it to happen. After almost four decades of civil war, Guatemala is a troubled society, but it can also be seen as a microcosm of the pervasive violence and injustice against women worldwide.

Spanish/English (English subtitles). Directed by Giselle Portenier. Distributed by the National Film Board of Canada www.onf-nfb.gc.ca

THE GREATEST SILENCE: RAPE IN THE CONGO (USA, 76 minutes, 2007)

Shot in the war zones of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), this extraordinary film shatters the silence that surrounds the shocking plight of women and girls caught in this country's intractable conflict. The most moving and harrowing moments of the film come as dozens of survivors recount their stories with an honesty and immediacy pulverizing in its intimacy and detail. Heart-wrenching in its portrayal of the grotesque realities of life in Congo, this powerful film also provides inspiring examples of resiliency, resistance, courage and grace. Directed by Lisa F. Jackson, a survivor of gang rape. French/Swahili/Lingala/Mashi with English subtitles. Distributed by Women Make Movies www.wmm.com

V-DAY: UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS (USA, 2003, 72 minutes)

Features playwright and activist Eve Ensler in a powerful film that documents how the Vagina Monologues called V-Day to stop the violence against women and girls. Until the Violence Stops features women from Harlem to Ukiah, CA; from the Pine Ridge Reservations to the Philippines and Kenya, uniting and courageously revealing their intimate and deeply painful experiences with abuse ranging from rape to female circumcision. www.vday.org

Special thanks to the NOW Global Feminist Strategies and Issues Committee for their assistance in compiling this kit, especially Stephanie Ortoleva, Chair; Tiffany Goldwater; Shaya Gregory; Linda Morse; Tara Romano; Kathleen Sloan; and Jan Strout.