



Government
Equalities Office

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**RESPONSE BY THE UNITED KINGDOM (UK) AND NORTHERN
IRELAND (NI) TO SELECT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL
FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN FOLLOWING
THE EXAMINATION OF THE UK AND NI'S 5TH AND 6TH
PERIODIC REPORTS ON JULY 10 2008**

JULY 2009

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(NI) TO SELECT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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Introduction

1. The concluding observations of the examination of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland's 5th and 6th Periodic Reports under the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) request that the Government of the UK and Northern Ireland provide, within one year of the examination, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained within paragraphs 261 and 263 of the concluding observations.

Paragraph 261 in full

2. *The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation and urges that, in the light of the proposed introduction of a new Equality Bill for England, Scotland and Wales, and single equality legislation covering all grounds of discrimination in Northern Ireland, the State party utilize this important opportunity to ensure the incorporation of all provisions of the Convention. It calls upon the State party to consult and collaborate with civil society organizations, in particular women's and human rights organizations, and other stakeholders in the formulation of the new equality legislation with a view to raising awareness and broadening understanding of the Convention and of the principles of equality and non-discrimination.*

Paragraph 263 in full

3. *The Committee underlines that the principal responsibility for implementation of the Convention lies with the Government of the United Kingdom. Reiterating its recommendation of 1999, the Committee calls for the development and enactment of a unified, comprehensive and overarching national strategy and policy for the implementation of the Convention throughout the United Kingdom, including its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. It calls upon the State party to undertake all necessary measures to ensure the full implementation of this strategy in a consistent and coherent manner across its territory, including through the establishment of an effective coordination and monitoring mechanism on implementation, and to provide comprehensive information on steps and measures taken in this regard in its next periodic report. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party provide adequate technical and financial assistance to its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies for the implementation of the Convention. In line with article 24 of the Convention and article 13 of its Optional Protocol, the Committee calls upon the State party to take concrete measures to make these two human rights instruments widely known. In this respect, the Committee requests the State party to undertake public awareness and training programmes on the Convention and its Optional Protocol, as well as on the Committee's general recommendations. It also requests the State party to raise awareness among women of their rights under the Convention and the communications and inquiry procedures provided by its Optional Protocol. It further requests the State party to ensure that the Convention and its Optional Protocol, as well as the Committee's general recommendations, and the views adopted on individual communications, are made an integral part of educational curricula, including for legal education and the training of judicial officers, judges, lawyers and prosecutors.*

Response of the government of the United Kingdom Government¹ to the recommendations contained in Paragraph 261

4. **Recommendation: The Committee [....] urges that, in the light of the proposed introduction of a new Equality Bill for England, Scotland and Wales [....], the State party utilize this important opportunity to ensure the incorporation of all provisions of the Convention.**

5. The UK rejects this recommendation on the basis that such an approach would create a separate, parallel regime within the Equality Bill that incorporates all the elements of CEDAW that are, to the extent that the UK is obliged to comply with them, already covered by or present in other areas of UK law.

6. The purpose of the Equality Bill is to prohibit discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. It provides protection against discrimination in specific fields only, namely work, the provision of goods, facilities and services and the exercise of public functions, premises, education in schools and in further and higher education institutions, and in associations including private clubs. By contrast, CEDAW covers all fields including in particular social and cultural fields. The Convention includes obligations such as “*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures ... to ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of*

¹**The UK Government and Devolved Administrations:** In reporting on matters that pertain to the United Kingdom, it is critical to be aware of how the UK Government is structured, namely in regards to role of Central Government at Whitehall and its relationship with the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In 1999, following a series of referendums, devolved governments were established in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, named respectively: the Scottish Parliament; the National Assembly for Wales and; the Northern Ireland Assembly. These devolved governments have responsibility for a range of policy and legislative matters (devolved matters), where arrangements are different for each administration, reflecting their history and administrative structures. The UK government remains responsible for national policy on all matters that have not been devolved (reserved matters), including foreign affairs, defense, social security, macro-economic management and trade. In regards to equal opportunities, such matters are largely reserved in respect of Scotland and Wales (with certain exceptions). In Scotland, the Scotland Act (1998) gives the Scottish Parliament power to encourage (other than by prohibition or regulation) equal opportunities. In Northern Ireland, equality issues are a transferred matter under the UK's devolution settlement.

the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases". Many of the Convention's obligations, like this one, are not to do with the conferral of rights on people, which is what the discrimination provisions in the Bill deal with. Indeed, the UK considers that it is not appropriate, nor indeed possible, for legislation to address such obligations. Article 3 of CEDAW recognises that non-legislative measures will be the right way to address some of the Convention's obligations.

7. Gender equality is being advanced under the Bill in a number of ways. For instance, the Bill:

- extends the period during which positive action measures, including women-only shortlists, are allowed in order to help increase the representation of women in the UK Parliament and local, national and European elected bodies.
- increases transparency in pay in order to tackle the gender pay gap and other persistent inequalities. Specifically, it includes powers which will require public sector employers to report on their gender pay gaps; employers have to identify the problem before they can tackle it. It includes further powers which will apply this requirement to the private sector in 2013 if it has taken insufficient steps to reduce the pay gap by then.
- promotes the scope for employers to take positive measures to increase workforce diversity.
- carries forward the existing gender equality duty which means that public bodies need to think about the needs of everyone who uses their services or works for them, whatever their gender.
- makes explicit the protection against discrimination for pregnant women and new mothers.

- protects from discrimination those who have caring responsibilities, the majority of whom are women, in certain circumstances such as caring for a disabled child or an older relative.
 - strengthens the powers of employment tribunals so that, for example, if a woman brought a sex discrimination claim but ended up leaving the company she worked for, the tribunal could recommend that her employer reviews its equal opportunities policy to prevent women being in a position whereby they need to bring similar claims in the future.
8. The Equality Bill is a reserved matter and is therefore applicable to England, Scotland and Wales (See Footnote 1 on page 4 for fuller explanation).
9. **Recommendation: The Committee [...] urges that, in the light of [...] the proposed introduction of single equality legislation covering all grounds of discrimination in Northern Ireland, the State party utilize this important opportunity to ensure the incorporation of all provisions of the Convention.**
10. The Northern Ireland administration is keeping all aspects of equality legislation under ongoing review.
11. **Recommendation: It calls upon the State party to consult and collaborate with civil society organizations, in particular women's and human rights organizations, and other stakeholders in the formulation of the new equality legislation with a view to raising awareness and broadening understanding of the Convention and of the principles of equality and non-discrimination.**

12. Wide-ranging public consultation was undertaken by the Government Equalities Office (GEO) throughout the drafting of the Equality Bill process including a formal three month public consultation that closed in September 2007 and a number of meetings with stakeholders. 4,000 responses to the consultation were received of which 600 were from stakeholder organisations including Chwarae Teg, National Assembly of Women, Women's Resource Centre, FATIMA Women's Network, South London Fawcett Group, Women's Voice, National Council of Women of Great Britain, Scottish Women's Convention, Scottish Women's Aid, End Violence Against Women, the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology, Women and Manual Trades, EAVES Housing, Rights of Women, Women's Aid, Breastfeeding Network, Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition, The Fawcett Society and Welsh Women's Aid.

13. As part of this public consultation, the GEO also had ongoing and close dialogue with the Women's National Commission (WNC) through both their participation in the senior stakeholders group and through a roundtable discussion that was attended by senior officials. The WNC was established by the UK Government in 1979 and as the 'official independent advisory body giving the views of women to government'. The WNC is fully funded by government but is independent and speaks on behalf of its vast network of over 500 representatives from civil society and women's non-government organisations (NGOs).

14. The Bill also underwent a rigorous Equality Impact Assessment which can be viewed here:

<http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/Equality%20Bill%20Eq%20Impact%20As.pdf>

15. In Scotland, The Scottish Government fed into the Equality Bill consultation in a number of ways. A Scottish representative expressed the views of the Scottish Stakeholders' Group - which met regularly and

was organised by Scottish Government, at meetings of the UK Government's Senior Stakeholders' Group. In addition, there was a Scottish Government representative on the UK specific duties and age reference groups.

16. In Wales, The Welsh Assembly Government worked closely with the GEO throughout the consultation period to ensure that Welsh interests were represented. This included attendance at regular meetings of the Equality Bill Cross Government Working Groups.

17. Further consultations on the public sector equality duty (currently ongoing) and on the exceptions to age discrimination (coming soon) have also been arranged. The public sector equality duty consultation can be viewed at:

<http://www.equalities.gov.uk/PDF/Specific%20Duties%20Consultation%20DocumentWEB.pdf>.

A joint stakeholder event on both of these consultations is planned with the WNC.

18. The development of the specific duties, for example the public sector equality duty, is a devolved matter and therefore a matter for the Scottish and Welsh governments.

19. In Scotland, the Scottish Government held a public sector meeting on 20 May 2009, which included discussions about the options for the development of the specific duties in Scotland. As part of a consultation period which is expected to run from July-October 2009, further meetings will be held with stakeholders to help determine what the specific duties should be. The Scottish Government will also be consulting on the socio economic duty.

20. In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government has sought a power in the Equality Bill to enable Welsh Ministers to place specific equality duties on public authorities in Wales, designed to fit the Welsh context and to help Welsh public authorities to better implement the new public sector equality duty. The Welsh Assembly Government will be conducting a listening exercise throughout the summer of 2009 which will take on board the views and opinions of key stakeholders in the Statutory and Third Sectors. These proposals will be subject to a full public consultation later this year or early 2010.

The response of the United Kingdom Government to the recommendations contained in Paragraph 263

21. Recommendation: The Committee [...] calls for the development and enactment of a unified, comprehensive and overarching national strategy and policy for the implementation of the Convention throughout the United Kingdom, including its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. It calls upon the State party to undertake all necessary measures to ensure the full implementation of this strategy in a consistent and coherent manner across its territory, including through the establishment of an effective coordination and monitoring mechanism on implementation, and to provide comprehensive information on steps and measures taken in this regard in its next periodic report.

22. The UK government considers the recommendations contained within the CEDAW concluding observations to be part of a *constructive dialogue* between the UK and the UN. The recommendations also inform the UK's work on gender equality.

23. After extensive cross-departmental discussions, the Government Equalities Office (GEO), which is responsible for overseeing the UK's commitments to CEDAW, concluded that due to the broad-based nature of CEDAW, the development of an all-encompassing national strategy would risk both duplicating existing policy frameworks and diluting the substance of the recommendations.

24. However, the GEO Ministers are ensuring the incorporation of the CEDAW recommendations into existing policy frameworks in order to progress the implementation of the Convention, including by:

- Allocating individual recommendations to relevant departmental policy leads across government. In order to ensure ownership of the recommendations at the highest level, GEO Minister Maria Eagle MP has written to all relevant departmental Ministers detailing those recommendations as relevant to their respective departments and encouraging that these recommendations be *'held in due consideration when formulating, planning, implementing and/or reporting' on their Departments forward work programme'*.
- In addition, the GEO has developed a matrix plan of the CEDAW recommendations to record activity. This matrix lists the individual recommendations, identifies the allocated policy lead and contains information on the current status of implementation against each of the recommendations. This matrix serves both as a mechanism for determining departmental ownership of the recommendations and, through regular updating, ensures continued departmental engagement with the recommendations.
- The GEO works closely with policy leads in the devolved administrations to ensure that they are sighted on the recommendations and engage actively in fulfilling the UK's reporting requirements to CEDAW. There is regular contact at both policy

official level and through the 'Gender Directors Network'. This network, which was established by the GEO, is a working group of the senior gender policy managers from the GEO and the devolved administrations. This network was established in response to the call from CEDAW for a greater joined-up approach to implementing CEDAW. The network meets quarterly and works to ensure a coordinated approach to work on CEDAW, and on other EU and International issues.

- In addition, the GEO has included clear references to the UK's obligations under CEDAW in the GEO 2009/10 Business Plan, which can be viewed here:

[http://www.equalities.gov.uk/PDF/295311_GEO_BusinessPlan_acc%20\(version%20on%20website\).pdf](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/PDF/295311_GEO_BusinessPlan_acc%20(version%20on%20website).pdf)

25. In Northern Ireland, the objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy 2006-2016 are closely aligned with CEDAW and the cross-departmental women's gender equality action plan calibrated against the 12 actions contained in the Beijing Platform for Action.

26. In Scotland, the Equality Unit engages with relevant policy areas across Scottish Government regarding progress in implementing the CEDAW recommendations.

27. In Wales, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division engages with relevant policy areas across the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) regarding implementation of the CEDAW recommendations. In March 2009 the WAG launched a Single Equality Scheme which was inspired by an aspiration to go beyond the fulfilment of legal commitments to eradicate unlawful discrimination with regard to gender, race and disability. The Scheme covers the six strands of race, disability, gender and transgender, religion and belief or non belief, as well as sexual orientation and is a key achievement in

promoting and embedding equality in the Welsh Assembly Government.

28. The GEO is currently working with the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to ensure the effective implementation of CEDAW in the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (see paragraph 36 for further information).

29. In addition to the targeted work on CEDAW outlined above, the UK government also undertakes very substantial work to advance women's rights through thematic work across government. Since the 2008 examination of the UK, and in addition to the forthcoming Equality Bill, the Committee will be interested to note the following examples of work - both legislative and non-legislative, which has been completed or is currently underway:

30. A considerable amount of work is currently underway to address the **under-representation of women in public and political life**, including:

- The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Councillors Taskforce:

In May 2008, Ministers launched a new cross-political-party taskforce to find practical ways to increase the numbers of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women councillors. The taskforce is currently leading a programme of outreach events across Great Britain² to raise awareness of the role of a councillor and provide advice and information to support BAME women to step forward. The taskforce has also recently launched a mentoring scheme to provide tailored support to BAME women considering standing as local councillors.

² 'Great Britain' refers to England, Scotland and Wales.

- The Speakers Conference:

On 12 November 2008, following a debate led by Harriet Harman MP QC, Minister for Women and Equality, the House of Commons agreed to establish a 'Speaker's Conference' to consider the under representation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled people in the House of Commons as part of the Governance of Britain agenda. The House of Commons published oral and written evidence on 27 May 2009 and continues to gather evidence through a series of public meetings across the UK. The Conference will report at the end of 2009 to make recommendations on how to improve representation of women, disabled and minority ethnic people in the House of Commons, so it better reflects society. Through its response to the Conference findings at the beginning of 2010, the Government will have an opportunity to increase diversity in Parliament. This is an important platform to discuss the action needed.

- Public Appointment Targets:

On 17 June 2009, Harriet Harman MP QC, Minister for Women and Equality, launched new cross-Government targets on gender, ethnicity and disability. This means that by March 2011, for all new public appointments regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA), women will make up 50%, disabled people will make up 14% and people from an ethnic minority will make up 11% of new appointees, making these targets proportionally representative of the population as a whole. These targets are underpinned by a cross-Government action plan, co-led by the Government Equalities Office and Cabinet Office, to be delivered over the next year. These measures will increase the visibility of the appointments system, ensure transparency and accountability, and tackle head on the barriers that are faced by women, disabled people and ethnic minorities when putting themselves forward for a public appointment.

31. A considerable amount of work is also currently underway to address the on-going problem of **violence against women**. Actions include:

- Violence Against Women Consultation

On the 9th March, the government launched a 12-week cross-Government consultation 'Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls'. This consultation constituted the largest programme of public engagement ever undertaken in England on violence against women and girls (VAW) and included a series of events in each English region; including stakeholder events and a mobile road-show which stopped at shopping centres, universities, housing estates, football grounds and travel hubs to canvas public opinion and raise awareness of VAW. In addition, a programme of qualitative research with service-users and difficult to reach groups was conducted by the Women's National Commission. The consultation actively engaged with stakeholders from both the voluntary and statutory sector to encourage debate and probe public understanding of VAW issues. It also invited people to communicate their views by e-mail or through questionnaires. Work is currently on-going across Government departments to draw together all strands of activity in this area and to look at what more needs to be done to develop a coherent strategy to end VAW. Information from the consultation is being drawn together to form an overarching, coordinated, cross-Government and highly-informed strategy towards tackling all forms of violence against women and girls. The strategy will be published later in 2009.

- Cross-Government Communications Project

GEO are currently leading a communications project which aims to accelerate cultural and attitudinal changes to VAW by developing a strategic and coherent cross-Government approach to campaign work to end VAW. The project intends to improve the way in which Government and key stakeholders communicate messages about VAW through delivery of a toolkit/strategy.

- Violence Against Women and Girls Advisory Group

The Department for Children, Schools, and Families (DCSF) is currently in the process of establishing a Violence Against Women and Girls Advisory Group. The aim of this group is to look at how schools should address the issue of violence against women and girls, and how the relevant current strands of work in schools can be harnessed to maximise their impact on preventing violence against women and girls. The group includes (among others) experts on Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE), gender bullying and preventing violence against women. The group will report to both the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families in Spring 2010.

- Health Professionals VAW Taskforce

On 14 May 2009, the Government announced a new taskforce of health professionals who will work together to spot early signs of violence and abuse against women and girls, investigate the scale of the problem and ensure that victims across the National Health Service get the support they need.

32. Valuable progress was gained for **primary carers - the majority of whom are women**, in April 2009 when legislation came into force to extend the right to request flexible working from parents of disabled children aged under-18 years and individuals that care for adults, to include all parents of children aged 16 years. The right to request flexible working allows employees to continue to work in the same post as their caring role changes, for example after maternity leave, by adjusting their hours to fit their caring roles instead of having to down-skill to a lower paid position. An additional 4.5 million parents have benefited from the extension of this provision.

33. The CEDAW Committee will also be interested to note that the GEO leads on implementing the UK's **three key priorities** for addressing women's inequality. These priorities, listed below, were identified by the Minister for Women and Equality in consultation with stakeholders, in 2007:

- Supporting women and families who are caring for children and elderly relatives
- Tackling violence against women and changing the way we treat women offenders
- Increasing the representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic women (BAME) women.

34. On July 16 2009, the GEO published a Two Years On Progress Report which provides UK citizens and women's NGOs with a full account of progress made on addressing the three priority areas. The GEO also published a One Year On Progress Report on July 16 2008. Both these documents are enclosed for the Committee's reference.

35. In Wales, a considerable amount of work has been progressed to address **the gender pay gap**. In April 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government signalled its commitment to continue to support the Wales Trade Union Congress and Wales Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Close the Pay Gap' campaign. In March 2009, an equal pay conference focused on decision-makers across the public sector and offered the opportunity for decision-makers to engage with trades union and equal pay experts on the impact of recent legal developments and to share learning from outside Wales. Further, equal pay compensation has recently been settled in eight local authority areas in Wales, with a further four local authorities expected to settle compensation by 2010-2011.

36. In addition, *Tackling Domestic Abuse: the All Wales National Strategy* has resulted in significant progress in tackling domestic abuse, and every local authority area in Wales is served by a specialised domestic abuse service. The Budget for this important work has increased since 2002 and now stands at £3.7 million for 2009/10. The all Wales Schools programme, which includes a module on domestic abuse, is now operating in 97% of primary and secondary schools.

37. In Scotland, Scottish Ministers have recently identified **violence against women** and **occupational segregation** as priority areas for the advancement of equality of opportunity between men and women. (This is in accordance with one of the Gender Equality Duty 'specific duties' in Scotland). Ministers have a duty to report on listed public bodies' progress in the priority areas by July 2010 and at least every three years thereafter.

- Violence Against Women

A considerable amount of work has been progressed to tackle violence against women. The Scottish Government's approach to this ongoing problem is framed by the [Safer Lives: Changed Lives](#) document, which was published on 1 June 2009. Its work is being taken forward by the National Group to Address Violence Against Women, which includes key statutory and voluntary sector organisations. The Scottish Government has made a commitment to allocate over £44m until March 2011 towards enabling women and children to access frontline support.³ This includes a substantial programme of activity to address the needs of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse, with young people participating in the process. Work has also been undertaken to improve how perpetrators are dealt with and public awareness raising campaigns on domestic abuse and rape are

³ This includes through 73 violence against women projects across Scotland, a network of rape crisis centres and a Sexual Assault Referral Centre, the Scottish domestic abuse and rape crisis helplines. It also channels funding to Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland.

underway. The Scottish Government has also invested in improving the capacity of agencies to identify and deal with violence against women, including routine enquiry in the health sector and a network of training consortia.

The Scottish Government has worked to strengthen the legal response to violence against women including by: introducing the Sexual Offences Bill, which modernises the definition of rape and clarifies the law on consent; developing a domestic abuse toolkit for local criminal justice partners across Scotland; introducing new legislation in the Criminal Justice and Licensing Bill to provide police with specific powers to close premises associated with human trafficking or child sexual exploitation; and consulting on the potential role of civil legislation to address the issue of forced marriage. The consultation closed on 27 March 2009 and Scottish Ministers are currently considering the next steps.

- Occupational Segregation

The Scottish Government is currently taking forward the actions identified in the report of the cross-directorate group on occupational segregation⁴, which was published in August 2009. Scottish Government has commissioned *Close the Gap* to help us with this work in the period to end March 2011. *Close the Gap* is a partnership project (other partners being Scottish Enterprise, Highland and Islands Enterprise, Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Trades Union Council), which raises awareness amongst employers and employees about the **gender pay gap** and its causes, (such as occupational segregation) and encourages and supports action to close the gap. Further, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has advised that 26 out of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities have implemented Single Status Agreements, which aim to harmonise terms

⁴ <http://sh45inta/Publications/2008/08/27101332/0>

and conditions of service for manual and non manual employees, removing any unfairness in the pay and grading arrangements. The remaining 6 are expected to do so within the next year.

38. Recommendation: In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party provide adequate technical and financial assistance to its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies for the implementation of the Convention.

39. Overseas Territories:

Currently, three of the 14 Overseas Territories (OTs) have had CEDAW extended to them – please see Annex A for the full list. The UK is currently working towards extending the UK's ratification of CEDAW to all populated Overseas Territories. All Territory leaders agreed a target date of **November 2009** for the extension of CEDAW at the 2008 Overseas Territories Consultative Council meeting. The UK continues to encourage and work in partnership with the Overseas Territories to make sure that they are on target to meet this deadline. We have offered both technical and financial assistance to all the Overseas Territories who require it, to prepare local legislation to enable us to extend CEDAW by November 2009.

40. Crown Dependencies

Please see below for the current status of CEDAW and the UK's three Crown Dependencies (CDs):

Isle of Man: CEDAW extended. The UK's ratification of CEDAW on 7 April 1986 included the Isle of Man.

Baliwick of Jersey: CEDAW not extended. Jersey is currently considering implementing a single Discrimination law where the implementation of CEDAW would form one of the provisions.

Baliwick of Guernsey: (including Guernsey and its dependencies): CEDAW not extended. Guernsey is actively exploring the possibility of extending the Convention with the UK Government but have requested a reservation with regards to tax.

41. Recommendation: In line with article 24 of the Convention and article 13 of its Optional Protocol, the Committee calls upon the State party to take concrete measures to make the Convention and its Optional Protocol widely known. In this respect, the Committee requests the State party to undertake public awareness and training programmes on the Convention and its Optional Protocol, as well as on the Committee's general recommendations.

42. Since the 2008 examination of the UK under CEDAW, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) has implemented various strategies in order to effectively raise awareness of CEDAW and the Optional Protocol amongst the public, and particularly with women. Actions include:

- In January-May 2009 the GEO and Women's National Commission (WNC) co-hosted five CEDAW awareness-raising events for civil society and women's groups in London, Newcastle, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These events, which were funded by the GEO and delivered by the WNC, included presentations from both GEO officials and representatives from women's NGO's on CEDAW and the Optional Protocol and included discussion sessions, where participants considered how NGOs could use CEDAW and the Optional Protocol more effectively as a tool to promote and protect women's rights in the UK. These events were well attended and received very positive feedback.

- In addition, the GEO has participated in a number of related awareness-raising public events on CEDAW, run by women's NGOs (e.g. the Women's Resource Centre) and equality organisations, including a large national event hosted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which was attended by the Chair of the CEDAW Committee. The EHRC is an independent organisation that is sponsored and funded (£70m annually) by the GEO.
- The GEO will also be hosting an additional series of awareness-raising and capacity-building events with the WNC in England and the devolved administrations in late 2009/early 2010. These events will focus primarily on the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), particularly its 15th anniversary in 2010 and the progress review at the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The events will also continue to highlight the inter-links between CEDAW and the BPfA in advancing the cause of women.
- The GEO has also included information on CEDAW and the Optional Protocol on its website, which can be viewed here:
http://www.equalities.gov.uk/international/united_nations.aspx
- The WNC website also contains information on CEDAW and the Optional Protocol on its website, which can be viewed here:
<http://www.thewnc.org.uk/work-of-the-wnc/international-articles/cedaw.html>
- GEO is currently developing a series of informative fact-sheets on CEDAW and the Optional Protocol. These will be disseminated at GEO's numerous public events and will be targeted at women's organisations.

43. In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Administration has undertaken and supported various conferences and seminars, including with WNC and NGO partners, to raise awareness of CEDAW and the Optional Protocol, and of various aspects of gender equality. CEDAW is

specifically recognised in Government's current 10-year Gender Equality Strategy.

44. In Scotland, the Scottish Government actively participated in the GEO/WNC CEDAW event in Glasgow, which was well attended. CEDAW is specifically recognised in the 2009 Annual Report of the Scottish Government's Gender Equality Scheme 2008-2011.

45. In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government actively participated in the GEO/WNC CEDAW event in Cardiff, which was well attended.

46. Recommendation: It also requests the State party to raise awareness among women of their rights under the Convention and the communications and inquiry procedures provided by its Optional Protocol.

47. As outlined previously in this report, particularly paragraphs 39 -42, GEO has undertaken a number of activities to raise awareness among women of their rights under the Convention and the communications and inquiry procedures provided by its Optional Protocol.

48. In addition, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) recently published a report on the effectiveness of the Optional Protocol in the UK to date. In brief, the report concluded that:

- The symbolic value of a State's recognition of the right of complaint under the Optional Protocol indicates a clear commitment to human rights.
- Acceptance of the right of complaint to the CEDAW Committee has in principle added to remedies available to women in the UK. However, it is difficult to identify any real practical benefits arising from the UK's acceptance of the right of individual complaint. The UK has been

named in only two complaints, and both have been declared inadmissible.

49. Recommendation: It further requests the State party to ensure that the Convention and its Optional Protocol, as well as the Committee's general recommendations, and the views adopted on individual communications, are made an integral part of educational curricula, including for legal education and the training of judicial officers, judges, lawyers and prosecutors.

50. The Department for Children, Schools, and Families (DCSF) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) are jointly responsible for leading on this recommendation.

Ministry of Justice

51. A number of the provisions of CEDAW are reflected in specialist legal training:

- Judges and legal advisers have received training on domestic violence, particularly those in the specialist domestic violence courts.
- The Crown Prosecution Service has now trained all prosecutors and associate prosecutors in dealing with domestic violence cases.
- Judges who deal with rape and murder cases receive specific training and have to be 'ticketed' or approved to hear such cases.
- The training requirement for lawyers engaged in professional practice is a matter for their own professional bodies. The Judicial

Studies Board (JSB) does not provide such training in order to maintain the independence of the judicial process.

52. In Northern Ireland, the Lord Chief Justice is responsible for judicial training and that responsibility is discharged on his behalf by the Judicial Studies Board [for Northern Ireland] (JSB(NI)) which has undertaken a number of training events on issues concerning women, particularly in relation to domestic violence, and which keeps these matters under regular review.

53. In Scotland, the Lord President is to become responsible for judicial training, and that responsibility will be discharged on his behalf by the Judicial Studies Committee (JSC). JSC has undertaken a number of training initiatives on issues concerning violence against women, including for judges sitting in specialist family courts. Further initiatives are planned, including training in issues arising from domestic abuse.

With regard to the training of prosecutors in Scotland:

- The investigation of serious sexual crime is undertaken by trained and approved specialist prosecutors working in one of 11 dedicated units across the country. Specialist investigators are required to undertake a two-day training programme which addresses legal issues, forensic and medical issues, the psychodynamics of sexual crime and societal attitudes. Specialists are also required to undertake a programme of e-learning courses and their work is assessed according to national standards within the prosecution service.
- Local sexual crime units report cases to the National Sexual Crimes Unit in which specialist Crown Counsel take decisions, prepare cases for trial and prosecute particularly complex or sensitive cases.

- Training on domestic abuse is provided as part of the training for all new procurators Fiscal (prosecutors in courts with sentencing powers of up to 5 years). An advanced one-day training course is also provided for investigators within the prosecution service, victim liaison staff and prosecutors. That training addresses the dynamics of domestic abuse, the relevant legal issues and particular issues which arise across the strands of diversity.

The Department for Children, Schools, and Families

54. A number of the provisions of CEDAW are reflected in educational frameworks - Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Citizenship Education:

- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education is a planned programme of learning opportunities and experiences that help children and young people grow and develop as individuals and as members of families and of social and economic communities. PSHE education promotes equality, understanding and non-discriminatory attitude in schools. Pupils learn about the similarities, differences and diversity among people of different races, cultures, ability, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation and the impact of prejudice, discrimination and racism on individuals and communities. Pupils are taught to challenge prejudice and discrimination assertively and understand that prejudice, racism and discrimination must be challenged at every level in our lives. The Government announced its intention to make PSHE education statutory in October 2008 and the Government is now running a full public consultation, to end on 24 July 2009, on the principles and legislative changes that would be associated with making PSHE education statutory. It is likely that statutory PSHE education will be introduced in September 2011, in order for schools to have a full academic year to prepare.

- Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) aims to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. Pupils are taught to understand the importance of forming and maintaining a relationship, of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, faith and values. It is about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. Good SRE is a mix of knowledge, development of skills and confidence – for example, to resist pressure to have sex – and opportunities to: understand risks; clarify values; and understand other people’s perspectives. Guidance issued to schools makes clear that SRE in schools should focus on relationships and promote the benefits of delaying sex and support young people to deal with pressure to engage in sexual activity before they are ready. The Government is currently updating the SRE Guidance for schools. The new guidance will be subject to consultation and will be available for schools in January 2010.
- Citizenship education has been a compulsory part of the National Curriculum in secondary schools since 2002; and in primary schools citizenship is part of a joint non-statutory framework for Citizenship and PSHE, introduced in 2000.
- Citizenship education plays a central role in giving young people the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in public life. Pupils learn about their rights, responsibilities, duties and freedoms and about the systems of law, justice and democracy. They learn to take part in decision-making and different forms of action. They learn to play an active role in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and wider society as active citizens.
- First teaching of the ‘identity and diversity’ strand of the citizenship curriculum started in September 2008. Recent proposals for the Primary curriculum will make citizenship a statutory part of the primary

curriculum. These proposals are currently being consulted on and the new curriculum is due to be introduced in September 2011.

55. In Northern Ireland, through the revised curriculum, young people explore issues such as gender equality and respect for others.

56. In Wales, the Foundation Phase, a new approach to learning for children from 3-7 years of age, lays the foundations for and enables children to develop the ability to challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination related to culture, gender or disability.

57. In Scotland, the new school curriculum *Curriculum for Excellence* goes to the heart of what Scottish Government wants to achieve in improving educational outcomes for young people. It provides a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum for all children and young people from age 3 – 18, firmly focused on the needs of the child and young person. *Curriculum for Excellence* promotes cross-subject teaching which will allow issues such as the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women to be explored under a number of subject areas. In particular, the health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes have been designed to help young people develop a sense of self-worth, establish and maintain healthy relationships and to develop respect for uniqueness and diversity. The social subjects and religious and moral education experiences and outcomes will make a significant contribution to the development of responsible citizenship by providing the contexts for learning about responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. Social studies will also enable young people to develop respect for other people as they learn about the values, beliefs and cultures of societies at other times and other places and question intolerance and prejudice. And, through religious and moral education, young people are able to develop capacity for tolerance and moral judgement. Careers Scotland's *Careers Box* is a resource that teachers use with children and young people aged 3-18

years. It includes activities that specifically aim to question and explore gendered assumptions around the jobs that women and men commonly do

Overseas Territories

(CEDAW extended to those in bold)

1. Anguilla
2. Bermuda
3. British Antarctic Territory
4. British Indian Ocean Territory
5. **British Virgin Islands**
6. Cayman Islands
7. **Falkland Islands**
8. Gibraltar
9. Montserrat
10. Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands
11. St Helena and St Helena Dependencies (Ascension and Tristan da Cunha)
12. South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
13. Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia
14. **The Turks & Caicos Islands**