



# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General  
17 November 2009

Original: English

---

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
Forty-sixth session  
12-30 July 2010

## **Information provided under the follow-up procedure to the concluding observations of the Committee\***

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

### **Response by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to select recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women following the examination of the fifth and sixth periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 10 July 2008**

#### **Introduction**

1. The concluding observations of the examination of the fifth and sixth periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women request that the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain (UK) and Northern Ireland (NI) 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*

---

\* The present report is being issued without formal editing.



*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 United Kingdom Government<sup>1</sup> 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 the Convention 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, the Convention 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 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 the Convention recognizes 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

---

<sup>1</sup> **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 the role of the 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, defence, social security, macroeconomic 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.

- 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 review 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 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. A total of 4,000 responses to the consultation were received, of which 600 were from stakeholder organizations, 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 a round-table discussion that was attended by senior officials. The WNC was established by the UK Government in 1979 as the "official independent advisory body giving the views of women to Government". The WNC is fully funded by the Government but is independent and speaks on behalf of its vast network of over 500 representatives from civil society and women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

14. The Bill also underwent a rigorous Equality Impact Assessment which is available at <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 organized by the 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 is available 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 to 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 Committee's concluding observations to be part of a constructive dialogue between the UK and the United Nations. The recommendations also inform the UK's work on gender equality.

23. After extensive cross-departmental discussions, the GEO, which is responsible for overseeing the UK's commitments to the Committee, concluded that owing to the broad-based nature of the Convention, 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 Committee's 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 those recommendations be "held in due consideration when formulating, planning, implementing and/or reporting on their Department's forward work programme"
- In addition, the GEO has developed a matrix plan of the Committee's 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 both serves 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 the Committee. 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 the Committee for a greater joined-up approach to implementing the Convention.

The network meets quarterly and works to ensure a coordinated approach to work on the Convention and on other EU and international issues

- In addition, the GEO has included clear references to the UK's obligations under the Convention in the GEO 2009/10 Business Plan, which is available at [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 the Convention 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 the Scottish Government regarding progress in implementing the recommendations of the Committee.

27. In Wales, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division engages with relevant policy areas across the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) regarding implementation of the recommendations of the Committee. 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 the Convention in the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (see para. 36).

29. In addition to the targeted work on the Convention 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 under way.

30. A considerable amount of work is currently under way to address the underrepresentation of women in public and political life, including:

- **The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Councillors task force**

In May 2008, Ministers launched a new cross-political-party task force to find practical ways to increase the numbers of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women councillors. The task force is currently leading a programme of outreach events across Great Britain<sup>2</sup> to raise awareness of the role of a councillor and provide advice and information to support BAME women to step forward. The task force has also recently launched a mentoring scheme to provide tailored support to BAME women considering standing as local councillors.

---

<sup>2</sup> Great Britain refers to England, Scotland and Wales.

- **The Speaker's 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 underrepresentation 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, women will make up 50 per cent, disabled people will make up 14 per cent and people from an ethnic minority will make up 11 per cent 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 under way to address the ongoing problem of violence against women. Actions include:

- **Violence Against Women Consultation**

On 9 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 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 violence against women and girls. 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 sectors to encourage debate and probe public understanding of issues related to violence against women and girls. It also invited people to communicate their views by e-mail or through questionnaires.

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

- **Violence Against Women and Girls Advisory Group**

The Department for Children, Schools, and Families 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 maximize their impact on preventing violence against women and girls. The group includes (among others) experts on Personal, Social and Health Education, Sex and Relationships Education, 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 the second quarter of 2010.

- **Health professionals violence against women and girls task force**

On 14 May 2009, the Government announced a new task force 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 caregivers — the majority of whom are women in April 2009, when legislation came into force to extend the right to request flexible working hours 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 hours 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 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 16 July 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 16 July 2008. Both reports are available from the GEO website at <http://www.equalities.gov.uk>.

35. In Wales, a considerable amount of work has 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 trade unions 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, the "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 specialized 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 per cent 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 progressed to tackle violence against women. The Scottish Government's approach to this ongoing problem is framed by the document entitled "Safer lives: changed lives", 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 organizations. The Scottish Government has made a commitment to allocate over £44 million until March 2011 towards enabling women and children to access frontline support.<sup>3</sup> 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 under way. The Scottish Government has also invested in improving the capacity of

---

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

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 modernizes 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 segregation,<sup>4</sup> which was published in August 2009. The 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 among 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 harmonize terms and conditions of service for employees performing manual and non-manual work, removing any unfairness in the pay and grading arrangements. The remaining six 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, 3 of the 14 Overseas Territories have had the Convention extended to them. Please see the annex for the full list. The UK is currently working towards extending the UK’s ratification of the Convention to all populated Overseas Territories. All Territory leaders agreed on a target date of November 2009 for the extension of the Convention 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 the Convention by November 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Available from <http://sh45inta/Publications/2008/08/27101332/0>.

#### 40. Crown Dependencies

Please see below for the current status of the Convention and the UK's three Crown Dependencies:

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

Baliwick of Jersey: The Convention not extended. Jersey is currently considering implementing a single discrimination law where the implementation of the Convention would form one of the provisions;

Baliwick of Guernsey (including Guernsey and its dependencies): The Convention not extended. Guernsey is actively exploring the possibility of extending the Convention with the UK Government but has 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 the Convention, the GEO has implemented various strategies in order to effectively raise awareness of the Convention and its Optional Protocol among the public, and particularly among women. Actions include:

- In January-May 2009 the GEO and the WNC co-hosted five Convention 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 NGOs on the Convention and its Optional Protocol and included discussion sessions in which participants considered how NGOs could use the Convention and its 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 the Convention run by women's NGOs (e.g. the Women's Resource Centre) and equality organizations, including a large national event hosted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which was attended by the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The EHRC is an independent organization that is sponsored and funded (£70 million 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, particularly its fifteenth anniversary in 2010 and the progress review at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The events will also continue to highlight the interlinks

between the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action in advancing the cause of women;

- The GEO has also included information on the Convention and its Optional Protocol on its website, which is available at [http://www.equalities.gov.uk/international/united\\_nations.aspx](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/international/united_nations.aspx);
- The WNC website also contains information on the Convention and its Optional Protocol, which is available at <http://www.thewnc.org.uk/work-of-the-wnc/international-articles/cedaw.html>;
- GEO is currently developing a series of informative fact-sheets on the Convention and its Optional Protocol. These will be disseminated at GEO's numerous public events and will be targeted at women's organizations.

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 the Convention and its Optional Protocol, and of various aspects of gender equality. The Convention is specifically recognized in the Government's current 10-year Gender Equality Strategy.

44. In Scotland, the Scottish Government actively participated in the GEO/WNC event on the Convention, held in Glasgow, which was well attended. The Convention is specifically recognized 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 event on the Convention, held 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, in particular paragraphs 39 to 42, the 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 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 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 and the Ministry of Justice are jointly responsible for leading on this recommendation.

### **Ministry of Justice**

51. A number of the provisions of the Convention 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. In order to maintain the independence of the judicial process, the Judicial Studies Board does not provide such training.

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), 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, which 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 the Convention are reflected in educational frameworks — personal, social, health and economic education; sex and relationships education; 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 to 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 the 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 to 18, firmly focused on the needs of the child and young person. The 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 well-being 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. In addition, 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 to 18 years. It includes activities that specifically aim to question and explore gendered assumptions around the jobs that women and men commonly do.

## Annex

### Overseas Territories

(The Convention has been extended to those entries in boldface type)

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. Saint Helena and Saint 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 and Caicos Islands.**
-