

2 NATIONAL STRATEGY: CEDAW said the UK Government should:

'... [Develop and enact] a ... national strategy and policy for the implementation of the [CEDAW] Convention throughout the United Kingdom ... undertake all necessary measures ... including through the establishment of an effective coordination and monitoring mechanism on implementation, and provide comprehensive information on steps and measures taken in this regard in its next periodic report.'

The UK Government said:

'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...'

'... 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.'

Questions

- 1. How/why has the UK Government arrived at the interpretation of the Committee recommendations as 'constructive dialogue'? The CEDAW Convention is legally binding on States which have both signed and ratified it (as the UK has done). The Government has a legal responsibility to comply with the Convention.**
- 2. What do you think about the value of a national strategy for Scotland?**
- 3. What steps would you like to see the Scottish Government take towards a national strategy?**
- 4. Any other comments?**

HOW THE UK GOVERNMENT IS INCORPORATING CEDAW RECOMMENDATIONS

24. GEO Ministers are ensuring incorporation ... into existing policy frameworks by:

- Allocating individual recommendations to relevant departmental policy leads ... [for] due consideration when formulating, planning, implementing and/or reporting on their Department's forward work programme.
- [Developing] ... a matrix plan of the CEDAW recommendations to record activity... [ensuring] continued departmental engagement with the recommendations.
- GEO has included clear references to the UK's obligations under CEDAW in the GEO 2009/10 Business Plan.
- The GEO works closely with policy leads in the devolved administrations ... and through the 'Gender Directors Network' ... a working group of the senior gender policy managers from GEO and the devolved administrations, established in response to the call from CEDAW for a greater joined-up approach to implementing CEDAW. The network meets quarterly ... to work on CEDAW, and other EU and International issues.

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

EXAMPLES OF FURTHER UK WORK FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

29. In addition to the targeted work on CEDAW [see pages 1 and 2], the UK government also undertakes work to advance women's rights through thematic work across government ... both legislative and non-legislative, which has been completed or is currently underway:

30. **Under-representation of women in public and political life:**

- **The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Councillors Taskforce**
2008: A cross-political-party initiative to find ways to increase BAME women councillors (relates to England, Scotland, Wales).
- **The Speaker's Conference**
2008: ...House of Commons set up 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. ... continues to gather evidence through public meetings across the UK ... Through its response to the Conference findings at the beginning of 2010, the Government will have an opportunity to increase diversity in Parliament.

- **Public Appointment Targets**

Launched [2009] new cross-Government targets on gender, ethnicity and disability ... 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... representative of the population as a whole. Targets underpinned by a cross-Government action plan ...

[NB No mention here that Scotland has its own Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments and that it has produced an equal opportunities document Diversity Delivers (2008),]

31. Work currently underway to address the on-going problem of **violence against women**. [Information relating to England and Wales. See page 4 for Scotland.]

32. **Primary carers legislation:** April 2009: extended rights to request flexible working (most primary carers are women).

33, 34. Relates to three 2007 priorities for England, identified by Minister and others:

- Supporting women and families who are caring for children and elderly relatives
- Tackling violence against women and changing treatment of women offenders
- Increasing the representation of BAME women