



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Fifty-fifth session

8 – 26 July 2013

List of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of periodic reports

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The pre-session working group considered the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CEDAW/C/GRB/7).

Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

1. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that the new integrated Public Sector Equality Duty effectively “requires public bodies to have due regard when exercising their functions” to equality between women and men, in line with the Convention, given that the Equality Act (2010) authorizes the introduction of different equality duties across the United Kingdom (paras. 11 & 12).¹ What steps are being undertaken to ensure that all levels of government and the devolved administrations are complying with the Convention?
2. The follow up report of the State party mentions that the Northern Ireland administration is keeping all aspects of equality legislation under ongoing review (CEDAW/C/UK/CO/6/Add.1, para. 10). Please provide detailed information on the incorporation of the provisions of the Convention in relevant legislation, as subsequently requested by the Committee in the letter it addressed to the State party on 19 February 2010.
3. According to the State party’s follow up report, the Gender Equality Office (GEO) works with the Foreign Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Justice to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention in the Overseas Territories (OTs) and Crown Dependencies (CDs). It also indicates that the Convention has been “extended” to OTs (3) and CDs (1) CEDAW/C/UK/CO/6/Add.1, paras. 28, 39 & 40). Please provide detailed information on mechanisms in place to monitor the implementation of the Convention in the OTs and CDs where the Convention has been extended. Please also provide detailed information on obstacles and consultations with local governments to extend the

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the seventh periodic report of the State party (CEDAW/C/GBR/7).

Convention to other OTs and CDs and solutions envisaged as well as on the resources needed, mentioned in paragraph 8 of the report.

Legal complaint mechanisms

4. In light of additional information received, please provide clarifications on steps taken to monitor and where applicable mitigate the impact on women's access to justice due to the changes made to legal aid and to the fees for applying to an employment tribunal.

National machinery for the advancement of women

5. Please provide detailed information on the mandates and coordination between the Government Equalities Office (GEO), which according to the report is the national machinery for the advancement of women, and the Minister for Women and Equalities, who chairs the Inter-Ministerial Group on Equalities (mechanism responsible for the implementation of the Equality Strategy).

6. According to the report, within the framework of the Equality Strategy –Building a Fairer Britain (December 2010), targeted measures to promote equal opportunities and to tackle discrimination will be put in place by the central government and separately by the devolved administrations (para. 2). Please provide detailed information about the role of the Gender Directors Network (CEDAW/C/UK/CO/6/Add.1 para. 24) or any other governmental body, in ensuring a coherent approach to gender equality, in line with the Equality Strategy across the United Kingdom.

7. The report mentions that the Women's National Commission has been abolished (para. 30) as a result of a review of the non-departmental public bodies and that a new mechanism will be put in place. Please clarify whether the new approach of communication to enable engagement with women and with women's organisations has already been implemented across the United Kingdom and provide details about it. If not, when does the State party envisage its implementation?

8. Please provide further information on the changes in the operation of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) mentioned in paragraph 31 of the report. How does the State party ensure that the EHRC is able to fulfil its mandate in light of the reported budgetary reductions (60%)? Please also provide information on measures undertaken to effectively guarantee women's rights in the broader context of growing alarm felt at public spending cuts and its negative consequences for women.

Temporary Special Measures

9. According to the report the Equality Act (2010) permits the use of temporary measures to accelerate substantive equality between women and men (para. 37) and a number of temporary special measures have been introduced (para. 36). Please provide concrete examples of temporary special measures in place and their results.

Gender stereotypes

10. Please provide further information on the work of the group of experts tasked to identify non-legislative solutions to combat the "singularity of body image" presented in the media (para. 60). Please also indicate whether the Gender Equality Office has developed a policy to tackle this issue. Please also provide information on measures taken to project a positive image of women in the media, in particular ethnic and minority women, elderly women and women with disabilities, as recommended by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/UK/CO/6, para. 275).

Violence against women

11. The report mentions in paragraph 269 a number of measures in place to support and protect victims in the criminal justice system and in bringing perpetrators to justice. Please provide further information about the 12-month pilot programme of domestic violence protection orders and domestic violence protection notices. Please also provide detailed information on the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence, including rape, the rate and number of cases reported, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, prosecutions and punishment of perpetrators. Please provide further information on the Sojourner Pilot programme, including on measures to ensure that migrant women who are victims of domestic violence are aware of it (para. 123).

12. Please provide further information on measures in place to ensure that local areas have the necessary means and tools to adequately respond to incidents of violence against women, including victims' equal access to services. Please indicate the steps envisaged to modify the commissioning and delivery of services for victims of violence against women across the United Kingdom (para. 258), also involving the local communities in deciding the priorities.

Female Genital Mutilation

13. Although the practice of FGM persists in some communities in the State party, the report acknowledges that there have not been prosecutions related to this practice (para. 286). Please provide information on actions taken to encourage prosecutions related thereto. Besides the various awareness raising measures, please indicate other measures in place to encourage the elimination of FGM in practising communities in the State party. What are the protocols in place to identify girls at risk?

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

14. Please indicate whether the State party's strategy to combat trafficking in persons has been published and provide information on its content, particularly in the context of gender sensitivities. Please also provide information on measures envisaged and/or in place to provide women who wish to be out of prostitution with alternative lifestyle opportunities. Please also indicate measures taken in order to decrease the demand of prostitution.

Participation in political and public life

15. Please provide information on further efforts to increase the participation of women in political and public life, in particular the adoption of temporary special measures to accelerate the achievement of equality between women and men in decision-making positions in the public sector, including in the judiciary and the private sector. Please provide detailed information on the implementation of Lord Davies' report (para. 101) as well as on further measures to increase the participation of BAME women in the political and public life of the State party (paras. 93 & 94).

Employment

16. Please provide information on the achievements of the State party's call for voluntary gender equality reporting to the business and voluntary sectors (para. 164). Please provide further information on measures undertaken to reduce the gender pay gap in both public and private sector. Please also provide detailed information about measures in place to ensure a high rate of employment for women while addressing the reported gap between the demand for and supply of affordable high-quality childcare.

Health

17. Please provide information on actions taken to initiate a public consultation process to remove punitive provisions imposed on women who undergo abortions in Northern Ireland, as recommended by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/UK/CO/6 para. 289).

Social and economic benefits

18. The report acknowledges changes to the social welfare system (paras. 209-213). Please provide information about actions envisaged to assess the impact of the introduction of the Universal Credit on women's economic independence. Please also indicate the impact of the changes in the welfare system and the pension reform (2008) on older women, women with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

Disadvantaged groups of women

19. The report mentions the "Inclusion Health Programme" as a measure in place to improve access to health care services of groups in vulnerable circumstances (para. 182). Please provide further information on specific measures in place to guarantee traveller and Roma women, access to education, employment, housing and health care and support services, as well as women belonging to ethnic and religious minorities.

20. Please provide further information on the implementation of the Corston's report (para. 22). Please also provide further information on the implementation of the programme, mentioned in paragraph 202, which aims at providing quality mental health services for women in prison, as well as measures undertaken for gender-sensitive handling of detainees.

21. Please provide information on the removal of safeguards to migrant domestic workers, in particular women, under the Overseas Domestic Work visa, which reportedly increases the risk of women domestic workers being abused and exploited. Please also provide information on measures to improve asylum-seeking and refugee women's access to health-care, labour market, legal remedies and social services.

Marriage and family relations

22. Please provide an update on the consideration of proposals set out in the Law Commission's report "Cohabitation: The Financial Consequences of Relationship Breakdown" (para. 232), with a view to safeguarding the equal rights of women vis-à-vis men.
