



# **Seizing the Opportunities of CEDAW**

## **Conference report and next steps**

June 2009

Understanding and supporting  
women and their organisations

This document is available in other formats. Contact the Women's Resource Centre on 020 7324 3030 or [info@wrc.org.uk](mailto:info@wrc.org.uk)

These events were generously supported by

Equality and  
Human Rights  
Commission

[equalityhumanrights.com](http://equalityhumanrights.com)

## **About the Women's Resource Centre**

The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) is a charity which supports women's organisations to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also lobby decision makers on behalf of the women's not-for-profit sector for improved representation and funding.

Our members work in a wide range of fields including health, violence against women, employment, education, rights and equality, the criminal justice system and the environment. They deliver services to and campaign on behalf of some of the most marginalised communities of women.

There are over ten thousand people working or volunteering for our members who support almost half a million individuals each year.

For more information about this report or the WRC, contact:

Kara Beavis  
Policy Officer  
Email: [kara@wrc.org.uk](mailto:kara@wrc.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7324 3030

Women's Resource Centre  
Ground Floor East, 33-41 Dallington Street  
London EC1V 0BB  
[www.wrc.org.uk](http://www.wrc.org.uk)

*"It is a violation of human rights when women and girls are sold into the slavery or prostitution.*

*It is a violation of human rights when women are raped in their own communities or subjected to rape as a tactic of war.*

*It is a violation of human rights when a leading cause of death worldwide among women ages 14 to 44 is the violence they are subjected to in their own homes.*

*It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families.*

*If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, it is that human rights are women's rights – and women's rights are human rights.*

*Let us not forget that among those rights are the right to speak freely and the right to be heard."*

**Extract from Hilary Rodham Clinton's speech at the Fourth Conference on Women, Beijing 1995**

## **Contents**

<b>1. Introduction and Context .....</b>	<b>pg 4</b>
<b>2. Conference Summary .....</b>	<b>pg 6</b>
<b>3. Monitoring and Evaluation .....</b>	<b>pg 9</b>
<b>4. Women's Sector Strategy .....</b>	<b>pg 10</b>
<b>5. Comments from Delegates .....</b>	<b>pg 13</b>
<b>6. Delegate List .....</b>	<b>pg 15</b>
<b>7. CEDAW Working Group .....</b>	<b>pg 19</b>
<b>8. Feedback from WRC staff .....</b>	<b>pg 20</b>
<b>9. Feedback from Delegates .....</b>	<b>pg 22</b>
<b>10. Pledges from Delegates .....</b>	<b>pg 24</b>

## Context

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was established in 1979 and is recognised as the 'international Bill of Rights for women'.

On 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008, the UK Government gave its oral report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – a group of experts on women's equality that monitors States' implementation of the Convention - at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The UK Government had not reported to the Committee since 1999, despite expectations do so every four years.

At the 2008 examination, the Committee learned of the status of women and girls in the UK through the official Government report, oral briefings from non-government organisations (NGOs) and national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and 'shadow' reports submitted by women's and human rights organisations. This was concluded with an oral examination where the Committee questioned the Government for almost six hours based on this intelligence.

Following the oral examination, the Committee issued Concluding Observations that stated that – despite some advances such as the introduction of gender equality legislation and the establishment of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission – women's rights are far from being fully realised in the UK. Further, the committee noted a "lack of reference [by the Government] to the concluding observations of 1999 and its general recommendations".

In the 2008 Concluding Observations, the Committee made a number of recommendations to the UK Government, including:

- Ensure that the Gender Equality Duty is interpreted and applied properly so that women-only services and other activities of women's organisations are not negatively impacted upon
- Incorporate the provisions of the Convention into Single Equality legislation
- Conduct an assessment of the impact of commissioning on women's organisations
- Provide increased and sustained funding to NGOs involved in women's rights
- Include information on funding to women's organisations in the next report to CEDAW
- Raise public awareness of (including training) of the Convention, Optional Protocol and general recommendations amongst all branches of government, public bodies, women, judicial officers, judge, lawyers and prosecutors
- Disseminate CEDAW's concluding observations throughout government.

There were also recommendations relating to specific women's rights issues, for example:

- Review the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' policy to ensure the protection of and provision of support to victims of violence
- Establish gender-sensitive policies, strategies and programmes for women in prison
- Pay specific attention to the vulnerability of women asylum-seekers while their claims are under examination
- Establish additional counselling and other support services for victims of forced marriage
- Increase efforts to design and implement targeted FGM prevention strategies and education and awareness-raising programmes
- Give consideration to granting victims of trafficking indefinite leave to remain
- Ensure all health policies and programmes integrate a gender perspective
- Take concrete measures to address the high maternal mortality rate in traveller communities, including the allocation of adequate resources to increase access to affordable health services, particularly pre-natal, post-natal and obstetric services.

A small group of women from women's voluntary and community organisations and non-departmental public bodies attended the examination on behalf of the women's third sector:

- Andrea Murray, Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Ann Marie Gray, Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
- Hannana Siddiqui, Southall Black Sisters (SBS)
- Lee Eggleston, South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) and Rape Crisis England and Wales
- Liz Kelly, End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW)
- Sheila Coates, South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) and Rape Crisis England and Wales

Whilst in New York, some of these women also attended a two week, in-depth training on CEDAW, delivered by International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific.

Attendees reported that the training was invaluable and greatly increased their knowledge and skills in using CEDAW and international human rights frameworks:

*"We had been in CEDAW training and getting a really gendered analysis. Then, we heard the Government response which was really very gender neutral. That's when CEDAW suddenly made sense to me."* (Sheila Coates)

*"We learned so much about how to lobby and about the work we need to do now."* (Ann Marie Gray)

Upon their return, some of the women who attended the examination asked the Women's Resource Centre (WRC) to develop a capacity building day for women's organisations to share this learning and inspire other women to be more aware of – and use – CEDAW. In consultation with other organisations, including the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), WRC organised 'Seizing the Opportunities of CEDAW' – a one-day capacity building conference for UK women's organisations which was held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

The conference was held the day after the launch of WRC's 4<sup>th</sup> 'why women?' campaign report *Not Just Bread, but Roses Too: Funding to the Women's Voluntary and Community Sector in England 2004 – 2007* (23<sup>rd</sup> March 2009). 'Bread and Roses' examined the financial state of women's organisations, and found that 1 in 5 women's organisations became 'inactive' (most likely closed) during this three year period. The 'Bread and Roses' launch was attended by over 100 representatives from the women's voluntary and community sector, MPs, funders and friends of the sector, with guest speakers Dr Dubravka Simonovic (Chair, CEDAW 2007 – 09), Dr Nicola Brewer (then Chief Executive, EHRC) and Baroness Joyce Gould (Chair, Women's National Commission).

The 'Bread and Roses' report launch and 'Seizing the Opportunities of CEDAW' conference were made possible with funding and support from the EHRC.

## Conference Summary

*"An amazing event that women will remember for a long time"*

Isabel Livingstone, Head of National Equality Partnership

On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 150 women gathered at the Human Rights Action Centre in London for the Women's Resource Centre (WRC) and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 'Seizing the Opportunities of CEDAW' conference.

The aims of the conference were to:

- Raise awareness amongst women's organisations of CEDAW, the Optional Protocol, and the UK Government's examination of July 2008 from the perspective of the women who attended,
- Assist women's organisations to understand how they can use CEDAW,
- Establish the level of interest from within the women's sector for ongoing CEDAW activities.

There were representatives from women's third sector organisations from across the UK including Belfast, Blackburn, Birmingham, Bradford, Cardiff, Cleveland, Coventry, Derbyshire, Edinburgh, Galway, Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle Upon Tyne, South Tyneside and Worcestershire.

Vivienne Hayes from WRC and Andrea Murray from the EHRC opened the conference by welcoming delegates.

Andrea Murray then chaired the keynote by Dr Violeta Neubauer, Rapporteur for the CEDAW Committee, who travelled from Slovenia to attend the conference. In her keynote address, she explained the CEDAW examination process and talked about 2008 from the Committee's perspective. She emphasised the vital role that women's NGOs play in providing evidence about key women's issues.

A panel session on the 2008 UK examination followed, which was chaired by Andrea Murray from the EHRC. Panellists were:

- Ann Marie Gray, Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
- Hannana Siddiqui, Southall Black Sisters (SBS)
- Lee Eggleston, South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) and Rape Crisis England and Wales
- Liz Kelly, End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW)
- Sheila Coates, South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) and Rape Crisis England and Wales

The panel described their experiences of the examination and shared what they had learned. Lee Eggleston talked about how important it was that a diverse group from the sector attended, and how important it was that they worked together. Ann Marie Gray said that CEDAW places women's rights within a human rights framework, and shifts the emphasis from 'needs' to 'rights', which she found very

empowering. Hannana Siddiqui was concerned that some of the issues concerning black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) women had not been fully addressed (e.g. the recommendation for women with No Recourse to Public Funds). Sheila Coates said that prior to attending the examination and training, she was a cynic about the usefulness of CEDAW. However, her experiences and learning gave her important knowledge, skills and inspiration. Hannana agreed, saying that all the effort to lobby and travel to New York had been worth it. Ann Marie stated that as a sector, women's organisations have no choice but to learn about CEDAW, how to use it in lobbying, and how to incorporate it into domestic policy. Lee suggested that more women think about going to the next examination. She stated that the women's sector must mobilise and organise *now* about attendance at the next examination (scheduled for 2011). Liz Kelly stressed the importance of the women's sector feeding into shadow reports, in order to provide a realistic appraisal of women's equality in the UK without the government gloss.

The EHRC gave a presentation on their new status as a national human rights institution (NHRI). One of the implications is that NHRIs may, with the consent of the state party, intervene on the day of consideration of the state party's report. Separate seating is to be ensured for representatives of NHRIs, with a sign that clearly identifies them. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has not amended its rules of procedure yet, however it did permit an oral intervention from an NHRI for the first time in 2005. The EHRC will be discussing its role at future CEDAW examinations of the UK with the Committee in due course. In the meantime, the EHRC remains committed to enforcing the Gender Equality Duty on public bodies, funding women's organisations, working on the Equality Bill, and partnering with the End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition on 'Map of Gaps' reports.

The morning session was followed by afternoon workshops:

- 'Women's rights as human rights', delivered by Amnesty International UK
- 'Beijing Platform for Action', by Rights of Women
- 'CEDAW Optional Protocol', by Equality Now
- 'CEDAW stories: Global North/South exchange', by WOMANKIND Worldwide
- 'Mobilising Northern Ireland: experiences of 2008', by the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
- 'Making the European Connections', by the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO).

Following the afternoon workshops, delegates focussed on identifying key issues in promoting CEDAW within the women's sector and future, strategic activities. During this session, delegates identified that CEDAW is a really important tool for women's equality, but that knowledge of how the Convention can be used practically, was generally low. The conference was only intended to provide an overview of the Convention and its uses, and delegates were encouraged to identify specific activities to increase use of the Convention.

Many women suggested that a tool kit and on-line resource be developed, with accompanying training. Delegates agreed with the establishment of a 'working group' to lead on a women's sector CEDAW strategy until 2011 and more than 20 organisations stated their interest in being part of this group. Specific tasks for the working group could include maintaining a 'watching brief' on responding to the Government's implementation of CEDAW recommendations, collecting evidence for the next shadow reports, lobbying on key CEDAW recommendations and themes, attending the next examination. Delegates emphasised the importance of collecting qualitative evidence (e.g. survivors' stories) along with statistics for shadow reports. Delegates also wanted to stay in touch with each other's work on CEDAW, and learn from women's organisations in the Global South (through groups like IWRAW and WOMANKIND Worldwide). Delegates suggested that all these activities form part of a co-ordinated, adequately resourced women's sector strategy.

Delegates suggested that, as individual organisations and as a sector, conference attendees should:

- Read the Committee's Concluding Observations and become familiar with those that are most relevant
- Write to local MPs and government departments to ask how they are taking forward CEDAW recommendations
- Use CEDAW (along with GED and public law) to access funding and challenge unfair and gender-neutral decision making
- Take responsibility for raising awareness of CEDAW
- Use CEDAW and CEDAW language (e.g. 'substantive equality' and 'temporary special measures' etc) in all interactions with policy makers and each other
- Ask all major parties to address CEDAW recommendations in their 2010 election manifestos.

Helene Reardon-Bond from the Government Equalities Office (GEO) made the final presentation of the day on what her department has been doing since July 2008. GEO activities included writing to all central government departments to raise awareness of the Convention and Concluding Observations and a 'road show' across the country. The Government is required to submit a 'One Year On' report by July 2009 which outlines how the new Single Equality Bill incorporates "all provisions of CEDAW", and how the Government is developing a "unified, comprehensive and overarching national strategy for the implementation of the Convention", amongst other things.

The conference was recorded and WRC has developed a short film which is available on [www.wrc.org.uk/cedaw](http://www.wrc.org.uk/cedaw). It contains excerpts from speeches and presentations, interviews, information about CEDAW, and messages of solidarity, action and hope from across the women's sector. A DVD of the film is available by contacting [policy@wrc.org.uk](mailto:policy@wrc.org.uk) or 020 7324 3042.

## Conference evaluation

The Conference was evaluated through two primary mechanisms:

1. 'Distance travelled' monitoring and evaluation methodology at the conference itself, and
2. Through an event evaluation survey conducted on-line after the conference.

Measures of success were also gleaned from less formal indicators including emails sent to staff post-event and the level of interest in attending the conference, which was significantly oversubscribed. It should be noted that an important contribution to the success of the conference were the travel bursaries, financed by the EHRC. In total, forty bursary places were allocated, which enabled genuine participation (i.e. 25% of the total delegation) by women from outside London. Apart from benefits including networking, building solidarity and information sharing, this was important because CEDAW is a UK-wide convention.

At the end of the conference, 87% of delegates reported that their confidence in using CEDAW in their day-to-day work had improved. Comments included:

*"Many thanks for this, we found the conference very useful – we were CEDAW novices before but have much better understanding of it now!"*

*"The large and enthusiastic participation was truly inspiring and the WRC did a magnificent job in pulling it all together."*

*"Hi Viv, I hope you were pleased with yesterday. It certainly seemed to be very well received. I think women's organisations are very interested in CEDAW."*

Helene Reardon-Bond, Government Equalities Office

The words most frequently selected (from a list of 30) to describe the conference:

- Useful (68%)
- Valuable (60%)
- Necessary (56%)
- Interesting (52%)
- Motivating (44%)
- Empowering (40%)
- Friendly (40%)

In evaluating different aspects of the conference:

- 100% said that the range of **speakers** was very good or good
- 92% said that the quality of speakers was very good or good
- 96% said the **workshop** they attended was very useful, quite useful or useful
- 92% said the **delegate pack** was very good or good
- 84% said the info provided and **workshop materials** were 'about right'
- 80% said the range of workshop **topics** was either very good or good
- 80% said the **learning for their organisation** was very beneficial or quite beneficial

- 92% said their **overall impression** of the conference was very good or good

### **Feedback from delegates:**

- *"I really enjoyed **meeting other feminists** and discussing UN Treaties".*

*"An excellent day, great buzz, has given me a real boost. I have learned lots, great speakers. Has given me the energy to carry on with the good fight".*

*"Really got a lot from this conference – enjoyed meeting women from all over the United Kingdom and Ireland".*

*"There was a real buzz from having a wide geographical spread of women's organisations present".*

*"I had a fantastic time and came away having learnt a lot and feeling very inspired. I really appreciated being given the chance (via a bursary) to attend and I thought this was instrumental in having a wide range of groups and individuals from different areas of the UK present".*

*"It was really well put together & thoroughly enjoyable, thanks".*

*"The WRC team are really good, and managed it all very efficiently!"*

- *"The **initial panel discussion** was very interesting".*

*"Great to hear from women who actually attended the examination and a member of the Committee".*

*"It is vital to humanity and the emancipation of women that there are women like Hannana Siddiqui and Liz Kelly who both mainstream equalities issues at the same time do not compromise their integrity and are prepared to be radical and outspoken where necessary".*

*"It was so important having members of the CEDAW Committee present and hearing first hand their experiences in monitoring compliance of the Convention".*

*"Hearing from a current committee member for CEDAW. Particularly enjoyed the keynote address by the Rapporteur".*

*"Enjoyed the feedback from women from the sector who attended CEDAW. Good to hear first hand comments".*

*"I liked listening to how women working in the community had participated on a higher strategic level, and how training had enabled effective participation".*

*"The opening session with the reflections from various women's organisations who had worked at the previous CEDAW Committee session was excellent".*

*"I got a lot out of listening to the panel talk about their experience".*

- *“I learnt a lot about **CEDAW** and how I am able to use it when lobbying and the impact that it has on our work”.*

*“I had never heard of CEDAW and have worked in women’s sector for 25 yrs. So I was astonished to hear about it and pleased to be beginning to link in nationally with women’s networks.”*

*“I liked the workshops on how to use CEDAW, found it informative and managed well by the workshop 'leaders' for want of a better word! “*

*“I enjoyed the afternoon workshop on what action we should be taking as a sector on CEDAW but felt this needed a lot more time!”*

*“The brainstorming session in the afternoon on strategy was really enjoyable.”*

*“There was so much energy in the room to use CEDAW as a tool to tackle women's oppression.”*

*“I am already quite familiar with CEDAW and how it works and I enjoyed the level that the conference was pitched at. I got the impression that for some participants it would have been useful to have an optional 'beginners guide' session where this was covered.”*

*“Very useful day but would have been good to have the explanatory session about CEDAW (the EHRC session) first as I was a complete beginner!”*

*“It was excellent to have examples of CEDAW into practice – particularly from women’s groups in the South.”*

#### **Feedback from WRC staff:**

- **Coordinated approach** was excellent. The events were well organised. Developed internal (i.e. WRC) working relationships and pride in work. Staff felt their expertise was utilised and new staff members felt included and useful. Having whole-staff involvement was crucial, and having staff everywhere at the events was great so women could ask for help if they needed it.
- **Partnership with EHRC** was excellent – especially in terms of funding, bursaries, speakers and securing Violeta Neubauer from CEDAW Committee. Consolidated our positive working relationship with them.
- **Bursaries** were excellent, and meant these events enjoyed a genuine participation of women from outside London (i.e. 40 out of 150 women supported via a bursary to attend). It’s one of the things that made it such a success, it wasn't the usual suspects and people got a lot from connecting with women from round the UK.
- **Speakers** were excellent. The opening panel at the conference was brilliant. It was accessible, inspiring, good example of women’s sector working together, and brought CEDAW to life. Violeta was excellent, great to

get it from the 'horses' mouth', and it was a significant achievement to get two CEDAW committee members to these events. It was excellent to have Government engagement at the end of the day after the sector had met and developed their ideas.

- **Content** *"The balance of accessibility and detail was struck really really well. Sheila, Lee, Hannana and Ann Marie helped make it all feel do-able and brought it down to earth, but at the same time the level of discussion from them and of course from Violetta meant that we were really getting down to some serious business".*
- **Workshops** The Amnesty workshop on human rights was the most popular workshop indicating that women want rights based framework to understand their work and further training has been requested. Workshop leaders themselves provided an example of the amazing expertise within the sector. Feedback from the workshops was very good; delegates thought they were very informative. Workshop times were cut short unfortunately as the first session and EHRC session ran over. Chairing needed to be tighter. Delegates would have benefited from a "CEDAW 101" and the draft women's sector strategy in advance.
- The **women's sector** have realised they have got to lobby on **CEDAW**. There was a real buzz of learning – buzzing atmosphere. The vast majority of delegates said their knowledge of CEDAW had improved. Good to kick start CEDAW working group. There was a comment that "it was amazing to get that many women to an event with 'CEDAW' in the title". Women trust WRC to put on an event that meets their needs.
- We produced an event for our **members**, based on good relationship with them and the integrity and trust for WRC. Both events provided a real sense of celebration and solidarity for the sector and good networking opportunities. Women *"felt really spoilt"* with nice drinks and nibbles at the launch event. It was fantastic to have such impressive women launch *Bread and Roses*. Nicola Brewer was fantastic. Many MPs expressed an interest in coming, and would if they could. Will follow up by sending them a copy of the report.
- We liked Amnesty as a **venue** as it has compatible values and it is cost-effective. However, we were significantly over-subscribed which was a pleasant surprise but meant we needed more space than had been allocated. The volume of participants also meant it was difficult to serve everyone at once for lunch. We also needed herbal tea options, soy milk, and fresh coffee.

### **Equality and diversity monitoring from conference evaluation**

- 100% female
- 4% identify as trans
- 9% identify as disabled
- 13% identify as lesbian

- 13% identify as bisexual
- 13% are 24 years or younger
- 55% are 25 – 35 years old
- 30% are 36 – 49 years old
- 5% are 50 – 66
- 46% identify as white UK
- 9% identify as African
- 13% identify as Asian UK
- 9% identify as Irish
- 5% identify as Latin American

Other comments from delegates included:

*"Thank you so much for your help. Lynne and I thoroughly enjoyed our time in London and were able to benefit from a lot of information that will be useful to us in our ongoing struggle for sustainability in the future. Thanks again."*

Debbie Lawrence, Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre

*"Thanks again to the WRC for inviting me to participate in this event. The large and enthusiastic participation was truly inspiring and the WRC did a magnificent job in pulling it all together."*

Jacqui Hunt, Equality Now

*"I wanted to thank you all for such a great event. I have never been to anything like it. I forgot to put my sticker on the door – but I learned a lot. Thank you also for organising the accommodation, travel etc. I am very happy to have had the opportunity to take part. Best wishes and I hope you are having a rest!"*

Ann Marie Gray, Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)

*"A big thank you for having the conference and giving groups like us the opportunity to learn about CEDAW, UN and international work in other countries by NGO's. We have been inspired and would like to work with you for the next UK report in 2011. Thank you again and hope you will keep me posted about the progress in setting up this steering group...!"*

Robina Iqbal, Sparkhill Asian Women's Association

*"I would just like to say thank you for a well organised conference For WOMEN, BY WOMEN! I truly enjoyed the event and was very inspired. As a result I would like to be involved and become a member of the CEDAW working group. I also intend to spread the word of CEDAW – which I promised your chief executive that I will do through my area of work. Stay in touch and hope to see you soon"*

Binta Pokawa, United Kingdom Border Agency

*"Many thanks for this, we found the conference very useful – we were CEDAW novices before but have much better understanding of it now! Thanks again for organising the conference."*

Abigail Fitzgibbon, British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas)

*"Thanks for this and for a great conference – it was really well put together and had a great buzz! Thanks again, and I hope NAWO will be able to contribute to your ongoing work on CEDAW."*

Janet Veitch, National Alliance of Women's Organisation (NAWO)

*"I am full of praise for all of WRC staff, I think you did a fantastic job. What a seamless event! I am truly impressed and love WRC!"*

Sandhya Sharma, Oxfam

*"I am finally getting a chance to e-mail and thank you again for the excellent CEDAW conference and meeting with me on the 25<sup>th</sup>. I have been speaking to a lot of people over here since. It seems we have some work to do in terms of building capacity in the women's sector."*

Lynn Carvill, Women's Resource and Development Agency, Belfast

*"Thank you for sending the conference materials. I found the conference very valuable. Fawcett is interested in being involved in the working group and we would also be open to assist in any other way. For example, if we can assist the WRC by undertaking specific work / research on any CEDAW-related area please let us know. Many thanks again for organising such an enjoyable conference."*

Sharon Smeed, Fawcett Society

*"Many thanks for organising CEDAW Conference. It was very interesting to know CEDAW examples, to have listened to different speakers and to had an enjoying time meeting you all! Thanks for sending the presentations."*

Rosario Undurraga R., Sociology Department, University of Warwick

*"Thanks Kara and well done to all of you for a really excellent conference. I was able to do some great networking while I was there and found the EHRC and session with GEO especially informative."*

Ceri Hayes, WOMANKIND Worldwide

## Women's Sector CEDAW Strategy to 2011

Delegates identified a number of activities to form a draft strategy. There was clear support for a 'Working Group' and a meeting will take place in July 2009 to discuss how ideas from the conference might be taken forward.

**Overall Aim:** To build the capacity of the women's sector to use CEDAW as a tool to address women's inequality in the UK.

### Specific Aims of the Strategy:

1. **Empower** the women's sector to understand and use CEDAW and human rights instruments and language in their day-to-day work
2. **Gather** evidence about the state of the women's (in)equality to enable us to develop robust shadow reports and lobby effectively
3. **Raise awareness** of the Convention, Optional Protocol and General Recommendations amongst all Government departments, public bodies, women, judicial officers, judges, police, lawyers and prosecutors
4. **Monitor** and hold the Government to account on its implementation of 2008 general recommendations
5. **Lobby** the Government on key issues enshrined in the recommendations; both those affecting the sector (e.g. sustainable funding, Gender Duty) and specific communities of women (e.g. FGM, No Recourse to Public Funds)
6. **Engage** the women's sector more fully in CEDAW processes, including in the development of shadow reports and at the examination of 2011.

### Year One: Summer 2009 – Summer 2010

Activity	Aim
Raise awareness amongst women's groups of CEDAW & 2011 through a range of mechanisms (e.g. newsletters, meetings)	1, 6
Develop a calendar of key dates, e.g. reporting dates, dates for submission of shadow reports, national elections, Committee elections	1, 4, 5, 6
Establish and support a Working Group to meet 3 – 4 times in Year One	ALL
Reiterate and promote human rights and CEDAW language (e.g. substantive equality, temporary special measures) in interactions with policy makers (e.g. consultation responses, funding applications, stakeholder meetings)	1, 3
Develop a CEDAW tool kit for women's organisations to include (amongst other things): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fact sheet on "our human rights as women in the UK" under domestic and international law</li> <li>• Sample letter for MPs, local Councillors, commissioners on how they are meeting their CEDAW obligations</li> </ul>	1, 5, 6
Disseminate tool kit to women's orgs, networks and second tier/ infrastructure organisations	1, 3

Develop and deliver 5 x training days across the country for women's organisations and networks to accompany the tool kit	1, 3, 6
Identify priority issues enshrined within the Convention and nominate leads to co-ordinate gathering of evidence and lobbying	1, 2, 3, 6
Identify possible cases under the Optional Protocol and seek legal advice/support for these	1, 6
Develop an interactive, on-line space for information-sharing and networking	1, 2, 3, 6
Develop a 'bank' of inspiring stories, experiences and outcomes of women using CEDAW and domestic gender equality legislation	1, 2, 5, 6
Host an event with women from organisations in the Global South to exchange CEDAW stories	1, 3, 6
Develop a tool kit that explains how NGOs can input into shadow reports	2
Commission research on priority issues based on identified gaps in evidence	2
Develop a range of ways that women's organisations can input into shadow reports	2
Write to and seek meetings with elected officials asking how they intend to progress the Committee's recommendations	3, 4, 5
Consult on a national action plan for CEDAW that harmonises the actions of government bodies, the women's sector and other agencies	3, 4, 6
Raise awareness amongst government departments of their obligations under CEDAW, the recommendations, the "One Year On" report, and Geneva 2011	3
Identify concrete ways key Government departments can take forward key recommendations and look for strategic policy opportunities to feed this in	3, 4, 5
Monitor the government on its implementation of the Convention and domestic gender law (e.g. Gender Equality Duty)	4
Respond to the "One Year On" report	4
Identify stakeholders, champions and 'friends of influence' for the campaign (e.g. journalists, academics, politicians, activists)	5, 6
Identify who from the women's sector will attend the next examination and fundraise to send this delegation	5, 6

### **Year Two: Summer 2010 – Summer 2011**

Activity	Aim
Support Working Group to meet 3 – 4 times in Year Two	ALL
Disseminate tool kit to women's orgs, networks and second tier/ infrastructure organisations	1, 3
Develop and deliver 5 x training days across the country for women's organisations and networks to accompany the tool kit	1, 3, 6
Deliver a week of in-depth training on the CEDAW for the sector, i.e. 'Seizing the Opportunities of CEDAW 2'	1, 6
Maintain the on-line forum for information exchange and networking	1, 6
Co-ordinate the writing of shadow reports	2, 6
Publish a national action plan for CEDAW that harmonises the actions of government bodies, the women's sector and other agencies	3, 4, 5
Publish articles on 2011 examination in newsletters, women's sector journals,	3, 6

etc	
Host a special event in Summer 2011 to feed back on the examination to women's groups	3, 6
Gain media coverage of key issues enshrined in the Convention in the lead-up to and post examination	3,4,5,6
Hold meetings with key gender policy leads/ elected officials on priority issues based on evidence generated	4,5, 6
Develop a comprehensive report on the two year process for women's groups and funders	6

## Delegate List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Org</b>
Abigail Fitzgibbon	British Pregnancy Advisory Service
Abigail Hunt	Centre for the Study of Women
Akima Thomas	Women & Girls Network
Amy Murtagh	Manchester Women's Domestic Violence Helpline
Andrea Murray	Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
Angela de Prairie	University of Sussex
Angela Oxberry	Women's Health in South Tyneside
Angela Viano	UNA - Westminster
Anita Shervington	Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS)
Ann Marie Gray	Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
Ann Rossiter	Irish Women's Abortion Solidarity Campaign
Anna Grindle	Oxfam GB
Anna Gurevitch	Engender
Anne Quesney	Marie Stopes International
Anne Stebbings	Manchester Rape Crisis
Anne Walker	Ballybeen Women's Centre
Ayo Bakare	UK Women's Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology
Becky John	whomadeyourpants?
Bernie Smyth	
Betsy Kawamura	
Binta Pokawa	United Kingdom Border Agency
Cailin Lynn	Women's News Magazine
Carol Flack	Engender
Cath Elliott	UNISON
Catherine Cooke	Foyle Women's Information Network
Cathy Freese	London Development Centre-National Programme for Gender Equality & Women's Mental Health
Ceri Hayes	WOMANKIND Worldwide
Chawapiwa Faith Muverengwi	African Women Support Project
Christine Bennet	Rape Crisis England & Wales
Clare Dimmer	Breast Cancer UK
Clare Jones	WomenCentre Limited
Clare Laxton	Independent
Clothilde Redfern	Film4
Cynthia Forson	University of Hertfordshire
David Ruebain	Equality And Human Rights Commission
Dawn Thomas	Northhamptonshire Rape & Incest Crisis Centre
Deborah Lawrence	Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre
Deborah McIlveen	Women's Aid
Diane Mulligan	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Dianne Whitfield	Coventry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre

Dilara Demir	
Eleanor Lisney	Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS)
Eleri Butler	Women's National Commission
Elizabeth Lau	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Elizabeth Sclater	Older Women's Network Europe
Emma Ritch	Close the Gap
Falilatou Issa	Birmingham Empowerment Training Institute (BETI)
Fazeelat Iqbal	Roshni
Foziha Raja	Greater London Domestic Violence Project
Gabi Sibley	University College London
Geraldine Nolan	Women's Resource Centre
Gizem Akyil	University College London
Gwendolyn Sterk	Welsh Women's National Coalition
Gwynne Wallis	Breast Cancer UK
Haley Rose	Women Organising in Wolverhampton
Hannana Siddiqui	Southall Black Sisters
Helen Jackson	Manchester Rape Crisis
Helen Shervington	Woodview Community Association Women's Group
Helene Reardon-Bond	Government Equalities Office
Hilde Roren	National Alliance of Women's Organizations
Ingrid Salomonsen	Eva Women's Aid
Iram Awan	National Centre for Social Research
Iris Elliot	National University of Ireland
Isabel Livingstone	National Equality Partnership
Jabien Kauser	Lancashire Wide Network for Minority Ethnic Women
Jacqui Hunt	Equality Now
Jane Gordon	London School of Economics
Janet Veitch	National Alliance of Women's Organizations
Janette Lord	Northhamptonshire Rape & Incest Crisis Centre
Jennifer Lumsden-Gorden	Sandwell Rape Support Service
Jim Karstegl	Women's Self Education Fund
Jo Todd	Respect
Joanna Jones	Giving Real Opportunities To Women (GROW)
Jodie Darge	The Wish Centre
Judi Chaddock	Soroptomist International
Judith Higgins	European Anti-poverty Network
Julia Marshall	Cumbria Probation
Kath Rees	The Haven Wolverhampton
Katherine Ronderos	Central American Women's Network
Laura Riley	British Pregnancy Advisory Service
Laurel Townhead	Women in Prison
Lee Eggleston	SERICC & Rape Crisis (England & Wales)
Lee Webster	
Lianne Howard-Dace	Girlguide UK

Liz Kelly	End Violence Against Women Coalition
Liz McKean	Amnesty International
Liz Todd	Association of Women Solicitors (AWS)
Lynn Carvill	Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
Lynne Hinde	Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre
Marie Birchall	One World Action
Maureen Ndawana	Zimbabwe Women's Network
Meera Chindooroy	
Michelle Millar	Disability Action
Mussurut Zia	Lancashire Wide Network for Minority Ethnic Women
Nadia Chergui	Women's Resource Centre
Natalie Thomlinson	
Naureen Khan	Equalities and Human Rights Commission
Nesta Lloyd-Jones	Welsh Women's Aid
Nicola Harwin	Women's Aid
Pat Jarvis	Rotherham College
Pauline Westcott	Older Feminists Network
Pratibha Mistry	Sparkhill Asian Women's Association
Rachel Hodgkin	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children
Rachel Saunders	UNISON
Rita Brennan	
Robina Iqbal	Sparkhill Asian Women's Association
Ros Bragg	Maternity Action
Rosario Undurraga	University of Warwick
Rowena Jaber	The Wish Centre
Sagina Bi	Apna Haq
Sally Blyth	Womens Health Matters
Sandhya Sharma	Oxfam UKPP
Sarah Learmonth	Coventry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre
Sarah Priest	Women's National Commission
Severyna Magill	School of Oriental and African Studies
Shaki Sanusi	Rights of Women
Shaminder Ubhi	Ashiana Network
Shamshad Iqbal	Angelou Centre
Sharin Aslam	Mirpuri Community Development Trust
Sharon Greene	UNISON
Sharon Smee	Fawcett Society
Sheila Coates	SERIC & Rape Crisis (England & Wales)
Shelly Dowrich	Women's National Commission
Shirini Heerah	Independent
Sian Patterson	Worcestershire Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre
Sonia Omar	British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR)
Sue England	Engender/Humanist Academy
Sue Robson	NEWomen's Network
Sue Waterhouse	London Development Centre
Susana Oguntoye	FORWARD

Tammara Mattingly	The Wish Centre
Tanya Hughes	Ballybeen Women's Centre
Tara Zengeni	Comic Relief
Tinyan Otuomagie	Stories of CEDAW
Trudy Ndabire	Women Asylum Seekers Together (London)
Umme Iman	The Angelou Centre
Vahideh Golzard	Leeds University
Violeta Neubauer	UN CEDAW
Zarin Hainsworth	United Nations Development Fund for Women

## **CEDAW Working Group**

Organisations that have expressed an interest in being involved in a CEDAW Working Group until mid-2011:

1. Apna Haq
2. Ballybean Women's Centre
3. Blue Sky Solutions
4. Breast Cancer UK
5. British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR)
6. British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas)
7. Cumbria Domestic Violence Strategic Management Board
8. End Violence Against Women Coalition
9. Equality Now
10. Fawcett Society
11. Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network
12. London School of Economics
13. National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO)
14. National Centre for Social Research
15. Newham Asian Women's Project
16. Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
17. North East Women's Network
18. Older Women's Network Europe
19. Oxfam
20. Rights of Women
21. Rural women's network in Derbyshire
22. South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) and
23. SI Ballymoney and District and Alliance for Choice Belfast
24. Southall Black Sisters
25. Sparkhill Asian Women's Association
26. The Angelou Centre
27. UNIFEM
28. United Kingdom Border Agency (Midlands and East Region)
29. United Nations Association UK
30. Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS)
31. Women Asylum Seekers Together London
32. Women in Prison
33. Women's Resource Centre
34. Women's Voice Wales

## **Pledges from Delegates**

At the end of the conference, delegates were asked to pledge three actions that they would commit to taking after the conference. Pledges included:

- Mention CEDAW in all our lobbying, consultations, campaigns from now on!
- Brief women offenders and those working with women offenders
- Work to include forced marriage and honour violence in the next report
- Monitor regularly the progress made on CEDAW in the UK/ internationally
- Learn more about the Optional Protocol
- Ensure this information is shared with colleagues, our trustees, members
- Use CEDAW in discussions with my Local Authority
- Hold government to account on CEDAW recommendations
- Present CEDAW opportunities to our Women's Strategy Group
- Refer back to Board and members to raise organisational awareness
- Include CEDAW together with GED to Local Authorities
- Lobby local councils on funding issues using CEDAW specific language
- Contact my local MP and refer to CEDAW re: No Recourse
- Lobby PCT using CEDAW specific language
- Use CEDAW in budgeting
- Read and understand the OP and which CEDAW recommendations to use
- Get more knowledge about the Human Rights Act as a whole to use
- Liaise with WRC re guidance and information on using public law to challenge funding decisions
- Learn more about existing UN conventions
- Talk to people at HQ about using CEDAW
- Help CEDAW working group with strategic planning and gathering evidence
- Make an appointment with MP Dr Julian Lewis at his surgery. He can add CEDAW info to my large file!
- Give friends a leaflet to inform them about this exciting day
- Feed back to org and recommend we support CEDAW more overtly
- Follow up on any health rights CEDAW may have highlighted
- Write an article about today
- Discuss CEDAW with NGOs linked with my organisation
- Support women experiencing violence to increase awareness
- Use CEDAW as a tool to support women's organisations to gain resources

- Work out opportunities within government for CEDAW champions
- Include the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers when accessing maternity services in the next report
- Propose our local women's forum propose a motion to City Council to adopt CEDAW
- Be involved in legal strategies using domestic law and international mechanisms (CEDAW Optional Protocol)
- Look more closely at Government Equalities Office work on CEDAW
- Note key dates for CEDAW in office diary.

For the full list of pledges, visit [www.wrc.org.uk/cedaw](http://www.wrc.org.uk/cedaw).