



## QUESTIONNAIRE

PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION, 1995  
AND  
THE COMMONWEALTH PLAN OF ACTION ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT  
(1995) AND ITS UPDATE (2000 – 2005)

This questionnaire has been prepared for National Women's Machineries by the Gender Section, Social Transformation Programmes Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Information and statistics captured from it will be used to record progress, best practice, constraints and emerging issues in gender equality for:

- (a) A **Special Report** on progress in gender and development in Commonwealth countries since the 1995 Beijing conference to be prepared for the 7th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministerial Meeting (7WAMM) in 2004. This publication will also be the Commonwealth's contribution to discussions at the Fifth World Conference on Women in 2005 (Beijing +10);
- (b) **The Commonwealth Secretary-General's 2003 Biennial Report to Heads of Government** on implementation of the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development between 2001 – 2003 which will be tabled at the **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting** in Abuja, Nigeria, in December 2003; and
- (c) Other related policy, research and website materials produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The deadline for receipt of the completed questionnaire is 31 August 2003.

**PLEASE FILL IN THE NAME OF  
YOUR COUNTRY HERE:**

United Kingdom
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### GUIDELINES FOR COUNTRY RESPONSES

#### **Purpose of the Questionnaire**

1. To provide an opportunity for each country to inform and share with the rest of the Commonwealth progress on the promotion of gender equality in development since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. This will enable the Commonwealth Secretariat to prepare a synthesis report on pan-Commonwealth progress in gender equality since 1995 (previous country reports will also be drawn on) to be produced for 7WAMM; and
2. To enable each country to report in more detail and depth progress in the two-year period (April 2001 – May 2003) under the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development (1995 – 2000) and its Update (2000 – 2005).

In addressing all questions, please focus on successes, best cases, case studies, innovative policies and practices and outstanding challenges that indicate progress and which you wish to share with your Commonwealth colleagues. Any interactions you have had involving civil society should be highlighted. It is important that you make a clear distinction in recording progress from the period before in your summaries or analyses.

If available, please attach the most recent National Reports on CEDAW and Progress on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the completed questionnaire.

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## IDENTITY OF RESPONDENT

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Reporting Officer's Name: Rachel Lloyd

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 24 October 2003

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You may download the questionnaire from our website: [www.thecommonwealth.org/gender](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender)  
If you wish to receive this questionnaire by email, please contact [m.roberts@commonwealth.int](mailto:m.roberts@commonwealth.int) or [gad@commonwealth.int](mailto:gad@commonwealth.int)

Kindly mark an 'X' in the following box if you do **not** wish to have your report posted on the Commonwealth Gender Website

Please return questionnaires by **31 August 2003** to:

**QUESTIONNAIRE 2003**  
**Gender Section, Social Transformation Programmes Division**  
**Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House**  
**Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, United Kingdom**

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**Website: [www.thecommonwealth.org/gender](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender)**

## **PART A – PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION SINCE 1995**

Countries are requested to provide a summary of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action **since 1995**. Responses will be synthesised into an overview report of progress in Commonwealth countries, identifying priority areas for action, best mechanisms and achievements, especially those resulting in change on the ground, constraints and implementation issues, as well as emerging issues of concern.

Please use extra pages for your answers as necessary.

### **Q.1 The Beijing Platform for Action outlined 12 critical areas of concern with accompanying strategic objectives and actions. In the boxes, please rank by number (1, 2 etc down to 12) issues that have been of priority concern and action for your country since 1995.**

**=1** **Women in poverty.**  
(Macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address needs and efforts of women in poverty; laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources; access for women to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions; gender-based methodologies and research to address the feminisation of poverty.)

**6** **Women and health.**  
(Women's access throughout their lives to appropriate, affordable, quality health care, information and related services; preventive programmes that promote women's health; gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues; research and information on women's health; more resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.)

**=7** **Women and armed conflict.**  
(Participation of women in conflict resolution, at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation; reduce excessive military expenditures and control availability of armaments; promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations; promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace; protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women; assistance to women of colonies and non-self-governing territories.)

**5** **Women in power and decision-making.**  
(Women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making; increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.)

**=7** **Education and training of women.**  
(Equal access to education; eradicate illiteracy among women; improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education; non-discriminatory education and training; sufficient resources for and monitor educational reform; promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.)

**2** **Violence against women.**  
(Integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women; study causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures; eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.)

**=1** **Women and the economy.**  
(Women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources; women equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade; provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women; strengthen women's capacity and commercial networks; eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination; harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.)

**4** **Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.**  
(Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies; integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects; generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.)

3

**Human rights of women.**

(Promote human rights of women through full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially CEDAW; equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice; legal literacy.)

8

**Women in the media.**

(Participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communications; balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.)

9

**Women and the environment.**

(Women active in environmental decision-making at all levels; integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development); mechanisms at national, regional, international levels to assess impact of development and environmental policies on women.)

10

**The girl-child.**

(Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child, negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls; promote, protect rights of girl-child and increase awareness of needs and potential; eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training; eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition; eliminate economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work; eradicate violence against the girl-child; strengthen role of family in improving status of girl-child.)

**Q.2 Summarise below your country's progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA) since 1995.** Concentrate on your top 3 or 4 ranked priority areas. Include reasons why these are priority areas for your country and how progress has been measured (include examples of activities, any legislation and policies, new machineries/structures and statistics showing change). Describe in greater detail one or two of your country's top achievements or best case practices. Cite any constraints and implementation issues in any of the 12 PfA areas which have yet to be overcome.

1. The UK Government recognises the importance of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and has taken every opportunity to address its objectives.
2. The top 4 ranked priority areas of the UK progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA) since 1995 are:
  - Women and the economy
  - Violence against women
  - Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
  - Human rights of women
3. Legislation and policies and the new machineries/structures can be found under the section on Human rights of women, Para. 37 - 54.

**Women and the economy**Women's participation in the labour market

4. The Government recognises that women make a crucial contribution to the economy, in their role as both workers and carers. With the increasing number of women taking an active part in the economy the Government is fully committed to equal opportunities in the labour market, encouraging family-friendly employment policies, and to improving childcare packages to encourage those parents who wish to work to do so.
5. One of the most important changes in UK society in recent decades has been women's increased participation in the labour market. The proportion of women in the labour force has been increasing and this trend is likely to continue. In 1971 women of working age (16-59 years) made up 38% of the labour force, this figure increased to 44 % in 1996 and to 45% in 2002<sup>1</sup>. According

<sup>1</sup> Labour Force Survey figure seasonally adjusted and regressed to the 2001 census.

to the Spring 2002 Labour Force Survey, there are around 12.2 million women of working age in employment in the UK. Between Spring 1992 and Spring 2002, the employment rate for white women in the UK increased by 7% compared with an increase of 2% for ethnic minority women over the same period. Moreover, the number of people in the workforce increased by approximately 240,000 in the year to May 2002. Of this increase, 66% were female and 34% were male.

6. The measures taken by government to improve the women's situation in this area are:

#### Women in Business

7. Women entrepreneurs make an increasingly important contribution to the business sector. The 2002 Labour Force Survey estimates that women constitute around 27% of the self-employed in the UK. Women are most likely to establish businesses in service sectors, with nearly 50% of businesses in this sector started by women. A key Government objective is to promote enterprise for all. As part of this agenda it is important to ensure that services for start-up businesses are delivered effectively in disadvantaged areas and to those in under-represented groups, including women and ethnic minorities. As part of this, the Government's Small Business Service is taking the lead in identifying and removing barriers in the provision of those services and spreading best practice.

8. The *Small Business Service and Government – the Way Forward* (published in December 2002) set out a new policy framework for a Government-wide approach to helping small firms. It identifies seven core strategies as key drivers for economic growth, improved productivity and a wider involvement in enterprise for all. One of the seven core strategies is “encouraging more enterprise in disadvantaged communities and under-represented groups”.

9. The Small Business Service, in partnership with Prowess (a UK-wide trade association for the promotion of women's enterprise support), has led the development of a cross Government strategy for women's enterprise which will focus primarily on the business support needs of women starting and growing their own businesses.

#### Northern Ireland

10. Recognising that women in business are under-represented, the Government is undertaking a number of initiatives to increase their representation in the business sector. In 2001, the report, *Mapping of Support Provision for Women in Enterprises in Northern Ireland – A Strategic Framework for the Future*, aimed at understanding the barriers that potential women entrepreneurs experience, was published.

#### Scotland

11. Scottish Enterprise has in place a broad range of initiatives to provide advice, assistance and training for women starting a business or considering doing so. Examples include: the Women into the Network (WIN) programme; various Training and Development programmes; Women's Business Clubs; Women into Business Programme; coaching seminars *scottishbusinesswoman.com*; Women's Business Directory; Women's Technology Centre.

#### Wales

12. The *Entrepreneurship Action Plan for Wales* (EAP) has identified specific groups, amongst them women, that are under-represented in terms of starting up in business and that require special measures of support and encouragement in enterprise development. An integral project of the Plan is *Women's Enterprise Wales* (WEW) set up to address the needs of potential female entrepreneurs pan-Wales.

### New Deal for Lone Parents

13. As part of the measures to tackle poverty among women, the Government has intensified its efforts aimed at improving lone parents' living standards by facilitating their access to the labour market. In this context, the Government introduced the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP), in 1997, that aims to help and encourage lone parents to improve their prospects and living standards by taking up paid work. In November 2001, NDLP was extended to include all lone parents not working, or working fewer than 16 hours per week. Over 90% of those benefiting from the programme are women. NDLP offers active case management through dedicated Personal Advisers (PAs). The PA will offer advice on job-search, childcare, training and in-work benefits, and provide an in-work support service to help lone parents make the transition into employment.

### Work / Life Balance

14. The Government set out plans for providing a package of family-friendly policies in its White Paper *Fairness at Work*, which was published in May 1998.

15. In addition to implementing the Work Time and Young Workers Directives, the Government proposed to introduce parental leave as part of a cohesive package of parental rights. The package covers new rights to parental leave and time off for urgent family reasons, and simpler maternity leave rights. Implementation of the Working Time Directive provides rights to minimum daily and weekly rest periods, rest breaks, annual paid holidays, a limit of 48 hours a week on the average time which employees can be required to work (except by voluntary agreement); and restrictions on hours worked at nights. The Government also welcomed the Part-time Work Directive, which was extended by the UK in April 1998.

16. Since 1999, the Government has taken forward a raft of measures to help provide employees with more flexible working options and an end to the long-hours culture, making it easier for working parents to spend more time with their families.

17. The Employment Act 2002 gives all parents of children under the age of six the right to ask their employers for flexible working arrangements, and underlines the Government's commitment to encouraging employers to allow this to become the norm in the workplace. The Government has increased the statutory rate of maternity pay to £100 a week from April 2003 and extended the period of paid maternity leave from 18 to 26 weeks. For the first time, the UK Government also extended the right to maternity leave to adoptive parents, and introduced paternity leave, payable from April at £100 a week, for new fathers as well. Britain's six million part-time workers, 80% of whom are women, have also been given more rights under the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, which have made it illegal for part-timers to be treated less favourably than their full-time peers.

### The Pay Gap

18. The Government is determined to take steps to help close the pay gap and has conducted research to understand its root causes.

19. The fact that the vast majority of part-time workers are women has exacerbated the pay gap, as many part-time jobs are in lower-paying occupations. The introduction of the National Minimum Wage has gone some way to address this issue, but the pay gap remains at 19%. Other contributing factors include the differences in men and women's work experience and qualifications, travel constraints caused by childcare considerations, occupational segregation and discrimination. For example, many women who re-enter the workplace after an extended absence spent raising their children find that they are doing so at a lower wage rate than men who have not had long absences from the labour market. We are working to reduce the pay gap through a variety of measures, including working with the Equal Opportunities Commission to promote equal pay reviews, providing trade unions with additional funding for training representatives in equal pay issues and requiring the Civil Service to undertake pay reviews by April 2003. The Employment Act 2002

should go some way to addressing many of these issues, not least by making it easier for women to pursue equal pay cases through the courts through the introduction of a questionnaire procedure. The Castle Awards, launched in March 2002, are designed to recognise steps taken by employers to promote equal opportunities and address the issues of pay inequality.

### Childcare

20. The Government wants to ensure that affordable, accessible, quality childcare is available in every neighbourhood. Children have to have the best possible start in life, and to ensure that working parents, especially women, have increased opportunities to improve their participation and productivity in the workforce.

21. The Government will continue to influence the way childcare policy is implemented, following the Strategy Unit's report "Delivering for Children and Families", published in November 2002. The Government wants to ensure that the economic benefits of appropriate childcare are acknowledged alongside the child development and welfare benefits.

22. The UK Government will be broadening their understanding of the decisions that working parents make in choosing whether to work or study and how childcare can impact on that process.

23. The Government will also be working with employers to help them see the business case for supporting childcare for their employees.

24. The National Childcare Strategy was launched in 1998, and is designed to support choice by expanding good quality, affordable childcare. It aims to create places to accommodate 2million children by 2006. So far, over 1.1million children have already benefited. The Government has met its target of guaranteeing a nursery place for every 4 year old who needs it, and is on target to meet this for all 3 year olds by 2004. Help with childcare costs has been extended to the lowest paid – nearly 1.3million families now benefit. Sure Start will reach 400,000 children in disadvantaged areas by 2004 (a third of all children in poverty). Through the Neighbourhood Childcare Initiative, £300m will be invested in the most disadvantaged areas over 3 years to 2004, to establish a network of flagship nurseries.

25. Between 1993 and June 1998 the UK Government's Out of School Childcare Initiative (OSCI) has created over 81,000 good quality, affordable out of school childcare places in England. The Initiative offers parents, especially women, the opportunity to participate more fully in the labour market.

26. See [http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/work\\_life/childcare.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/work_life/childcare.htm) for more information.

## **Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women**

### Government Mechanisms

27. The Women and Equality Unit (WEU) is one of the UK's main mechanisms to secure equal rights between women and men. The Unit – formed after the 1997 election – started out as the Women's Unit, in the then Department of Social Security (DSS). The Unit has lead responsibility within Government for policy on women, gender equality, sexual orientation and the co-ordination of equality. (<http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/>). The UK Government has two Ministers for Women, one at Cabinet level, leading on gender equality: Rt Hon. Patricia Hewitt, Minister for Women, and Jacqui Smith, Deputy Minister for Women.

28. The aim of the Unit is to reduce and remove barriers to opportunity for all, specific roles include:

- Leading the development of a more integrated approach across Government and its bodies on equality to increase opportunities for all.
- Leading on legislation and sponsoring other bodies in the equality areas where WEU has policy lead within Government.
- Undertaking specific projects solely or in partnership.
- Evaluating the impact of policies and contributing to redesign/new policies.

#### Northern Ireland

29. The Office of the First and Deputy Prime Minister are subject to the Programme for Government in Northern Ireland, which commits them to bring forward and implement cross-departmental Gender and Race strategies during 2003. They are also in charge of the Single Equality Bill. <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/equality/seb/index1.htm>

#### Scotland

30. The Equality Strategy in Scotland is delivered and implemented by the Scottish Executive Equality Unit. The Unit acts as a source of advice and guidance on equality as well as promoting equal opportunity issues throughout the Executive and championing the interests of equality groups. Under the Scottish Parliament's Standing Orders a statement of impact on equal opportunities must accompany all legislation proposed by the Executive.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/social/wtem-00.asp>

31. The Scottish Executive is providing funding for a Women's Convention in Scotland to strengthen the structure for women's organisations in Scotland to provide a strategic input into the Executive's work.

#### Wales

32. The Equality Policy Unit (EPU) provides advice and guidance on equality issues to the Welsh Assembly and takes forward statutory obligations on equality. The Unit has established baseline information on equality of opportunity through their equality survey, which will then be used to monitor and measure progress on equality issues.

33. The Committee on Equality of Opportunity audits the Assembly's promotion of equal opportunities and avoidance of discrimination. The Committee has conducted two baseline audits to assess the extent to which current policy takes race, gender and disability into account. The Committee also oversees the EPU's operational plan and agrees its content.

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/equalities/gender/>

#### Institutional Mechanisms

##### Women's National Commission (WNC)

34. The WNC was established in 1969 as a Government funded non-departmental public body. It works to present women's views, priorities and concerns to the Government from its 230 plus partner organisations, which represent in turn, over 6 million women. The WNC is now accountable to the Minister for Women. It organises seminars, publishes documents, submits reports to the Ministers and monitors international developments concerning women.

##### Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

35. The EOC was established by statute in 1975 as a mechanism for securing women's rights. It covers all of Great Britain, including Scotland and Wales. Its objective is the elimination of all forms of discrimination, to promote equal opportunities for women and men in general, to monitor the application of the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act and to prepare proposals to amendments of law for the Minister for Women. It undertakes formal investigations, assists complainants, carries out research and promotional activities, disseminates publications and collaborates with trade unions, employers and other organisations.

### Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)

36. The ECNI is a non-departmental public body that works to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity for all and encourage good practice. The Commission has been given a wide range of powers and responsibilities, including advising and assisting complainants, investigation and enforcement, awareness-raising and review of equality legislation.

### **Human rights of women**

37. The UK promotes women's enjoyment of human rights and freedoms by negotiating resolutions and other documents in international fora, such as the UN Commission on the Status of Woman (CSW), the UN Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR). The Women and Equality Unit (WEU), as part of the Department of Trade and Industry, supports the Ministers for Women in promoting gender equality throughout government. The Unit liaises across Whitehall on international policy matters relating to gender equality and helps to co-ordinate, negotiate and present UK positions on women's issues.

### Promoting women's rights on national level

#### Legal Mechanisms

38. The Government is working to secure women's rights and put an end to all forms of discrimination against women. These objectives are given effect through national law, in particular the *Equal Pay Act 1970* and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975*, each as amended, as well as the *Employment Act 1989* and Northern Ireland equivalents.

[http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/discrimination/discrimination\\_act.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/discrimination/discrimination_act.htm)

39. The UK Government signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981 and ratified in 1986. The UK submits national reports to the UN CEDAW Committee every four years (periodic reports) on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations. The UK considers the Convention a critical instrument in securing women's rights.

40. *Sex Discrimination Election Candidates Act 2002* enables political parties in the UK, if they wish, to adopt positive measures to reduce inequality in the numbers of women and men elected as representatives of their party.

[http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/public\\_life/parliament.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/public_life/parliament.htm)

41. The Employment Act 2002 increased the standard rate of Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance, lengthened paid maternity leave and gave parents the right to apply for flexible working. In addition the Act introduces an equal pay questionnaire for use in employment tribunal equal pay cases.

[http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/work\\_life/work\\_life\\_balance.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/work_life/work_life_balance.htm)

42. Please refer to section of Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) in Q.2.2.

#### Policy Mechanisms

43. The WEU is promoting gender equality across Government through the development and monitoring of the report, *Delivering on Gender Equality*, in support of the DTI Gender Equality PSA. *Delivering on Gender Equality* sets out specific targets and initiatives across Government, covering the key delivery departments and the key government priorities for action: including employment, pay, flexible working, childcare, and fear of crime. *Delivering on Gender Equality*

also sets out the broader context of work going on right across Government to make a positive impact on gender equality.

44. For further information please refer to the Report “[Delivering on Gender Equality - Supporting the PSA Objective on Gender Equality 2003-2006](#)”; download:

#### Equality Institutions Review

45. Following the consultation document *Towards Equality and Diversity*, published in December 2001, the Government concluded that there were arguments, in favour of a single statutory commission. The project has stimulated a lively debate both on the principles that underpin UK equality institutions and future options. The Equality Institutions Review is the most significant review of equality in over a quarter of a century. It is centred on looking at long-term options for the priorities and role of equality institutions in Great Britain. The initial phase of this project was completed in October 2002, with the publication of a consultation document entitled *Equality and Diversity: Making it Happen*. The consultation document set out the Government’s assessment of the priorities for equality and the challenges ahead. It looked at what equality institutions could contribute to making the Government’s vision of equality a reality, invited views on possible structures for the future and looked at a number of cross-cutting issues that the Government will address. These include the relationship between equality and human rights; devolved, regional and local issues; and the relationship between promotion and enforcement. The Department for Trade and Industry has published *Equality and Diversity: the way ahead* alongside this consultation process. This document details the results of the consultation from December 2002, and offers stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the draft regulations that will implement the *EC Race and Employment Directives*. Through implementing these EC Directives, the Government aims to develop effective legislation that will have a real impact in removing unfair discrimination.

<http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/equality/project/project.htm>

46. For further information on Gender mainstreaming see Q.6.1.

#### Promoting women’s rights at the EU level

47. The WEU participated in the working group on the Future of Europe, which is part of the European Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The aim is to ensure that a gender perspective is included in the debate relating to the Convention on the Future of Europe. In October 2002 the group drafted its Opinion on the Gender Dimension of the Convention on the Future of Europe. WEU also participates in the EU-wide high level group on Gender Mainstreaming, which meets twice a year to consider and advise how to mainstream gender within the EU.

48. Women’s rights are also promoted internationally through the European Union. The EU is fully committed to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, as an international body and through individual member states.

#### Promoting women’s rights at the international level

49. The UK is an elected member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which meets annually in New York. CSW is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that promotes women’s rights and plays a catalytic role in mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programmes within the UN system. CSW prepares reports and recommendations for ECOSOC on promoting women’s rights.

50. The WEU led the UK delegation at the CSW’s 47<sup>th</sup> session in March 2003, which included FCO officials and representatives of the Women’s National Commission. The themes this year were women’s human rights and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls

and women's participation in and access to the media and information and communication technology (ICTs) – their impact on, and use as an instrument for, the advancement and empowerment of women.

51. The CSW adopted resolutions on the situation of women and girls and Afghanistan; the situation of Palestinian women; and women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS. It also adopted a UK-led resolution on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the UN system. The resolution highlighted progress in gender mainstreaming in the UN system in the previous 12 months. It invited UN bodies to identify and address the remaining gaps and encouraged monitoring and evaluation, with a view to maintaining momentum towards ECOSOC's review of its 1197 agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming due by 2005. The CSW thanked the UK for introducing this resolution as an important tool for achieving the commitments set out in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session of the General Assembly Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

52. ECOSOC's annual substantive session in July 2002 adopted the UK-sponsored resolution on gender mainstreaming in the UN system by consensus. The resolution represents an important step towards an effective gender mainstreaming strategy across the UN.

53. At the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in September-December 2002, the Third Committee adopted resolutions promoting the rights of women. The UK participated through the EU in negotiating the resolution on eliminating crimes against women committed in the name of honour. The number of sponsors increased significantly up from 67 in 2000 to 89 in 2002. The resolution was adopted by consensus. This represents welcome progress on a resolution that has proved difficult to negotiate in its short history. The UK also helped to negotiate other adopted resolutions, including those on trafficking in women and girls; the follow up to the Fourth World Conference on women; and improvement of the status of women in the UN.

54. WEU is a member of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG), an intergovernmental body that promotes gender equality, including women's rights. The UK has participated in the debates and negotiations of recommendations on violence against women, and balanced decision making.

### **Violence against women**

55. The Government has made stopping violence against women in all its forms and bringing perpetrators to justice a priority. It is a complex social problem with wide reaching implications, causing poverty, ill health, social exclusion and loss of life. To this end, a Ministerial Working Group on Domestic Violence was set up in 2001 to co-ordinate policies across Government. As well as developing effective interventions to prevent repeat attacks, the group is also working to raise awareness about domestic violence, and challenge the 'just a domestic' culture which tolerates, and consequently perpetuates, domestic violence.

56. Increasing safe accommodation choices for women and children is another key priority. From April 2003, a new £153 million programme called 'Supporting People', was introduced to help domestic violence survivors to live more independent lives in the community. This is on top of the £120 million in additional funding that has already been spent on providing victims of domestic violence with safe accommodation.

57. The Government published a consultation paper in June 2003, which sets out proposals for preventing domestic violence from happening in the first place. Interested parties will give their opinions on a range of proposals from sentencing and providing anonymity for victims in court, to making breach of a non-molestation order a criminal offence and putting murder reviews on a statutory footing. The paper is the latest in a long line of research and policy initiatives that have

been developed over the last four years. In 1998, the Crime and Disorder Act placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to monitor the level of domestic violence in their community and form partnerships to reduce the problem.

58. Then in 1999, the Government published Living Without Fear: an integrated approach to tackling violence against women, which set out a national strategy, and which was followed a year later by the Home Office publication Domestic Violence – Break the Chain: multi-agency guidance for addressing domestic violence.

59. The Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence has also been asked to look more closely at the issue of rape by known perpetrators, with a view to increasing the number of offenders being brought to justice.

#### Scotland

60. In 1998, the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse was set up to recommend minimum levels of service for women experiencing domestic abuse, and in 2000 it produced a national strategy which led to the creation of a National Group to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland.

61. The Scottish Executive is providing £10 million between 2001- 4 to build, purchase or upgrade refuges. In April 2000, the Executive created the Domestic Abuse Service Development Fund, which is currently spending £3 million a year to support 57 local projects. January 2001 saw the publication of the Scottish Strategy for Victims, to give victims of crime better support and more information. In a related development, the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill includes provisions to give victims of certain crimes the right to be informed when an offender is being considered for release, and make representations before any final decision to release the offender from prison is made. Separately, the Scottish Executive is expected to publish a draft bill proposing a reduction in the period of separation constituting grounds for divorce. It is thought that a reduction will discourage acrimony, help to protect present and former partners against domestic abuse and encourage fathers to stay involved with their families.

#### Wales

62. Lead responsibility for the criminal aspects of domestic violence in England and Wales rests with the Home Office.

63. The National Assembly for Wales has devolved responsibility for a number of cross-cutting issues, including health and social services, and child protection.

64. A Working Group on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women in Wales has been set up, and a number of initiatives are currently being considered.

65. In addition, the National Assembly provides core funding for Welsh Women's Aid, which in turn supporting 32 local groups responsible for running 40 refuges and 22 information centres.

#### Northern Ireland

66. In 1997, the police in Northern Ireland introduced a new method of recording the number of domestic violence cases.

67. As a result, the number of incidents registered increased from around 8,500 in 1997, to 14,000 in 1998.

68. The Government believes that this is a result of more effective accounting rather than an increase in the number of domestic violence cases. Nevertheless, the Northern Ireland Office is due to publish a strategy to tackle violence against women in Northern Ireland in the next few months.

69. The strategy will build on the work already being done by the Regional Forum on Domestic Violence, set up in 1995, to reduce the levels of domestic violence, the protection of victims and the provision of services to women.

70. The Northern Ireland Court Service also recently introduced special arrangements at all Crown Court venues and most Magistrates Courts to allow women who are attending court in the capacity of a victim or witness to have access to separate and secure waiting facilities.

71. For more information on violence against women please refer to Q.6.2.

**The UK's top achievement for women as mothers are:**

72. The National Childcare Strategy was launched in 1998, designed to support choice by expanding good quality, affordable childcare. It aims to create places to accommodate 2million children by 2006. So far, over 1.1million children have already benefited. The Government has met its target of guaranteeing a nursery place for every 4 year old who needs it, and is on target to meet this for all 3 year olds by 2004.

73. Help with childcare costs has been extended to the lowest paid – nearly 1.3million families now benefit. Sure Start will reach 400,000 children in disadvantaged areas by 2004 (a third of all children in poverty). Through the Neighbourhood Childcare Initiative, £300m will be invested in the most disadvantaged areas over 3 years to 2004, to establish a network of flagship nurseries.

The UK's top achievement for women in the workplace are:

74. A boost to the pay of low paid workers – 70% of whom are women, with the introduction of the National Minimum Wage which went up to £4.20 in October 2002 and will rise to £4.50 in October this year. Around one million women have benefited.

75. Reducing the Pay Gap – making it easier for women and men to take up equal pay claims by simplifying and speeding up existing tribunal procedures, and introducing an equal pay questionnaire procedure in April this year. The first Castle awards were presented in October 2002 to individuals and organisations with good records of action on pay. Following the Kingsmill report, the Government has set up a task force (chaired by Denise Kingsmill) to look at human capital reporting by companies.

76. From April 2003 introducing a new framework of support for families and low-income working households through the Child Tax Credit (extending support to more families currently excluded from income-related support for children) and the Working Tax Credit (available to lone parents or two partners working for at least 16 hours a week). These represent the biggest financial boost for mothers since the introduction of Child Benefit.

**Q.3 What are the top 2 or 3 areas concerning gender equality which you feel your country and your region need to concentrate on in the next five years? Why? Describe any plans to implement them and any constraints.**

77. The top areas concerning gender equality that the UK will concentrate on in the next five years are outlined below.

**Work-Life balance**

78. Work-Life Balance/tackling the long hours culture – from April 2003, employees with children under six have had the right to require employers to seriously consider requests to work flexibly. Up to 55,000 new mothers may return to work as a result of the new right.

79. The challenge fund – over 400 companies have benefited from consultancy advice worth a total of over almost £9m through the Work Life Balance Challenge Fund since 2000.

80. Other rights – Government has introduced paid time off for workers with dependants for family emergencies, and given part timers (and people on fixed term contracts) the same rights as full timers. It has also introduced three months' parental leave.

81. The Women and Equality Unit with the Best Practice at Work team at DTI will work to promote work-life balance and flexible working practices at all levels.

See [http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/work\\_life/index.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/work_life/index.htm) for more information

### Childcare

82. The Government wants to ensure that affordable, accessible, quality childcare is available in every neighbourhood. Children have to have the best possible start in life, and to ensure that working parents, especially women, have increased opportunities to improve their participation and productivity in the workforce.

83. The Government will continue to influence the way childcare policy is implemented, following the Strategy Unit's report "Delivering for Children and Families", published in November 2002. The Government wants to ensure that the economic benefits of appropriate childcare are acknowledged alongside the development and welfare benefits.

84. The UK's Government will be broadening their understanding of the decisions that working parents make in choosing whether to work or study and how childcare can impact on that process.

85. The Government will also be working with employers to help them see the business case for supporting childcare for their employees.

86. A National Childcare Strategy launched in 1998, to support choice by expanding good quality, affordable childcare. It aims to create places to accommodate 2million children by 2006. So far, over 1.1million children have already benefited. The Government has met its target of guaranteeing a nursery place for every 4 year old who needs it, and is on target to meet this for all 3 year olds by 2004. Help with childcare costs has been extended to the lowest paid – nearly 1.3million families now benefit. Sure Start will reach 400,000 children in disadvantaged areas by 2004 (a third of all children in poverty). Through the Neighbourhood Childcare Initiative, £300m will be invested in the most disadvantaged areas over 3 years to 2004, to establish a network of flagship nurseries.

See [http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/work\\_life/childcare.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/work_life/childcare.htm) for more information.

### Reducing the pay gap

87. The pay gap has steadily decreased from 30% in 1975 to 19% in 2002 but we still have a long way to go. The price women pay over the course of their working lives for being female is £250,000. They can add another £140,000 to that if they have children.

- The Government action plan for reducing the pay gap includes:
- Implementing the accepted recommendations of the Kingsmill Review;
- Disseminating authoritative research, the Gender Pay Gap, on the causes and relative importance of the pay gap;
- Making annual Castle Awards to recognise excellence in employers who are working to address equal pay and equal opportunities issues;
- Making it easier for women and men to take up equal pay claims by simplifying and speeding up existing tribunal procedures;
- Introducing an equal pay questionnaire procedure in the Employment Act 2002;

- Developing a means for reporting in company annual reports and accounts of deployment of human resources;

88. The Government has appointed Fair Pay Champions from business, the public sector and trade unions to promote and share good practice.

89. A statutory national minimum wage was introduced in April 1999. It is helping to reduce the pay gap between men and women, because around 70% of its beneficiaries are female. Minimum wage rates are based on recommendations from the independent Low Pay Commission. The main rate is currently £4.20 per hour for workers aged 22 or over. The rate for workers aged 18 to 21 is £3.60 per hour. The rate does not vary by region, industry or size of company. It applies to all workers whether full-time or part-time, whether permanent, temporary or casual, and to home-workers. The Low Pay Commission's fourth report was published in March 2003 and recommended increases in the minimum wage rates over a two-year period. On 1 October 2003 the main and youth rates will increase to £4.50 and £3.80 per hour, respectively. The rates from October 2004 are presently recommended at £4.85 and £4.10 per hour respectively.

See <http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/pay/index.htm> for more information.

#### Domestic violence

90. The Government aims to create a society that will not tolerate, excuse or ignore domestic violence.

91. It has set up a new Ministerial Group convened to ensure co-ordinated and concerted action across Government to reduce and prevent domestic violence. The WEU is a member of a cross-Government team implementing the agreed action plan.

See [http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/domestic\\_violence/index.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/domestic_violence/index.htm) for more information.

For more information on the following areas please see the links below

- [Sexual orientation and civil partnerships](#)
- [Gender Equality across Government](#)
- [Sex Discrimination](#)
- [Equality Institutions Review](#)
- [Equality Coordination](#)
- [Europe and International](#)

**Q.4 Outline the establishment and growth of the National Women's Machinery (NWM) in your country since 1995.** (How has its structure changed – attach organisational charts – as well as its mandates and responsibilities during this period? Describe and attach statistics on how staffing levels have changed since 1995, how budget allocations have changed, and the level of head of NWM, e.g. department head, permanent secretary, minister)

92. The principle mechanism in the UK's NWM is the Women and Equality Unit. This was formed after the 1997 election. The Unit started out as the Women's Unit, in the then Department of Social Security (DSS), but in 1997 moved to the Cabinet Office

93. In 1999 the Unit undertook a 'Listening to Women' campaign, consisting of Ministerial road shows, focus groups and a postcard survey. As a result, the Unit compiled a series of priorities, some of which remain our key aims today – for instance, reducing the pay gap and improving work-life balance.

94. After the 2001 election, responsibility for different aspects of equality policy was dispersed more widely across Whitehall departments. The Unit was expanded and renamed 'The Women and Equality Unit', taking on the work of the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) as sponsor of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) and responsibility for gender-related European committees and directives.

95. A new Cabinet Minister for Women, Patricia Hewitt, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was appointed. The cabinet sub-committee for women became the cabinet sub committee for equality, and a small team was established outside the unit to coordinate equality policy across government. This team initiated the work on civil partnerships and the feasibility of creating a single equality body.

96. In 2002 the Unit moved to the Department of Trade and Industry. The Equality Coordination Team and the DTI's pre-existing Equality Impact Team – which from 2000 had ensured DTI complied with equality legislation in Northern Ireland and on race – were both merged into the Unit proper.

97. The Women and Equality Unit (WEU) is one of the UK's main policy mechanisms to secure equal rights between women and men. The Unit has lead responsibility within Government for policy on women, gender equality, sexual orientation and the co-ordination of equality.

98. The UK Government has two Ministers for Women, one at Cabinet level, leading on gender equality: Rt Hon. Patricia Hewitt, Minister for Women, and Jacqui Smith, Deputy Minister for Women.

99. The aim of the Unit is to reduce and remove barriers to opportunity for all; specific roles include:

- Leading the development of a more integrated approach across Government and its bodies on equality to increase opportunities for all.
- Leading on legislation and sponsoring other bodies in the equality areas where WEU has policy lead within Government.
- Undertaking specific projects solely or in partnership.
- Evaluating the impact of policies and contributing to redesign/new policies.

100. For further information on the Women and Equality Unit can be found on the Unit's website at <http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/>.

#### Northern Ireland

101. The Office of the First and Deputy Prime Minister are subject to the Programme for Government in Northern Ireland, which commits them to bring forward and implement cross-departmental Gender and Race strategies during 2003. They are also in charge of the Single Equality Bill.

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/equality/seb/index1.htm>

#### Scotland

102. The Equality Strategy in Scotland is delivered and implemented by the Scottish Executive Equality Unit. The Unit acts as a source of advice and guidance on equality as well as promoting equal opportunity issues throughout the Executive and championing the interests of equality groups. Under the Parliaments Standing Orders a statement of impact on equal opportunities must accompany all legislation proposed by the Executive.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/social/wtem-00.asp>

103. The Scottish Executive is providing funding for a Women's Convention in Scotland to strengthen the structure for women's organisations in Scotland and to provide a strategic input into the Executives work.

## Wales

104. The Equality Policy Unit (EPU) provides advice and guidance on equality issues to the Welsh Assembly and takes forward statutory obligations on equality. The Unit has established baseline information on equality of opportunity through their equality survey, which will then be used to monitor and measure progress on equality issues.

105. The Committee on Equality of Opportunity audits the Assembly's promotion of equal opportunities and avoidance of discrimination. The Committee has conducted two baseline audits to assess the extent to which current policy takes race, gender and disability into account. The Committee also oversees the EPU's operational plan and agrees its content.

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/equalities/gender/>

106. The UK Government works closely with non-governmental-organisations on gender issues. Three of the principal NGO's are outlined below.

### Women's National Commission (WNC)

107. The WNC was established in 1969 as a Government funded non-departmental public body. It works to present women's views, priorities and concerns to the Government from its 230 plus organisations representing more than 6million women. The WNC is now accountable to the Minister for Women. It organises seminars, publishes documents, submits reports to the Ministers and monitors international developments concerning women.

### Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

108. The Equal Opportunities Commission for Great Britain (EOC) was set up in 1975 under the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act.

109. It covers all of Great Britain, including Scotland and Wales. Its objectives are: to eliminate all forms of discrimination; to promote equal opportunities for women and men in general; to monitor the application of the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act; and to prepare proposals for amendments of law for the Minister for Women. It undertakes formal investigations, assists complainants, carries out research and promotional activities, disseminates publications and works in partnership with trade unions, employers and other organisations.

110. It is funded by Government and has offices in Manchester, London, Glasgow and Cardiff.

### Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)

111. There is a separate Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland which was established in 1976. It broadly mirrors the functions of the EOC (GB).

112. The ECNI is a non-departmental public body that works to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity for all and encourage good practice. The Commission has been given a wide range of powers and responsibilities, including advising and assisting complainants, investigation and enforcement, awareness-raising and review of equality legislation.

## **Q.5 Critically assess any support/assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat which has helped your country implement the Beijing PfA (e.g. through Commonwealth ministerial decisions, Secretariat technical assistance, meetings, workshops, training, publications).**

113. The Commonwealth Secretariat's publications have been useful as reference sources for research projects.

## PART B – PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH PLAN OF ACTION

Countries are requested to provide a summary of progress between **May 2001 and April 2003** in implementing the Commonwealth Plan of Action (PoA) on Gender and Development (1995) and its Update (2000 – 2005). Please include best practices, case studies and statistics as appropriate. Attach diagrams and charts as relevant. In framing responses, you may need to liaise with relevant ministries, statistics bureaus, commissions, NGOs and other agencies. Use separate pages for your responses as necessary.

**Q.6** What have been the top four priorities under the Commonwealth's areas of strategic focus in advancing gender equality in your country between May 2001 and April 2003? Please rank these by number (1, 2 etc) in the relevant boxes. Indicate why these are priorities in your country and summarise implementation developments for this period. Include statistics to show development or otherwise.

### The Commonwealth areas of strategic focus are:

- 6.1 - Gender mainstreaming** (includes national mainstreaming policies, mainstreaming in specific sectors, e.g. local, social, political, economic; or in development issues, e.g. education, health, poverty reduction. Please provide sex-disaggregated statistics if available.)

114. The Government recognises the need to tackle barriers to participation and to ensure that equal opportunities and equal treatment become a priority for all. Gender mainstreaming is a key tool to enable this and is central to the Government's efforts to improve policies and services.

115. The Women and Equality Unit (WEU) has developed two easy-to-use gender mainstreaming tools, *Gender Impact Assessments* and *Diversity, Policy and Services*. They provide a methodology for policy makers to assess whether their policies will support equality of opportunity, and help to challenge policy makers to question the assumption that policies and services affect everyone in the same way. The Government is working to apply Equality Impact Assessments to legislation, policy plans and programmes, budgets, reports and existing policies and services. The Government recognises that such assessments should be done at an early stage in the decision making process so that policies can be changed – or even discarded - if necessary. The gender mainstreaming tool is widely accessible through the internet ([http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/equality/policy\\_making.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/equality/policy_making.htm)).

116. The UK Government has committed itself to reducing gender inequalities in the first ever gender equality Public Service Agreement (PSA) objective announced in 2002: "By 2006, working with all departments, the Government will work to bring about measurable improvements in gender equality across a range of indicators, as part of our objectives on equality and social inclusion". This objective is supported by specific targets and initiatives across Government, which the Ministers for Women believe are key to delivering improvements in gender equality. These are set out in the document *Delivering on Gender Equality*, published in June 2003. These targets cover areas including childcare, equal pay, flexible working, public appointments and domestic violence. The WEU will work with other Departments to help in the delivery process and will report on progress throughout the Spending Review period (2003-06). *Delivering on Gender Equality* also sets out the broader context of work going on across Government to make a positive impact on gender equality: including skills, training, education, ill health, and transport. The breadth of these initiatives shows that gender mainstreaming has started to become a reality in many Departments.

117. The Equality Institutions Review is the most significant review of equality in over a quarter of a century. It is looking at long-term options for the priorities and role of equality institutions in Great

Britain. The Review developed from a statement made in *Towards Equality and Diversity*, published in December 2001, which stated that Government could see arguments in the longer term in favour of a single statutory commission.

118. In October 2002 it published a consultation document entitled [Equality and Diversity: Making it Happen](#) and invited responses from end-users, businesses, service providers and equality experts. The consultation phase ended in February 2003. The results of this consultation, and details of further issues concerning the future role, powers and functions of UK equality institutions will be published in autumn 2003.

**6.2 - Women's human rights, including violence against women** (include new policies, legislation, training. Attach most recent copy of CEDAW Report and national programmes on VAW if possible. ALSO include statistics on cases of reported domestic violence and any other gender-based violence.)

## Violence Against Women

119. Stopping violence against women in all its forms (including domestic and sexual violence) and bringing perpetrators to justice is a priority for Government. It is a complex social problem that causes poverty, ill health, social exclusion and loss of life. Domestic Violence accounts for almost a quarter (23%) of all violent crime. Roughly one in four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime (British Crime Survey, 2000). Since May 2001 the UK Government has adopted significant measures to tackle violence against women.

120. In December 2002 Comic Relief and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced a new, national 24 hour free helpline for women and children fleeing domestic violence. This is a £2million initiative to help families in danger at home and at risk of homelessness through violence. The service should be fully operational by Autumn 2003. The service will be underpinned by a UK Refuges Online system that will provide touch-of-a-button information on refuge accommodation and specialist services across the UK.

121. The UK Government has initiated a pilot scheme to introduce routine ante-natal questioning about domestic violence. This project will look at levels of domestic violence before and after pregnancy. The report on the scheme will describe pilot outcomes and make recommendations on educational and support mechanisms for health professionals.

122. In July 2002 the Home Office published the Criminal Justice White Paper, Justice for All. This outlined a range of proposals including changes in sentencing, policy, anonymity for victims in court, attaching a criminal offence to a non-molestation order, enlarging the interface between civil and criminal justice systems and putting murder reviews on a statutory footing. ([White Paper](#))

123. The Government has instigated a review of sexual offences and penalties in the UK to ensure that the law on sexual offences is clear and coherent in order to protect the citizen, particularly the more vulnerable, from abuse and exploitation. It must enable abusers to be brought to justice. New legislation will also ensure that the sexual offences are fair and non-discriminatory; the offences and penalties will have to comply with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Government has considered the recommendations of the public consultation on the existing UK framework of sexual offences and penalties and published its report in 2002. Legislation to amend the existing Sexual Offences framework has been introduced into Parliament.

124. The Reducing Violence against Women Initiative is part of the national Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) - an evidence-led initiative that aims to identify the most effective, and cost effective approaches to reducing domestic violence, rape and sexual assault by known perpetrators, and to disseminate good practice. Numerous multi-agency projects have been commissioned since

July 2000. The projects are victim-focused and provide information, advice and support to empower survivors to report incidents to the police and to other agencies, as well as enabling them to make informed decisions. The findings and lessons from the initiative will be made available in 2003.

125. In November 2001 the Crown Prosecution Service issued a revised policy on prosecuting cases of domestic violence. The new policy focuses particularly on: victims' priorities (safety, support and information); greater co-ordination between criminal proceedings and civil proceedings; and constructing cases, wherever possible, on the basis of evidence other than that of the victim. To support the launch of the new policy, a new national Network of CPS Domestic Violence Co-ordinators was set up. Since 24 July 2002, special measures such as TV links/screens have been available to assist some vulnerable or intimidated witnesses give evidence in court. (*Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999*). ([CPS Policy on prosecuting domestic violence](#))

126. The Home Office and Crown Prosecution Service have produced a report on Rape and Sexual Assault of women: findings from the British Crime Survey. This report suggested that actual numbers of victims were higher than the reported levels. The study also demonstrated that sexual assault is part of a wider problem of domestic violence. In response to this report, the Government published an action plan in July 2002, which details practical measures at every stage of the criminal justice process. The aim of the plan is to improve the conviction rates for rape by (i) improving the investigation of rape cases; (ii) enhancing the quality of advice, decision making, case preparation and presentation at court; and (iii) bettering the treatment of victims and witnesses in cases involving allegations of rape. ([Findings](#))

127. In April 2002 the Chief Inspectors of Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary collaborated on the Joint Inspection into the Investigation and Prosecution of Cases Involving Allegations of Rape. The Review analysed and assessed the quality of investigation, decision-making and prosecution by police and the CPS, in cases involving allegations of rape. It made a number of recommendations and suggestions as well as identifying good practice. ([Report](#))

128. The Solicitor General has launched revised Crown Prosecution Service Policy on prosecuting cases of domestic violence, which sets out how the CPS deals with such cases. The CPS has also issued guidance to its prosecutors, which highlights relevant issues such as civil proceedings / additional barriers faced by members of minority communities / the effect on children and provides a useful checklist for the background information and evidence that prosecutors need from the police.

129. In November 2002 the Metropolitan Police introduced a national training product, 'Policing domestic violence - a modular training programme'. The programme is intended to provide a structured but flexible approach to the delivery of domestic violence training within the police service. The material for this programme was developed with the assistance of the Women's Aid Federation of England and the NSPCC.

130. 'Domestic violence - together we can put an end to it' is a new campaign from the Women and Equality Unit to provide helpline information through black cabs to women experiencing domestic violence. This campaign, initiated in April 2003 serves as part of a broader awareness-raising drive to stop the crime. The focus of this is to promote safe options for women fleeing domestic violence. Drivers are being asked to offer women the helpline numbers or drive them to the nearest police station or hospital if needed. Drivers will not be acting as councillors neither will they intervene. This pilot scheme is based in London and runs for approximately one year. It will be followed by an evaluation.

131. The Women and Equality Unit has commissioned research into the economic and social costs of domestic violence. This report will estimate the costs to organisations dealing with the consequences of domestic violence – including social services, housing providers, health services and the voluntary

sector. It will estimate costs to the criminal justice system, including the police and the courts. The research aims to describe the current position in the UK in terms of the availability and quality of data; to develop a methodology to estimate the economic and social costs in the UK and to use the proposed methodology to estimate costs borne by service providers, employers and women and their families. The final report will be published in the autumn of 2003. ([Interim Findings](#))

132. In February 2003, the Government announced a £14 million cash boost to help tackle domestic violence. This three-year funding package will help the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships across the country develop practical strategies for dealing with domestic violence at a local level.

133. All newly appointed part-time judges, and all judges who are authorised to hear family cases, are required to attend a residential induction course in the relevant jurisdiction. Modules on Domestic Violence are included in both Induction and Continuation Training in Criminal, Civil and Family Law, with a view to ensuring they are given the same attention and consideration as other cases. Many judges also attend locally organised conferences.

134. In July 2002 the UK Homelessness Act was passed, which included the Priority Need Order. This Act placed more emphasis on local authorities to develop homelessness strategies that address the causes of homelessness as much as its effects. The extension of the Priority Need Order also extended the groups of vulnerable people in priority need, which includes people at risk of violence. £125 million was allocated in 2002/03 to help local authorities meet this challenge and many have used some of this money to form partnerships with local women's aid groups to develop innovative schemes that prevent and reduce homelessness caused by domestic violence.

135. The Supporting People Programme is the new system of planning, monitoring and funding for housing-related support services in England and will form an integral part of delivering safe accommodation for women and children. The programme aims to help domestic violence survivors to live more independent lives in the community. Revenue funding of £153 million is being provided to ensure the effective implementation of this programme and in the run up to implementation £120 million additional capital funding was made available to increase provision for specified vulnerable groups that included women fleeing domestic violence. The programme became operational in Wales on 1 April 2003.

136. In partnership with the Housing Corporation for Registered Social Landlords the Government will provide £18.9 million and 273 units of accommodation in all regions of England for those most vulnerable women and their families. Additionally, the UK Government are committing a further £7 million in each of the following two financial years to fund refuge provision. This substantial funding package will make a huge difference to the ease with which women can find a place of safety when they most need it. In particular, it will provide a stepping stone to a new home and a safer future for hundreds, if not thousands, of women.

137. The Government is working to extend the provisions of the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation Bill, a Private Members Bill introduced on 11 December 2002, will, if it becomes law, restate and extend the provisions of the 1985 Act and give them extra-territorial effect.

138. In February 2002 the Home Office published Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain. This paper examined and made recommendations on combating human trafficking, including measures to help victims. ([Paper](#))

139. In May 2002 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Home Office, and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) launched police guidelines on dealing with forced marriage. This initiative ensures that police are equipped with the skills and understanding needed to help victims of forced

marriage. The guidelines were drawn up following a consultation with the police, non-governmental organisations, and communities throughout the country. The guidelines will be distributed to every police force in the country ([Paper](#))

140. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office have investigated the development of best practice guidelines for Social Services to help identify the key issues they face in dealing with victims or potential victims of forced marriages. A conference was organised in June 2002 to raise awareness of forced marriages; identify key contacts to work with over the next year in developing guidelines; and drawing up key issues to be included in the guidelines.

For information on Human Rights please see the response to Question 2, Para 37 – 54

**6.3 - Political empowerment and participation in conflict resolution and the peace process** (includes women's representation in parliament and other levels of political participation, in government, public service; women's involvement in conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution. Please provide statistics and/or percentages and case studies on: (a) numbers of women and men elected to parliament, State/provincial assemblies. Local government; (b) percentage of women in the national cabinet, percentage of female Chief Executive Offices in the private sector; (c) number and percentage of females in professional and senior management ranks of public service.)

141. The UK Government is committed to creating a more equal society and is determined to deliver policies that take account of the real lives of women. An important part of this is to work to ensure that the diversity of women's experiences, their perspectives and their voices are reflected in public life.

142. The Government is taking action to increase the number of women in political and public life. The General Election on 2001 resulted in the return of 118 women as Members of Parliament (MPs), representing 18% of members. This number remains the same in 2003. Since the changes in composition in 1999, women now make up 16% of the House of Lords. In 1999, women represented 24% of the UK members of the European Parliament. With the aim of increasing the number of women in the political life, the Government introduced the *Sex Discrimination (Election of Candidates) Act 2002*. This Act enables political parties in the UK, if they wish, to adopt positive measures to reduce inequality in the numbers of women and men elected as representatives of their party. It amends the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* and *Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 Act*. The Act is permissive, not prescriptive, and it is for political parties to decide what action, if any, they choose to take in selecting their candidates for election. There are no quotas and therefore no sanctions on political parties if they take no positive action to redress any gender imbalance. During the Act's passage through Parliament all main political parties supported the Act and pledged to work with their parties to take advantage of the Act's provisions.

143. In recent years, the Government has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at increasing numbers of women on public bodies, as well as people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities. There has been a steady increase in the number of appointments held by women from 26% in 1992 to 34% in 2001. The number of appointments held by people from ethnic minority backgrounds has also increased during this period, from 20% in 1992 to 38% in 2001. In 2001, at least 440 appointments were held by disabled people, and of these 197 were held by women. See tables 7.1-7.2 in annex 2 (article 7, p. 4).

144. All appointments are made on merit, and are monitored by the Independent Commissioner for Public Appointments. The aim is to increase women's representation to 45-50% of the public appointments made by the majority of Government departments by the end of 2005. Women are already engaged in public life at a local level – holding around half of all appointments such as school governors, magistrates or members of health trusts. The Government commissioned research to gain

a deeper understanding of the barriers to women's access to high-level public appointments. In this context, the Women and Equality Unit (WEU), in collaboration with the Public Appointments Unit, the Women's National Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and other stakeholders, has run a national outreach programme that included a series of seminars to encourage women from a diverse range of backgrounds to make the move from local to national level appointments. These regional seminars provided practical help, information and support to women thinking about applying for a national public appointment.

145. A research programme is now underway to evaluate the effectiveness of the seminars and explore in more depth women's views of public appointments and their experience of applying and holding them. Specific research will also be done on the experiences and perceptions of minority ethnic women in public appointments. The WEU has also produced a cascade pack, containing good practice guidance on developing seminars and awareness raising tools for encouraging women to take up public appointments. This has been made available to the devolved assemblies, local government, MPs, employers, public bodies and individuals.

146. The Government is keen to ensure that further and faster progress is made in public appointments and has two fundamental commitments: (i) equal representation of women and men in public appointments, pro-rata representation of members of ethnic minority groups and increased participation of disabled people; and (ii) use of fair selection procedures which recognise non-traditional career patterns as suitable qualifications for appointments. In line with these commitments, each central Government department has an individual plan of action including specific time-based targets for increasing the proportion of appointments held by women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled people. The plans were first published in 1998, and are updated and published each year. Details of the latest plans for action on diversity were published in February 2002 in *Public Bodies: Opening Up Public Appointments 2002-2005*. Alongside the action being taken by individual departments to achieve their targets, measures are being taken across Government to increase diversity in public appointments, and promote understanding of the work and value of public bodies. The Cabinet Office is responsible for promoting best practice with regard to public appointments, working with departments to enable continuous improvement in the quality and diversity of appointees.

147. In 2002, representation of women as councillors rose to around 28% of all councillors, a clear increase since 1964 when the proportion was 10%. It should be noted that there are roughly the same numbers of women in leadership positions as men. The Government hopes to encourage more women to become councillors. The main problem in recruiting new councillors of any gender or race is the steady decline in the public's interest in local affairs and the standing of local government and politics generally. The Government is addressing this through its programme of democratic renewal. It is committed to increasing women's participation in local decision-making.

148. Of all staff working in local government 71% are women (of whom 39% work full-time). Currently, 16% of Chief Executives and Chief Officers are female, an improvement since 1999, when only 10% were women. Recognising the need to increase women's representation, local government is involved in several equal opportunities initiatives aimed at increasing opportunities for female employees. These include *Opportunity 2000* and the *Women's Leadership Programme* run by the Local Government Management Board. In 2001, a performance indicator of the percentage of the top 5% of earners who are women in every local authority was introduced, with the aim to measure individual authorities' commitment to equality of opportunity in senior posts.

149. The UK was a driving force behind the adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000 and maintains an active and positive approach towards its implementation both in London and through the UK Mission to the United Nations in New York. The UK used its presidency of the UN Security Council in July 2002 to host an open debate on UNSCR 1325, led by the UN Department for

Peacekeeping Operations, with the participation of the UN Special Adviser on Gender, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the UN Department for Political Affairs.

150. The UK is committed to ensuring the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, including peace negotiations, as well as to raising awareness of the positive role that women can play in peace building and reconciliation.

151. The Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) continues to work and fund projects with the UN's Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and others on gender training for peace keepers.

152. The UK helped UNIFEM to put together a programme of work on women, peace building and gender justice and has pledged £3m towards that work. This ambitious programme, now in its second year, aims to increase women's participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict justice mechanisms. With our support, UNIFEM has published an independent assessment of how women are affected by armed conflict.

153. In Iraq the UK is committed to including women in all phases and at all levels in the reconstruction. Work is going on to increase the representation of women in all strands of the rapidly evolving political and reconstruction process, such as the governing and economic councils. In addition a gender expert from the government's Women and Equality Unit was seconded to the CPA's gender equality team and an FCO official in the CPA's governance team, who have been engaged in the involvement of women in the political process. The CPA has also facilitated an Iraqi-led women's conference consisting of five workshops, the recommendations from which will feed into the political process.

154. The UK Government will continue to seek opportunities to further the implementation of Resolution 1325 in areas of conflict

#### Public appointments held by women in the UK between 1992-2001

	1992	1997	2001
Total number of public appointments	41,011	38,083	29,499
Number of appointments held by women	10,701 (26%)	12,010 (32%)	9,940 (34%)

Source: Public Bodies, Cabinet Office

#### Women in grades below SCS (%) in the UK non-industrial Civil Service: 1997 – 2001\*

GRADE	1997**	1999	2001
Grades 6 and 7	21%	22%	26%
Senior/Higher Executive Officer (SEO/HEO)	26%	27%	33%
Executive Officer (EO)	47%	48%	51%
Administrative Officer/Assistant	61%	60%	61%
Representation across all grades	49%	49%	51%

- Figures by headcount showing substantive grades (temporary promotion shown in higher grade) \*\*Excludes Northern Ireland Civil Service

The proportion of women in national	The proportion of women in the regional parliaments,	The proportion of women in the national
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<b>governments</b>	<b>were appropriate</b>	<b>parliaments</b>
31.5% (June 03) <sup>2</sup>	Wales 50% (2003) Scotland 39.5% (2003) N. Ireland 13.8% (2002) <sup>3</sup>	18% (June 03)

**6.4 - Macroeconomic issues, including globalisation, trade and gender budgets** (including integration of gender issues in structural adjustment, debt, trade, investment liberalisation, gender analysis of government budget allocations and expenditures, women in the informal economy, gender impact of economic policies.)

For information on UK women in business please refer to the response to Question 2, Para. 7 – 12.

155. The UK Government also recognises the importance of reducing global poverty and promoting human rights and women’s equality around the world. The elimination of gender discrimination is a key component of the Government’s international development policy. The Department for International Development (DfID) published a gender strategy paper, [Poverty elimination and the empowerment of women](#) (September, 2000) that recognises the empowerment of women is an essential precondition for the elimination of world poverty and the upholding of human rights. In December 2000, the second *Government White Paper on International Development* was published, focusing on how to manage the process of globalisation to benefit poor people, a disproportionate number of whom are women. The White Paper states that the Government will “work with others to manage globalisation so that poverty is systematically reduced and the International Development Targets (now the Millennium Development Goals) achieved and to build a stronger, more open and accountable international system, in which poor people and countries have a more effective voice”.

156. Throughout the last few years DfID has worked to make resources and opportunities for economic and human development more readily available to women, particularly those who are poor. Key approaches include facilitating women’s access to markets and employment opportunities, making credit more readily available to poor women, and ensuring that infrastructure improvements benefit women as well as men. The Government has also contributed to the gender aware design of economic management, and human and social development programmes. Examples include through the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process in support of HIPC debt relief and other national poverty reduction strategies, support to human rights programmes, and the growth of a socially responsible private sector.

157. Recognising that the effects on women of globalisation and the liberalisation of world trade have shown both benefits and costs, the Government is working to identify policy instruments to improve opportunities for the poor and to reduce the negative effects on the most vulnerable. As well as supporting initiatives on ethical trade and socially responsible business, DfID is promoting core labour standards, which will protect women and other workers from exploitation, including through several programmes with the International Labour Organisation. Support is also provided to innovative programmes aimed at developing a more central role for women in conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction. Moreover, recognising women’s disadvantages in education and health, DfID expenditure in these areas is expected to continue to rise substantially.

<sup>2</sup> This information was taken from the UK Parliament Website (<http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/hmg.cfm#Stats>)

<sup>3</sup> The Northern Ireland Assembly was suspended on 14 October 2002, this figure is representative of the proportion of women at that time.

158. Gender budget analysis is an important tool to measure the gender impact of Government expenditure. Further information on gender budgeting can be seen in the response to question 6.4 below.

Further initiatives and responses on the UK economy and gender can be found under question 6.6.

**6.4(i) - In September 2002, Commonwealth Finance Ministers agreed to make progress in introducing and/or furthering implementation of gender-responsive budget initiatives - this is to be reviewed in 2004. What progress has been made? (policies, gender impact analysis, progress of existing initiatives.)**

159. Analysis of gender impact is at the heart of the Budget process. Potential budget measures are considered for their gender impact at an early stage as part of wider impact appraisal processes. This appraisal is revisited and updated as the detailed policy formulation continues.

160. The WEU publication [Delivering on Gender Equality](#) details the specific targets and initiatives that address mainstreaming a gender perspective into the budgeting procedure. Please refer to Paras. 43 and 116 for further information.

161. Distributional analysis is an important tool, and provides a useful statistical underpinning to the gender impact assessment. Detailed assessment is made of Budget measures both collectively and individually on women of a variety of ages and incomes.

162. Information published on Budget Day sets out the impact of measures which affect women and men differently. Disaggregating and presenting the impact on women effectively is a key mechanism for demonstrating the Government's commitment to women.

The following are some of the outcomes of the 2003 Budget for women:

**Fulfilling Women's Potential: Support for moving from welfare to work**

163. £183 a week for a single earner couple aged 25 or over and working full-time on the National Minimum Wage and £155 a week for a single person.

**Supporting Women's Choices: Support for families with children**

164. A Child Trust Fund: established for each child born since September 2002, with an initial endowment of at least £250 for all, rising to £500 for the poorest one third of children. Endowed during their childhood years and available at age 18 .

**Child Tax Credit**

165. Paid from April 2003, around 5 ¾ million families with children with incomes below £58,000 a year will receive the new Child Tax Credit.

- In the first year of a child's life it will be available to families earning up to £66,000 a year.
- A single earner family on median earnings of £21,400 and with two children will be nearly £5.00 a week better off, largely because of the new Child Tax Credit;
- 50 per cent of families with children will be better off, even after changes to income tax and national insurance contributions.
- Including Child Benefit, total support for children from 2003 will be up to £54.10 a week for the first child and up to £92.50 a week for a two-child family.

**Working Tax Credit**

166. From October 2003, the Working Tax Credit and the National Minimum Wage will guarantee minimum incomes of:

- £241 a week for a family with one child and one earner working full-time on the National Minimum Wage; and

- £279 a week for a lone parent with two children working full-time on the National Minimum Wage
- With the new housing benefit disregard, for lone parents on a rent of £50 a week, part-time work will pay £213 a week.

### **Support for Older Women**

167. From October 2003 the Pension Credit will ensure that millions of pensioners who have saved for their retirement benefit from having done so. Around half of all pensioner households stand to gain an additional £400 a year on average under the Pension Credit, with some gaining up to £1,000 a year

168. On average, from October 2003 many couples will benefit by up to £19.20 a week, and single pensioners by up to £14.79. The average additional payment will be £7 extra for single pensioners and £9 extra a week for couples.

- pensioner households will be £1,250 a year better off in real terms – around £24 extra a week; and
- the poorest third of pensioner households will have gained £1,600 a year in real terms – over £30 extra a week.
- An additional £100, on top of the £200 winter fuel payment, to households with a pensioner aged 80 or over, for the lifetime of this Parliament; and an extension, to 52 weeks, of the period over which all pensioners in hospital receive their full state pension.

**6.5 - How have gender issues been integrated into your country's programmes to meet the Millennium Development Goals?** (Please provide examples and/or attach relevant national programmes. If available, the country report on meeting MDGs should be attached.)

169. The Millennium Development Goals have been addressed in the policies, programmes and legislation mentioned in the previous questions.

**6.6 - Poverty reduction** (existence of National Poverty Reduction Policy/Programme, extent of integration of gender issues, and participation of National Women's Machinery, examples of poverty reduction initiatives including gender issues.)

170. The Government recognises that although the position of women in the UK has improved dramatically over the last few decades they are more likely than men to be in low-income groups, have lower employment rates than men, and are less likely to be contributing to a second pension. The Government has undertaken research to alleviate poverty among women and men, girls and boys.

171. These disadvantages partly stem from women accounting for the majority of both lone parents and single pensioners. Moreover, recent research showed that household type and marital status were more important determinants of low income in later life for women than for men. There are a number of factors behind this phenomenon. For example, nine out of ten lone parents are women; they are less likely to have qualifications than partnered women, more likely to report a long-standing illness or disability and more likely to have a child below school age.

172. The Government is determined to tackle poverty, from childhood through to old age, by tackling the causes of poverty and social exclusion, not just the symptoms. These causes are complex and multi-dimensional and can only be addressed by joined up action across Government and beyond. The Government publishes an annual report on poverty, *Opportunity for all*, (the first was published in September 1999) setting out its strategy, along with the measures against which the Government will be judged. The latest report *Opportunity for all - fourth annual report* was published in September 2002 and shows that the Government is making real progress towards eradicating poverty and its causes. The Government's strategy includes tackling inequalities by improving public services; constantly improving understanding of poverty and social exclusion, to identify what are the greatest priorities and what will work best to tackle them; tackling current and future poverty including

supporting those unable to work; investing in services for girls and boys to break cycles of deprivation; and working in partnership with other stakeholders.

173. The Government has adopted a range of policy responses to alleviate women's poverty. Some examples include, the National Minimum Wage (NMW). Around 1.3 million workers stood to benefit from higher pay as a result of the last major uprating in October 2002 of the NMW and around 70% of the beneficiaries are women. However, the NMW has to be seen as one part of a wider strategy. From October 2002 the NMW in conjunction with the Working Families' Tax Credit and other benefits provides a guaranteed minimum income of at least £231 a week (over £12,000 a year) for families with children with someone working 35 hours a week (see article 13 for details). Around 343,700 lone parents have joined the New Deal for Lone Parents and more than 1 in 3 participants (172,460) have found work (see article 11 for details). Pension Credit is particularly beneficial to women because they tend to have smaller pensions than men. Of the pensioner households that stand to gain just over half will be single women, around 30% will be men and women in a couple, and around 15% will be single men (see article 13 for details).

174. In ensuring that childcare does not prove to be an on-going barrier to women entering the labour market, the Government is continuing to develop the National Childcare Strategy. There has been a substantial expansion in childcare provision: since 1997, 497,000 new childcare places have been created, benefiting over 906,000 children and the Government is well on track to meet the target of creating new places for 1.6 million children by 2004. Annual childcare funding will more than treble between 2000-01 and 2003-04 and much of this increased funding will be targeted on the 20% most disadvantaged areas. With a budget of £300 million over three years to 2004, the Neighbourhood Nursery programme is the biggest ever single investment to increase childcare provision. The cost of childcare can be a significant factor in parents' employment decisions. The childcare tax credit component of the Working Families' Tax Credit provides financial assistance to low- and middle-income working parents to pay for childcare. Parents can receive help with up to 70% of their eligible childcare costs. Recent figures show that 160,000 families are receiving the childcare tax credit component – a dramatic increase from the 47,000 who had help with childcare costs under the preceding Family Credit scheme. The 2002 Spending Review confirmed the Government's intention to continue to expand and improve childcare provision. The Spending Review saw a doubling of spending on childcare. The extra funding will support the expansion of childcare places across the country and, in particular, the provision of integrated early education childcare and family services in a network of children's centres in disadvantaged areas. As part of this strategy, it will develop a thriving supply of childcare; provide financial help to lower- and middle-income parents for whom the cost of childcare is a barrier to work; and transform the way services are delivered to ensure that they better meet the needs of children and their parents, particularly for the most vulnerable.

175. Eradicating poverty is not just about providing income, or supporting people into jobs. Other forms of Government intervention can help break cycles of deprivation in the early years, including education and Early Years Investment: the 2000 Spending Review allocated resources that will result in average real growth in education spending of some 6.6 per cent a year across the UK over the four years from 1999 - 2000 to 2003 - 04. Sure Start programmes are helping to strengthen families and local communities with a range of support services for children living in deprived areas. The Government is funding a major expansion in free Early Education. All 4 year olds have been guaranteed a free early education place since 1998, with an increasing number of 3 year olds now enjoying free provision through a £1.13 billion programme that began in 1999. By September 2004, all 3 year olds will enjoy this entitlement. Overall funding of early education for 3 and 4 year olds will double from £1 billion in 1996-97 to £2 billion in 2003-04. The Connexions Service will, through both a universal and targeted approach, provide all teenagers with the information, guidance, personal development opportunities and work-related learning they need for a successful transition to adulthood. It will particularly help those at risk of social exclusion or of being marginalized. By the end of 2002-03 the Government will be investing £420 million in the Service across England. The Service will extend throughout England by 2003.

For further information on the New Deal For Loan Parents initiative please see Question 2, Para. 13

176. The focus on poverty elimination, and by extension on elimination of gender discrimination, was consolidated in law by a new International Development Act that came into force in June 2002. Implementation of this policy is based on a “twin track” approach that combines specific activities aimed at empowering women, with a commitment to place gender equality concerns into the mainstream of development programmes. Department for International Development (DfID) spending across all sectors on activities that include the promotion of gender equality and the removal of gender discrimination has increased significantly in recent years. During 2001-02, from a total bilateral commitment of £1,425 million, some £230 million of activities had gender equality as either the main goal or significant objective. This level of commitment is expected to continue. DfID is currently supporting more than 500 projects and programmes worldwide aimed at promoting gender equality.

**6.7 - HIV/AIDS** (how gender issues in HIV/AIDS have been addressed, whether gender issues are integrated in national plans, health policy and programmes, and national HIV/AIDS policies, programmes, provide details of policies and strategic actions and state partners involved, e.g. governmental, non-governmental, intergovernmental and development agencies. Please provide statistics or attach national plans.)

177. The UK is a relatively low prevalence country for HIV infections as a result of sustained public education and health promotion campaigns. Nevertheless, HIV remains a life-threatening condition. With the aim to intensify its efforts in this area, the Government has set out plans to prevent the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV, (<http://www.doh.gov.uk/nshs/strategy.htm>) published in 2001.

178. In order to reduce the prevalence of undiagnosed HIV infections, a national standard has been proposed, whereby all those attending sexual health clinics should be offered an HIV test as part of screening for sexually transmitted infections. The strategy also includes a goal to reduce the number of newly acquired HIV infections by 25% by 2007. The strategy highlights the importance of HIV prevention for those groups most at risk of HIV including men who have sex with men and people from high prevalence countries overseas. Gay men remain the largest group in the UK affected by HIV/AIDS. In line with the Strategy the Department of Health launched in November 2002 a new public awareness campaign on sexually transmitted infection. The *Sex Lottery* campaign is aimed at 18-30 year olds and aims to increase awareness of STIs and the importance of condom use. £4 million over two years has been allocated to the campaign so far. The *Sex Lottery* campaign builds on the success of the Teenage Pregnancy campaign (which also includes STIs).

179. Between January and December 2001, there had been 4909 new HIV diagnoses made and 674 AIDS diagnoses. New HIV diagnoses in 2002 are expected to be in the region of 6,500. During the reporting period, there has been an increase in the number of women diagnosed with HIV in the UK as a result of increased testing of pregnant women and differences in health seeking behaviour. However, the number of women diagnosed with HIV in the UK remains relatively small (around one fifth of the cumulative total of HIV diagnoses were for women). In 2001, 38% of reported HIV infections and 33% of AIDS cases were in women (see tables 12.7 and 12.8 in annex 2, p. 14-15). Promoting safer sex is still key to prevention efforts and HIV testing is being encouraged to allow prompt access to treatment. The use of highly active antiretroviral therapy has reduced the progression to AIDS and death in HIV infected people since the mid-1990s.

180. Over 250 women had their infection diagnosed in 2001 as a result of antenatal testing. In the UK, almost all HIV infected children have contracted the infection from their mothers during pregnancy, childbirth or via breastfeeding. The Government is working to reduce the number of HIV infected children through delivery of effective interventions (drug treatment, elective Caesarean

delivery and avoidance of breastfeeding) aimed at reducing the risk of transmission. National targets and objectives were set in 1999 involving the offer and recommendation of an HIV test to all pregnant women throughout England. It is intended that by increasing the uptake of antenatal HIV testing to 90%, and by increasing the proportion of HIV infections diagnosed prior to delivery to 80%, an 80% reduction in the proportion of children acquiring HIV infection from their mothers should be achieved by December 2002. Implementation of universal antenatal testing has resulted in substantial improvements in recent years in maternal diagnosis rates. The 80% diagnosis target has already been met in London, where the prevalence of HIV infection is highest. Increased detection of HIV infections in expectant mothers means that fewer babies are becoming infected. It is estimated that infection was prevented for around 100 babies born to infected mothers in 2001.

#### Statistics <sup>4</sup>

#### AIDS cases among women : Infections probably acquired through heterosexual Sex by age and year of AIDS diagnosis

Year of diagnosis	Age group (years)										Total
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+	
<b>2000</b>	2	12	38	61	36	23	12	4	4	9	<b>201</b>
<b>2001</b>	2	9	37	62	32	30	10	10	6	6	<b>204</b>
<b>2002</b>	2	10	33	41	36	19	14	1	2	2	<b>160</b>

#### HIV Infections among women: Infections probably acquired through heterosexual sex by age group and year of HIV diagnosis

Year of diagnosis	Age group (years)										Total
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+	
<b>2000</b>	29	154	295	331	213	88	52	32	18	14	<b>1226</b>
<b>2001</b>	48	218	444	458	263	144	57	49	25	19	<b>1725</b>
<b>2002</b>	35	181	357	340	262	101	60	19	16	7	<b>1388</b>

#### Children born to HIV infected mothers: year of birth by infection status, cases reported to the end of September 2002

Year of Birth	Infected		Indeterminate	Not infected	Total
	AIDS	Not AIDS			
1998-99	49	51	40	318	458
2000-01	31	25	319	446	821
2002	1	2	192	39	234
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>1513</b>

<sup>4</sup> Statistics from AVERT, international AIDS and HIV Charity [www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org)

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## PART C – PARTNERSHIPS

**Q.7** Does your regional development organisation (e.g. CARICOM, AU, IOC, SAARC, ASEAN, Pacific Forum) include gender equality and development issues as an integral part of its development strategies and assistance programmes? (for example, sharing regional gender-based data or gender development indexes, gender policies, development assistance, etc.)

**7(i) - Does (or would) such inclusion help your country in its own efforts to implement strategies in its priority areas? If YES, briefly outline how this helps (or would help)**

**Q.8** Please describe any good practice partnerships in gender and development at regional level in your region (e.g. with the private sector, NGOs, church, multilateral organisations.)

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## PART D – NATIONAL WOMEN’S MACHINERIES

Countries are requested to provide as much detail as possible on the structure, role, achievements and constraints of National Women’s Machineries (NWMs). Sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learned will provide other Commonwealth countries with tools with which to strengthen their own NWMs. Where possible, please provide examples on best practice and best cases.

**Q.9** How is the National Women’s Machinery (NWM) in your country structured (a) in relation to government departments, National Commissions and/or other agencies; and (b) internally? (Highlight any changes over the past 2 years and attach organisational charts. What is the budget allocation for the NWM and has it changed in the past 2 years? What percentage of the national budget is the allocation to the NWM? What, if any, is the budget allocation for gender mainstreaming activities?)

For general information please see Q.2 “Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women” and Q.4.

181. The **Women and Equality Unit** was formed after the 1997 election. It was initially known as the Women’s Unit, and was based in the Cabinet Office.

182. The Unit’s priorities were wide ranging. Relatively small in size, the Unit was led by a specially recruited senior civil servant, selected from outside Government.

183. The aftermath of the June 2001 General Election saw responsibility for different aspects of equality policy dispersed more widely across Whitehall departments and the Unit expanded and renamed 'The Women and Equality Unit'. The Unit brought in more staff from the Department for Education and Employment with their work as sponsor of EOC, the SDA and the European committees and Directives.

184. In May 2002, the Women and Equality Unit moved from the Cabinet Office to the Fair Markets Directorate of the Department of Trade and Industry. Throughout its existence the Unit has had political leadership provided by the Minister for Women, who is a member of the Cabinet. The current holder of that role is Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

185. Policy work began to improve the handling of sex discrimination and equal pay claims and work on a possible Single Equality Body, a cross-government review on a civil partnership scheme for same-sex couples and a Gender Equality Action Plan gained momentum. The Equality Coordination Team and the DTI's pre-existing Equality Impact Team – which from 2000 had ensured DTI complied with equality legislation in Northern Ireland and on race – were both merged into the Unit proper.

**Q.10 Describe the best achievements/outcomes of your National Women's Machinery between May 2001 and April 2003 within your top priority areas. Illustrate with comparative statistics to show change. How did these successes come about?** (e.g. policy, legislation, inter-ministry/department co-ordination, creation of new structures, training, co-operation with civil society, greater media and public awareness? How has policy made a change in gender development on the ground? Attach photographs, graphs, charts if possible.)

186. The Women and Equality Unit have achieved a number of advances in recent years in our priority areas.

187. The UK Government is committed to closing the Gender Pay Gap and reducing inequalities between women and men. The equal pay questionnaire plays a principle part in this aim. The questionnaire came into effect on 6 April 2003 and is intended to help individuals who believe they may not have received equal pay to request key information from their employers to establish whether this is the case and, if so, the reasons why.

188. The questionnaire should help to establish whether an individual is receiving less pay and whether the employer agrees that the people being compared are doing equal work. In the questionnaire the term "equal work" is used to describe work that is the same or broadly similar (known as "like work"); work that has been rated as equivalent under a job evaluation study; or work of equal value.

189. The information should help to establish key facts early on and make it easier to resolve any disputes in the workplace. If the individual decides to take a case to an employment tribunal, the information should enable the complaint to be presented in the most effective way and the proceedings should be simpler because the matters in dispute have been identified in advance.

For further information on the Gender Pay Gap please see Question 2, Para. 18 – 19 and Question 3, Para. 87 – 89

190. Examples of other policies and legislation on domestic violence and poverty reduction can be found in Paras. 55 – 71, 119 – 140(domestic violence) and Para170 – 176 (poverty reduction).

**Q.11 Which government departments does your NWM enjoy the closest relations with and how has this helped to progress gender development and equality?** (Give examples from the

period May 2001 to April 2003. Any planned initiatives to improve collaboration across departments/ministries?)

191. The Women and Equality Unit (WEU) has lead responsibility within Government on policy on women, gender equality, sexual orientation and the co-ordination of equality. The WEU works closely with colleagues across Government to bring about measurable improvements in the position of women, which benefit society generally; and to promote equality for all, particularly in the development and delivery of Government policy and services

192. It also provides support across the Department of Trade and Industry in ensuring that equality is integral to the development and delivery of the department's policy and services.

193. The WEU works closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on the promotion of women's human rights. One of the domestic initiatives that both Departments were involved with was aimed at tackling the issue of forced marriages. The Government is developing best practice guidelines for Social Services to help identify the key issues they face in dealing with victims or potential victims of forced marriages. To launch the initiative, a three-day conference was organised by the FCO for social workers, non-governmental organisations and community groups. The conference aimed to raise awareness of forced marriages; identify key contacts to work with over the next year in developing guidelines; and drawing up key issues to be included in the guidelines.

194. The FCO also works in conjunction with the WEU to represent the UK's position on women's issues in the International and European fora. For examples of further projects please see Para. 50 and 153.

195. The WEU works closely with the Department for International Development (DfID) in the field of International progress. The Government is working to identify policy instruments to improve opportunities for the poor and to reduce the negative effects on the most vulnerable. As well as supporting initiatives on ethical trade and socially responsible business, DfID is promoting core labour standards, which will protect women and other workers from exploitation, including through several programmes with the International Labour Organisation. Support is also provided to innovative programmes aimed at developing a more central role for women in conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction. Moreover, recognising women's disadvantages in education and health, DfID expenditure in these areas is expected to continue to rise substantially.

196. Some significant DfID initiatives that have achieved results include:

- New approaches that emphasise links to social benefits and women's needs, are being developed with DfID support. The department is also promoting participatory planning and assessment methods in road improvement programmes in Uganda and Ghana, and supporting a fifteen-country research programme in Africa and Asia, aimed at developing more gender-sensitive approaches to travel and transport programmes.

- DfID is helping the government of The Gambia to incorporate gender concerns into the planning and implementation of their public services. Assistance is being provided as part of wider DFID support to the Gambian's Strategy for Poverty Alleviation and is channeled through their Co-ordinating Office and the Women's Bureau. Promoting a holistic and integrated approach, these units are working directly with key departments – such as health and education – to ensure that improved services bring real and lasting benefits to those who need them most.

- Support to basic health care, awareness raising on sexually transmitted diseases, and the promotion of behaviour change has helped female sex workers in West Bengal, India, reduce infection rates to 5%, compared with 70% among similar groups in other parts of the country.

- Support for research to develop a microbicide that provides an alternative form of protection from HIV/AIDS infection for women.

- Development of new effective approaches to reducing maternal mortality in Malawi and Nepal, and support international efforts to raise awareness of maternal mortality as a human rights issue.

- Support to primary education in India has helped bring about an increase in enrolment of 6.5 percent over a two-year period. The enrolment of girls generally has grown by 7.5%, and among disadvantaged girls from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes by 12.4% and 9.6%, respectively.
- Support for a growing portfolio of work aimed at stopping violence against women, including work with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to protect women in refugee camps.

197. The WEU also works closely with the Home Office on issues of, inter alia, violence against women, poverty, victim support and trafficking in human beings. Examples of these collaborations can be seen under the previous questions.

**Q.12 Does your NWM work with civil society and non-governmental organisations to progress gender development and equality? Name some of these organisations and describe successful collaborations and their outcomes. What changes would you like to see to improve such partnerships?**

198. The Women and Equality Unit has been working in collaboration with other Government departments, statutory agencies, NGOs and the voluntary sector on a diverse range of gender issues, including violence against women, gender mainstreaming, sex discrimination and the gender pay gap. The Unit continues to consult a wide spectrum of NGOs and academic experts in these fields, thereby facilitating the greater involvement of the NGO sector in many areas of Government policy.

199. The Women's National Commission (WNC), a Non-Departmental Public Body, works to present the views of women to Government. The Commission has an expanded membership of over 230 organisations covering the whole of the UK, representing a unique vehicle for presenting women's views, needs, concerns and priorities to the Government. The WNC is now accountable to the Minister for Women. It organises seminars, publishes documents, submits reports to the Ministers and monitors international developments concerning women.

200. The WNC has developed and implemented numerous initiatives to tackle violence against women. The Commission has set up a Violence Against Women Working Group – members comprise representatives from NGOs such as Refuge, Scottish Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, Northern Ireland Women's Aid, the South East Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre, the Rape Crisis Federation, Womankind, YWCA, IMKAAN, Church organisations as well as many academics specialising in the field. Representatives from No.10, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Women and Equality Unit are also part of the group, giving it a valuable link to Government decision-makers.

201. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was established in 1975 as a mechanism for securing women's rights. It covers all of Great Britain, including Scotland and Wales. Its objective is the elimination of gender discrimination, the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men in general, and monitoring the application of the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act and the preparation of proposals to amendments of law for the Minister for Women. It undertakes formal investigations, assists complainants, carries out research and promotional activities, disseminates publications and collaborates with trade unions, employers and other organisations.

202. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) is a non-departmental public body that works to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity for all and encourage good practice. The Commission has been given a wide range of powers and responsibilities, including advising and assisting complainants, investigation and enforcement, awareness-raising and review of equality legislation.

For further information see Question 2, Para. 34 – 36

**Q.13** Describe if, and how, the Commonwealth Secretariat's programmes and activities have contributed to your work as described above, if applicable. What recommendations would you make to improve the role and support by the Commonwealth Secretariat to advance gender equality in your country and region? Please refer to the attached 6WAMM mandates/actions table if necessary.)

205. The Commonwealth Secretariat's resources have been useful as reference sources

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## **PART E – REPORTS AND ATTACHMENTS**

**Q.14** Would you prefer to read country reports on the implementation of the Plan of Action (mark one with an 'X')

In full       Summaries only       On CD-ROM       Online/website

**Q.15** Have you attached the following with this questionnaire:

- A copy of your country's latest CEDAW Report? Or other docs, e.g Millennium Development Goal National Report, any national plans/programmes?
- Charts on the organisational structure of your National Women's Machinery showing (a) its external relationship within government ministries, departments and other agencies; and (b) its internal structure?
- Any photographs, graphs and charts to illustrate any good practice, training, etc described in this questionnaire?
- Any changes in contact details for National Women's Machinery? We still have difficulty contacting some countries/regions by telephone, fax or email. Please let us have your updated addresses, telephone and fax numbers and email addresses. Other alternative addresses for the forwarding of correspondence are also welcome.

**Date: 30 May 2003**