

PREM 19/2564

WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED
 NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN,
 COPENHAGEN 14-30 JULY 1990

UNITED
NATIONS

SEX DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

JULY 1990

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
15.9.86		28.7.1987					
2.10.86		PREM 19/2564					
13.10.86							
14.10.86							
8.12.86							
5.5.87							
15.5.87							
16.7.87							
28.7.87							
21.8.87							
27.11.87							
1.9.87							
7.9.87							
14.9.87							
17.9.87							
28.9.87							
12.10.87							
23.10.87							
15/11/88							



MC
cfc

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

28 July 1987

10th Anniversary of the United Nations
Development Fund for Women

Thank you for your letter about the request from the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women for the Prime Minister to make a single sentence statement of support of UNIFEM to mark the Fund's 10th anniversary.

I am sure the Prime Minister will be content to authorise the statement enclosed with your letter although in the interests of good grammar it might start with the word "I".

(CHARLES POWELL)

R.N. Culshaw, Esq., MVO,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CA

R27/7



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

27 July 1987

Dear Charles

10th Anniversary of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

I attach a letter received by our Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York from the Director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The letter contains a request to a "very select number of major international figures", including the Prime Minister, to make a statement in support of UNIFEM to mark the Fund's 10th Anniversary. The "very select number" consists of President Cory Aquino, Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Ms Margaret Kenyatta and Mr Barber Conable. The letter also invites the Prime Minister "to honour the Fund during her presence at the (UN) General Assembly". We have already informed UNIFEM that the Prime Minister has no plans to visit the General Assembly.

UNIFEM was established by a UN Resolution in 1976 following the International Women's Year 1975. Although our policy is that women's needs and concerns should be incorporated into all programme planning and at all levels rather than be the subject of separate consideration and funding, the UK has always supported the work of UNIFEM because part of its mandate is to encourage greater commitment of mainstream development funds (eg UN Development Programme funds) to projects that benefit women as well as men, both as agents and recipients of development. At present it is estimated only 10% of UNDP funds benefit women. Our support for UNIFEM is evident in our funding: the UK is one of the largest contributors, having donated £750,000 to date and pledged a further £50,000 for 1987.

In addition to government funding, a UK Committee for UNIFEM was established in 1985 with the aim of raising private contributions to UNIFEM. The Prime Minister is its Honorary President and gave a photo-call on 6 March 1987 at Downing Street to launch its fund-raising campaign; Mr Raison when he was Minister of State for the ODA addressed

/the



the UK Committee's inaugural dinner; and Mr Eggar is a Patron. Lady Gardner of Parkes, the UK Observer and former Representative to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, is the President.

/ a /
I hope the Prime Minister will agree to contribute an appropriate sentence to underline our continuing support for UNIFEM. I attach/draft which our Mission in New York might transmit in good time for the anniversary celebrations.

Yours truly

R N Culshaw

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/No 10 Downing Street



DRAFT STATEMENT

Greatly welcome UNIFEM's continuing efforts to encourage a stronger commitment of development funds to projects which benefit women as well as men and send my congratulations on its tenth anniversary.



We are planning to hold a celebration to mark this Anniversary in the course of the next session of the United Nations General Assembly and also to issue some new publicity materials about UNIFEM, including a brochure outlining UNIFEM's achievements to date and our plans for the future.

It is critical to our publicity and fund-raising efforts that we should be able to demonstrate effectively, particularly to the private sector, that UNIFEM's programs and projects enjoy wide and high-level support in the international community.

We are therefore hoping that a small, very select number of major international figures may be ready to lend their support to our efforts, by indicating their appreciation for UNIFEM in a one-sentence commentary and authorising us to utilise this brief endorsement in our publicity materials.

We should be deeply honoured and grateful if Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would agree to support UNIFEM in this way, and, if at all possible to honour the Fund during her presence at the General Assembly.

On behalf of UNIFEM and the members of its inter-governmental Consultative Committee, so ably chaired by Mrs. Rose Arungu-Olende of Kenya, I therefore have the honour to submit this request to you, and to seek your good offices in its transmission to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

In making this request, Excellency, we are very aware of the many demands on the time and energies of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. We would not be making this request for her assistance if we did not believe that her support could make a unique contribution to our fund-raising activities and so to the effectiveness of our work on behalf of rural and poor urban women worldwide.

You may like to know that the small group of international figures whom we are approaching also includes President Cory Aquino, Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Ms. Margaret Kenyatta and Mr. Barber Conable.

Please let me know if you need any further information about UNIFEM or about this request for assistance. We shall be very happy to provide whatever further information you may require.

We hope very much that you and your Government may be able to give favourable consideration to our request and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

In the meantime, please accept, Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Snyder', is written over the typed name.

Margaret Snyder
Fund Director

U.N. Development Fund for Women



CDP/9

CDP 19/2.
CDP to
re

HOME SECRETARY

RATIFICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION
OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

You will recall that colleagues agreed in June last year that we should proceed to announce a decision to ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This was subsequently announced by means of an inspired PQ on 19 June. You will wish to know that the process of consulting Dependent Territories and the Islands is nearing completion, and that we propose to sign the instrument of ratification in the week beginning 17 March. We propose to make this timing public in answer to a written Question tabled by Baroness Vickers for answer on 20 February, and shall also arrange for a parallel Question to be tabled in the Commons.

attachd as flow

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister's Office, the Lord President and members of H Committee.

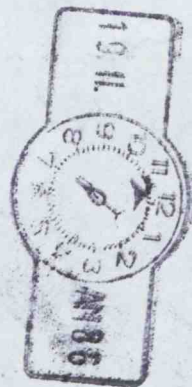
Lady Young

Lady Young

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
18 February 1986

UNITED NATIONS

Decade for Women 7/80



010
Mary Addison, 10 Downing St.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT



→ Mr Parker
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NF
Telephone 01-213 6670

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF
THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE PARLIAMENTARY
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

(sent at Mr Bottomley's
request)

Pam Hunt 16/7.

CF file pl

PQ 1909/1985

PARTY: LABOUR
CONSTITUENCY: CARRICK, CUMNOCK AND
DOON VALLEY

FOR PRIORITY WRITTEN ANSWER ON WEDNESDAY 17 JULY

N/S/M

QUESTION

MR GEORGE FOULKES (CARRICK, CUMNOCK AND DOON VALLEY):
To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if
he will publish in the Official Report the text
of the letter submitted to the EEC Labour and Social
Affairs Council concerning the equal treatment
of men and women and the implementation of Directive
76/207/EEC.

DRAFT REPLY:

I have placed a copy of the letter in the Library
of the House, ~~and~~ ^I am arranging for a copy to be
sent to the hon member.

my

15/7

PQ 1909/1985

BACKGROUND NOTE

1. A copy of the letter to EC Ministers and Commissioner Pfeiffer is attached.
2. The letter was discussed at the Council meeting on 13 June. The S of S pressed the Commission to include the effect on small firms of the Equal Treatment Directive in its examination of burdens on firms.
3. The Council took note of the letter. Summing up, the President (Signor De Michelis) asked the Commission to consider the matter further. The issue might be discussed again at the Informal Council in September.



Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF

Telephone Direct Line 01-213...6400.....

Switchboard 01-213 3000

Miss Grethe Fenger Moller
Minister of Labour Arbejdsministeriet
Laksegade 19
DK-1063 Copenhagen K

22 May 1985

D. G. G. G.

I am writing to you and to other members of the Council of Ministers for Labour and Social Affairs to raise an issue which I believe has important and serious implications for the work of the European Community in the employment field.

A recent judgement of the European Court of Justice (Case No 165/82), following proceedings brought by the Commission, found that the United Kingdom had failed to implement fully the Equal Treatment Directive on three counts. These concerned the application of our legislation to collective agreements, private households and small firms. On the first two, I intend to consult interested parties within the United Kingdom to establish how our legislation can most suitably be changed to give effect to the Court judgement. However, the third count - small firms - raises a serious difficulty for the United Kingdom, and I believe for the whole Community, on which I should like to seek your support.

Our legislation (the Sex Discrimination Act 1975) exempts firms with five or fewer employees. This reflects the view of successive British governments that it is inappropriate in situations of this kind (covering, for example, a small family business) to impose legal requirements and sanctions that are essentially intended to meet the circumstances of larger firms. I am not of course suggesting that other member states should not enact such legislation if it seems right in their particular national circumstances. But to impose a blanket requirement across the whole Community carries the risk of



frustrating other Community policies of major importance and of impairing public support for our work. As you know, at the last meeting of the European Council on 29-30 March our heads of government laid emphasis in their conclusions on the need to encourage the creation and development of small and medium sized undertakings, particularly by significantly reducing the administrative and legal constraints to which they are subject. The Council went on to call upon the Commission to report to it on the problem in this sector and on the measures to be taken at national and Community level, particularly with regard to administrative simplification.

I believe these conclusions accurately reflected a growing consensus within the European Community that we must do everything possible to protect small firms, which represent a major source of economic growth and innovation, from legal and administrative constraints hampering their development. Against this background, it would in my view be seen as inconsistent for the Community to be taking steps to increase legislative burdens in a sector where the Council has called for them to be reduced. I would certainly find it extremely difficult to explain to public opinion in the United Kingdom why we were having to make such a change.

I recently discussed this issue with Commissioner Pfeiffer and am grateful to him for a clear and helpful explanation of the position of the Commission, which will feel obliged to take proceedings against the United Kingdom if we remain unable to implement the Court's judgement. Nevertheless, I would earnestly hope that before such a situation were to arise, we could take the opportunity in the Council of Ministers to consider this issue. I hope the Council might be able to conclude that whatever our differences on the substantial issues involved, the Commission should defer any legal proceedings until the examination of relevant legislation had taken place on the lines requested by the European Council.

I am writing to Gianni de Michelis as President of the Council to say that I should greatly appreciate an opportunity to raise this question at our next meeting on 13 June. I shall of course be very glad to know your views either then or beforehand.

May I say in conclusion that the United Kingdom takes its Community obligations very seriously indeed and that we have not taken this step without searching consideration of the issues involved. It is my concern that the policies of the



Community should be seen to work coherently and not to conflict with each other and it must surely be to our common advantage to secure this objective.

Zu

Z



Rle
cc H Cttee
+ MOD ✓
DTI ✓
A. Gen ✓
Pay. Gen ✓
Mw P. ✓
COV ✓
EU

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 June 1985

bc PC.

**UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION
OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

The Prime Minister has noted the Foreign Secretary's minute of 17 June to the Lord President covering amendments to the text of our proposed reservations on this Convention.

Subject to the views of colleagues, she is content for us now to announce our intention to ratify this Convention.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the recipients of the Foreign Secretary's minute.

(Charles Powell)

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

EU



CSPC

NR 17
CDP
19/6

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Secretary of State
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AL

18 June 1985

Dear Secretary of State

UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Thank you for sending me a copy of your minute of 17 June to the Lord President of the Council which proposes a new form of words to be included in general reservation b. and Article 11. att.

I understand that Tom King and other colleagues are now content that the new formulation overcomes the difficulties which were seen to exist with the previous wording to the reservations. I also understand that you have satisfied Norman Fowler's concerns on the timing of ratification. I am bound to say that since I was not asked to your meeting at which the wording of the Reservation was discussed in detail, I have to rest on your assurance and that of the Attorney General that our future freedom of action will not be unduly restrained. On the basis therefore of the Attorney General's advice I do not object to the proposed announcement tomorrow of our intention to ratify this Convention.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, members of H, Michael Heseltine, Norman Tebbit, Michael Havers, John Gummer, David Young, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely
P. Rees

PETER REES

[Approved by the Chief Secretary]

R 19/6

0



FCS/85/178

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Prime Minister ^{CC810}

Colleagues have all now
agreed on the text of
reservations to this Convention.

Agree that FCS may
now announce ~~of~~ our intention

of ratifying it?
CDD 17/6. Yes not

United Nations Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

1. I minuted on 20 May to the Employment Secretary asking that in view of the difficulties raised by members of 'H' Committee and others in connection with our proposed reservations to this Convention, 'H' Committee should reconsider these reservations.
2. I subsequently agreed with colleagues who had expressed reservations that the quickest way of resolving the problems would be for those most concerned to meet informally. I therefore chaired a meeting on 10 June with the Employment Secretary, the Minister without Portfolio, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled and the Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry to discuss the problems they saw with the text of our reservations. We considered a number of reformulations of certain passages which might present a way round the difficulties. In the light of those discussions and further consideration by the Attorney-General, I and my Ministerial colleagues at that meeting have agreed that the amendments to the text of our proposed reservations set out in Annex A to this minute would meet the concerns expressed (including those of the DHSS on the timing of our actual ratification), whilst remaining acceptable under international law.
3. Where the proviso refers to 'the United Kingdom's obligations under the Convention', this would take in all our proposed reservations and interpretative declarations. The effect of the amendments is to preserve our right to amend the legislation in question provided that such amendment does not create, extend or accentuate discrimination between men and women or, in the case of the two amendments to our proposed reservation to Article 11, adversely affect the rights of women specifically provided so as indirectly to create, extend or accentuate discrimination in the



fields covered in that Article.

4. We are now under intense pressure to make clear how we propose to proceed on this Convention, in view of the UN Conference on the subject early next month. We need to announce our decision to ratify as soon as possible. Since all colleagues with a direct interest have now been fully consulted and reaffirmed their agreement (given in H Committee 4 months ago), I propose to announce the decision by an inspired written Parliamentary Question the text of which is at Annex B on Wednesday 19 June and at the same time lay copies of the text of our draft reservations in the libraries of both Houses.

5. Unless I hear to the contrary by noon on Tuesday 18 June I shall assume that all recipients of this minute are content with this proposal.

6. I am copying this minute to members of 'H' Committee, to the Prime Minister and to Michael Heseltine, Norman Tebbit, Michael Havers, John Gummer, David Young and Robert Armstrong.

GEOFFREY HOWE

UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST WOMEN

DECLARATIONS AND RESERVATIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

General reservations

- (b) The United Kingdom reserves the right to regard the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978, the Employment Act 1980, the Sex Discrimination _____ (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, the Industrial Relations (No 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1982, the Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended) and the Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 (as amended), including the exceptions and exemptions contained in any of these Acts and Orders as constituting appropriate measures for the practical realisation of the objectives of the Convention in the social and economic circumstances of the United Kingdom, and to continue to apply these provisions accordingly; this reservation will apply equally to any future legislation which may modify or replace the above Acts and Orders on the understanding that the terms of such legislation will be compatible with the UK's obligations under the Convention.

ARTICLE 11

(First and second paragraphs unchanged).

(Third paragraph): The United Kingdom reserves the right to apply all United Kingdom legislation and the rules of pension schemes affecting retirement pensions, survivors' benefits and other benefits in relation to death or retirement (including retirement on grounds of

redundancy) whether or not derived from a social security scheme. This reservation will apply equally to any future legislation which may modify or replace such legislation, or the rules of pension schemes on the understanding that the terms of such legislation will be compatible with the UK's obligations under the Convention.

The United Kingdom reserves the right to apply the following provisions of the United Kingdom legislation concerning the benefits specified.

- (a) Unchanged.
- (b) Unchanged.
- (c) Retirement pensions and survivors' benefits under the Social Security Acts 1975 to 1982 and the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Acts 1975 to 1982.
- (d) Unchanged.

This reservation will apply equally to any future legislation which may modify or replace any of the provisions specified in subparagraphs (a) to (d) above on the understanding that the terms of such legislation will be compatible with the UK's obligations under the Convention.

The United Kingdom reserves the right to apply any non-discriminatory requirement for a qualifying period of employment or insurance for the application of the provisions contained in Article 11(2).

Annex B to FCs/85/478



of 17 June

with cop?

With the compliments of

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH
AFFAIRS

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

s.w.1

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Question

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government intend to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

Answer

The Government ^{have} ~~has~~ decided to ratify this Convention. Our ratification will be accompanied by various declarations and reservations. We do not envisage that it will be necessary to make changes to United Kingdom legislation to enable the United Kingdom to ratify. Before our instrument of ratification can be deposited we have to consult the Dependent Territories, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man to ascertain whether they wish to be included in our ratification and, if so, with what declarations and reservations. We are now doing this. I have arranged to have copies of our declarations and reservations placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

(Also to be tabled, suitably amended, in the House of



NBAM
CDP
20/5

FCS/85/139

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms
of Discrimination Against Women

- will request if rec.*
1. Thank you for your letter of 10 May. I have also seen David Young's letter of ~~13~~ May.
 2. In the light of your difficulties, officials have again considered alternative formulations for general reservation (b) of the proposed reservations to this Convention. I understand that they examined a number of possible forms of words; that some of these have been submitted informally to the Solicitor General; but that Patrick Mayhew's reaction is that none of them would safeguard any better the Government's freedom of action in the future whilst at the same time remaining acceptable under international law.
 3. This in effect confirmed the conclusion of my minute of 8 May, namely that the reservations originally approved by 'H' Committee represent the limit of what is acceptable in international law. In these circumstances, and with great reluctance, I have no alternative but to ask for a further discussion of this subject in 'H' Committee. I have asked that it should be put on the agenda at the earliest opportunity.
 4. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, members of 'H' Committee, Michael Heseltine, Norman Tebbit, Patrick Mayhew, John Gummer, David Young and Sir Robert Armstrong.


GEOFFREY HOWE

UNITED NATIONS: Women: July 1980

9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

20 MAY 1985



NORM
AT 15/5

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 3299

From the Minister without Portfolio
The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham

The Rt. Hon., Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP.,
Foreign Secretary,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
Whitehall,
London, SW1.

13 May 1985

**UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

NO.
with
TEB?

As you know, Norman Tebbit copied to me the recent correspondence on ratification of the above Convention because of my responsibilities for interdepartmental co-ordination of action on deregulation. I have since seen your letter of 8 May to Peter Rees, and Tom King's further letter of 10 May.

While I appreciate the pressures on us to ratify the Convention, I have to say that I do share the concern expressed by Norman, Tom King and Peter Rees about the limits which the UK reservation as drafted would impose on our future freedom of action. I am particularly concerned insofar as it would place obstacles in the way of any subsequent examination of the options for deregulation.

I accept, of course, that ratification of the Convention must to a degree tie our hands but I am not clear that we need to reinforce this by a specific commitment to maintain the precise level of protection afforded by current legislation. Like Tom, I hope that it might be possible to work out some alternative formula.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of H Committee, Michael Heseltine, Norman Tebbit, Michael Havers, John Gummer and Sir Robert Armstrong.



10 DOWNING STREET

H Committee is
to reconsider this.
Please submit again
when it has met.

CDP
17/5.



FCS/85/128

CHIEF SECRETARY, HM TREASURY

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms
of Discrimination Against Women

1. I wrote to you on 3 April about our ratification of this Convention. I have subsequently seen Tom King's Private Secretary's letter of 16 April and Norman Tebbit's letter of 24 April.

2. As a result of the concerns expressed in these letters officials have examined the existing reservations agreed by 'H' Committee, to see whether they could be amended in such a way as to safeguard more fully the Government's future freedom of action whilst remaining compatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. The Law Officers have confirmed that the reservations originally put before 'H' Committee, or slight variations of them which amount to much the same, represent the limit of what is acceptable in international law.

3. I am concerned that, despite exhaustive inter-Departmental clearance, and the decision taken in 'H' Committee last year to ratify this Convention, I am in effect being prevented from doing so by the objections which have been raised at the very last moment. The political case for ratification is compelling. It would simply not be possible to explain or justify our inability now to ratify a convention that we were content to sign in 1981. Nor would it be understood if Britain did not support a convention endorsing the very principles which have underlain our own approach for many years. It was a Conservative government, as long



ago as 1955, that first established the principle of equal pay in the public service. Internationally we would be isolated if we were not to ratify. Sixty-six countries have ratified the Convention already, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Denmark, France, Greece, Austria, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden; and we have recently heard that the FRG, the Netherlands, Belgium and Japan are all likely to announce a decision to ratify in the coming weeks. Our isolation would be emphasised in July at the World Conference on the UN Decade for Women. Our position there would be virtually untenable if we have not by then announced our intention of ratifying the Convention. It would be impossible satisfactorily to explain why we, almost uniquely among our Community and Commonwealth partners (all of whom share our concern to foster employment, particularly in small businesses), were unable, after an interval of four years, to follow our signature with ratification.

4. Time is therefore running out fast. Since our signature of the Convention in 1981 there has been mounting pressure on us to ratify from a number of women's organisations, ranging from the Women's National Commission itself to the British Federation of University Women. Only one organisation, the Responsible Society, has lobbied us against ratification, and this for reasons which are not compelling and/or are covered by our proposed reservations. These reservations also deal with those parts of the text of the Convention which are not well drafted.

5. Ratification would inevitably mean the acceptance of obligations which would restrict to some extent our future freedom of action in legislation. But ratification of this Convention would not, given the



reservations we propose to make, oblige us to alter our existing legislation, nor would we be prevented from making certain technical adjustments to it. We would however be inhibited from introducing in the future legislation which discriminated or accentuated discrimination against women. I question whether we really do need or want to safeguard this possibility. Still less to publicise our intention of acting in that way. The political repercussions of being seen (as we inevitably would) to regard increased discrimination as a deliberate policy option would be very severe.

6. I therefore believe that we should now announce our decision to ratify this Convention. If any colleagues see difficulties with this I should be forced, very reluctantly, to put this back to 'H' Committee. Subject to that, I propose to reinstate the plan (on which we were previously agreed until literally 24 hours before it was to be put into effect) and to inspire a written Parliamentary Question to this effect in both Houses on 13 May for answer during that week.

7. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of 'H' Committee, Michael Heseltine, Tom King, Norman Tebbit, Michael Havers, John Gummer, David Young and Robert Armstrong.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

8 May, 1985

United Nations: Women July 80

12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

19 MAY 1985

CONFIDENTIAL
FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

cepc



HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

25th April 1985

Dear Judith,

*NBPM
ODP
26/4*

UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of
Discrimination Against Women

The Lord Chancellor has seen a copy of your letter of 16th April 1985 to Ricketts and has asked me to point out that the 'key concern' which you set out in the second paragraph cannot wholly be met. Ratification of the UN Convention must, as a matter of public international law, involve some sacrifice of freedom of action: to seek a reservation which gave the United Kingdom an entirely free hand to introduce discriminatory legislation would open this country to a charge of bad faith.

That being said, I believe that the specific reservation proposed in respect of Article 11(2) adequately meets the concerns expressed as to qualifying periods of employment or insurance. Copies go to Charles Powell and other recipients of your letter.

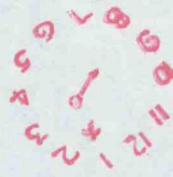
*Yours sincerely,
Richard*

R. C. Stoaate

Judith Rutherford
Private Secretary to the
Secretary of State for Employment
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NF

UN JULY 80

WOMEN



26

1985

BR



DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
1-19 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1H 0ET
TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-215 5422
SWITCHBOARD 01-215 7877

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

24 April 1985

NBRM

Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
London SW1

CDD
25/4

D. Geoffrey

UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST WOMEN

I have received copies of the recent correspondence on
ratification of the above Convention.

2 Like Tom King and Peter Rees, I am concerned that the
Convention, if ratified with the present UK reservations, which
commit the UK to maintain its present UK level of protection,
could limit the UK's future flexibility. Flexibility on labour
market, social security and fiscal matters is essential if we are
to be able to pursue our policy of removing, where possible, the
burdens placed by Government on industry. I would therefore like
to express my support for Tom and Peter.

3 As you know, David Young has the main responsibility for
deregulation. He does not appear to have seen this
correspondence. I am therefore copying this letter and earlier
correspondence to him. I am also copying this letter to the Prime
Minister, Members of 'H' Committee, Michael Heseltine, Michael
Havers, John Gummer and Sir Robert Armstrong.

NORMAN TEBBIT

JH5AXG

United Nations: Disc. against Women; 7/80

CONFIDENTIAL



Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF

Telephone Direct Line 01-213 6400.....

Switchboard 01-213 3000

~~CCPE~~
NBPM
CDD
16/4.

P F Ricketts Esq
Private Secretary to the Secretary of
State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
LONDON SW1A 2AH

16th April 1985

Dear Peter,

**UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

I have seen your letter of 3 April to Charles Powell at No 10 and can confirm that, so far as we are concerned, the further work is now well in hand between officials of this Department and the Treasury.

My Secretary of State's key concern, which he has asked me to reiterate, is that the Government avoids sacrificing its future freedom of action. He is determined that the terms in which the Convention is ratified should not fetter in advance discretion to introduce any legislative changes in whatever area of policy that might arise.

On points of detail, I would like to take this opportunity to correct, for the record, what you said in the second half of your letter where two separate issues, one relating to unfair dismissal and one to maternity pay provisions, have been conflated as if they were one. I do not think this affects any points now at issue, but we would not wish any reader to be misled as to the particular facts.

The position on unfair dismissal is, in its essential facts, as you put it. That is, there is presently a qualifying period of one year's employment (actually for those working for employers with more than 20 employees) for those wishing to complain to an industrial tribunal of unfair dismissal and the Government has announced its intention to increase this to two year's for all; this will affect those wishing to complain of dismissal on grounds of pregnancy.

CONFIDENTIAL



The present position on maternity pay is that there is already a two year's qualifying period of employment. (For maternity allowance, which is a DHSS responsibility, there is a qualification relating to national insurance). At the time my Secretary of State wrote his letter of 26 March there was a proposal before MISC 111 to restructure maternity pay and maternity allowance which would involve at least some women being worse off, because of either changed rates of payment or changes in qualifying requirements or both. It was subsequently agreed at MISC 111 however not to pursue that main option.

The addition to the specific reservation identified at the meeting of officials on 28 March would appear to meet the immediate point on unfair dismissal and also cover us against any future non-discriminatory changes in qualifying periods in the employment protection field.

Copies go to Charles Powell and other recipients of your minute.

*Yours ever,
Judith Rutherford*

JUDITH RUTHERFORD
Private Secretary

UN JULY 80

WOMEN

16 APR 1985

11 12 1 2 3
10 9 8 7 6 5 4



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~4307122~~ 218 2111/3

MO 10/7/4

9th April 1985

*Dear Peter**NBPM*

UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST WOMEN

The Defence Secretary has seen the recent correspondence concerning an announcement of our intention to ratify the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. I understand that your Secretary of State has now agreed to postpone such an announcement for the moment.

The Ministry of Defence has an interest in this matter with regard to the Armed Forces. We understand that our reservations, which relate to the position of Servicewomen, will be included in the list to be made available when the announcement is made. On this basis we are content to proceed.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, the Members of "H" Committee, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Attorney General and the Paymaster General and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
Simon Lowe
(S H LOWE)

P Ricketts Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



10 DOWNING STREET

No action on these
pps until problem
with the Chief
Secretary resolved.

Pl. resubmit to
me on 17 April.

CDD

5/4.

Wait until we get a
further report from
FCS

cc/rc



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

3 April 1985

Dear Charles,

UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

You asked for further background on the implications of the revised text of the proposed reservation on Article II of the above Convention, to which the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary referred in paragraph 2 of his minute of 1 April to the Secretary of State for Employment. In the light of the Chief Secretary's letter of 1 April expressing the view that the present Reservations may raise wider problems, Sir Geoffrey Howe has agreed that the present reservations should be reexamined generally, though he hopes this can be done quickly. You may nevertheless still like to know more about the specific problem posed by Article II.

with CAP?

Article II(2) of the Convention obliges States Parties inter alia to take appropriate measures:

- "(a) to prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;
- (b) to introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without the loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances:"

This provision is drafted in general terms: the Convention does not purport to stipulate the prime nature, scope or details of the measures involved.

The original text of our draft reservations agreed by Ministers in 'H' Committee in December 1984, contained a reference (general reservation (b)) to the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 (together with the corresponding Northern Ireland legislation) as constituting appropriate measures for the practical realisation of the objectives of the Convention in the social and economic circumstances of the United Kingdom. The wording of the general reservation encompassed the possibility of future

/legislation

CONFIDENTIAL



legislation involving the modification or replacement of this Act (as well as of other relevant items of basic legislation) "provided that the terms of any such legislation shall not in any respect be more restrictive than those currently existing."

Among the provisions contained in the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act is one conferring entitlement to protection against dismissal, including on the grounds of pregnancy, and entitlement to maternity leave with pay, provided that the employee concerned has served a qualifying period (currently one year) of prior employment or insurance.

The difficulty identified by the Department of Employment as represented to the meeting of officials at the FCO on 28 March and to which Mr King referred in his letter of 26 March to Sir Geoffrey Howe, concerned the Government's wish to increase this qualifying period of prior employment from one year to two. Department of Employment officials thought that such an increase would be incompatible with the stipulations in the original text of general reservation (b) that the terms of any modifications to our legislation shall not be more restrictive than those currently applying.

The solution to this problem identified at the 28 March meeting was to supplement the general reservation citing the United Kingdom's basic legislation with a specific reservation in respect of the provisions of Article II(2) of the Convention. Under this specific reservation the United Kingdom would expressly reserve the right to apply any non-discriminatory requirement for a qualifying period of employment or insurance for the application of the provisions contained in that Article. By virtue of this additional reservation, the position of the Government would be protected in respect of any future changes in the qualifying period. The further work which Sir Geoffrey Howe has now set in hand will cover this problem as well as those now identified by the Treasury, and fresh general recommendations will be made.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries to the recipients of the Foreign Secretary's minute.

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

Yours ever,

C D Powell Esq
Private Secretary
No 10

Peter Ricketts

CONFIDENTIAL

*cc/c*FCS/85/85CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURYUnited Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination Against Women

1. Thank you for your letter of 1 April. ^{with CDP} In the light of it I have reluctantly agreed to cancel the arrangements to announce the Government's decision to ratify this Convention by inspired Parliamentary Questions on Wednesday 3 April.
2. I must however register my surprise that you should at this late stage raise further doubts about the wording of our reservations. The text of these reservations has been discussed at considerable length by officials during the past three years. The text was put to 'H' Committee in March 1983, referred to officials for further work, and put to 'H' Committee again on 26 November 1984 (my minute to the Lord President, FCS/84(279)). The Lord President gave 'H' Committee clearance of the text on 14 December 1984, subject to a number of minor points of detail (which were subsequently cleared up at official level) and to your agreement. You yourself wrote to me on 21 December 1984 outlining your acceptance of the text of our proposed reservations, and indicating that you were also content that we should announce our decision to ratify the Convention.
3. You will by now have seen a copy of my minute of 1 April to Tom King, in which I set out the reasons why I wish to make an early announcement of our decision. I see serious political problems for us in a prolonged delay, and an indefinite postponement, which you suggest, is in my view out of the question. It is particularly important that we should announce

/the



the decision well in advance of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, which will be held in Nairobi in July. I therefore wish to do so very soon after the House returns after the Easter recess. My officials are already in touch with yours to take up the point you have raised in your letter and consider whether any further modification to our reservations may be necessary. I must ask that this be treated as a matter of urgency.

4. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of 'H' Committee, Michael Heseltine, Tom King, Norman Tebbit, Michael Havers, John Gummer and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe', written in a cursive style.

(GEOFFREY HOWE)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
3 April 1985

UN July 1980

WOMEN -

23 APR 1985

10 11 12 1 2 3
4 5 6 7 8 9



FCS/85/78

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT

Prime Minister
Content tells me
should now ratify
with this extra
reservation?

CDP
7/4

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination Against Women

1. I am responding to your letter of 26^{att} March. As you know, we have postponed the announcement of our decision to ratify the Convention which was planned for 27 March.

2. My officials convened a meeting on 28 March, attended by officials from your Department and other Departments with an interest in this question, to consider the problems outlined in your letter. The meeting concluded that the concerns raised by your Department would be met by the addition of a further short paragraph at the end of our reservation on Article 11, as follows:

"The United Kingdom reserves the right to apply any non-discriminatory requirement for a qualifying period of employment of insurance for the application of the provisions contained in Article 11(2)".

General reservation (b) would remain unchanged.

3. As you know, we signed this Convention in 1981. Since then there has been a detailed review in which all Departments concerned were involved. The outcome of that review was endorsed by H Committee last December.

4. We are now under considerable pressure to ratify. There have been over a dozen Parliamentary Questions and a large number of letters from MPs. The pressure comes



from organisations such as the British Federation of University Women and the Soroptimists as well as from the less sympathetic feminist groups. We have also received representations against ratification, but these are a more recent phenomenon and stem largely from the work of one organisation, the Responsible Society.

5. I think it is important that we should announce as soon as possible our decision to ratify, which was taken in principle at the end of last year. Making the text of our draft reservations available at the same time remains in my view essential, if we are to show that we will adequately be safeguarding our interests whilst supporting this international effort to eliminate discrimination against women. I should therefore like to announce the decision by inspired Written Parliamentary Questions on Wednesday 3 April and at the same time lay copies of the draft reservations (incorporating the extra wording drawn up by officials on 28 March) in the Libraries of both Houses. I should be grateful if you, and copy addressees, would let me know if you see any difficulties about proceeding in this way. In order to keep to the timing I have suggested above, I should be grateful for responses by noon on Tuesday 2 April.

6. I am copying this letter of members of 'H' Committee, to the Prime Minister (with a copy of your letter of 26 March), and to Michael Heseltine, Norman Tebbit, Michael Havers, John Gummer and Robert Armstrong.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

1 April, 1985

GEOFFREY HOWE



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Secretary of State
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AL

1 April 1985

Dear Secretary of State

**UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

with COP?

I have received a copy of Tom King's letter of 26 March asking you to defer the announcement of the intention to ratify the Convention. I understand that you have agreed to defer answering the PQ until 3 April.

I recognise that the decision to withdraw the PQ and cancel the press conference and briefing sessions at such a late stage caused difficulty and some inconvenience. But it has now been established following advice from Department of Employment lawyers, that the text of the UK Government's Reservations would have meant that the employment protection change announced in the Budget would probably have been inconsistent with the terms on which we were proposing to ratify the Convention. I must agree therefore that it was right to defer the announcement and I am most grateful to you.

However, we have dealt only with the immediately identifiable problem posed for the Budget measures. I am extremely concerned that there may be much wider problems with the wording of the UK Government Reservations. In particular, the words in the Reservations "provided that the terms of any such future legislation shall not in any respect be more restrictive than the provisions so specified" are very worrying. I am far from clear whether or not these words might restrict our flexibility on labour market, social security and fiscal measures currently under consideration which will undoubtedly disadvantage some women. It is essential that we are quite clear on this. If there is any doubt, I am afraid

the wording of the Reservations will have to be further modified. This is far too complex and important a matter to be sure that we shall have got it right by Wednesday. I must ask you therefore to postpone your announcement indefinitely to allow officials to investigate the problems thoroughly.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, members of 'H' Committee, Michael Heseltine, Tom King, Norman Tebbit, Michael Havers, John Gummer and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely

Peter Rees
for PETER REES

[Approved by the Chief Secretary]



02 APR 1985

CONFIDENTIAL



Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF

Telephone Direct Line 01-213 6400.....

Switchboard 01-213 3000

Mr Lever (UND)

cc PS

PS/Lady Young

PS/Mr Renton

Mr O'Neill

Mr Houston

C. Budd

26 March 1985

26/3

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
 Foreign Secretary
 Foreign and Commonwealth Office
 Whitehall
 LONDON SW1

D. Beffey,

**UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

I have seen your Private Secretary's letter of 15 March to the Prime Minister's Private Secretary about the above Convention.

I have had another look at the Convention and reservations in the light of our decision, announced in the Budget, to extend the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims - including dismissal on grounds of pregnancy - and I am concerned that we could be open to charges of inconsistency with Article 11 of the Convention and general reservation (b), which commits us to maintain at least our current level of protection. We are also, as you know, considering with renewed vigour measures to de-regulate the labour market and boost employment together with a restructuring of Social Security benefits involving changes in maternity pay. Inevitably these very recent developments were not taken account of in drafting the reservations and I think we need a little more time to reflect on whether they will be adequate to safeguard our future policies.

Although I appreciate your desire to proceed quickly with announcing ratification, I think we should be well advised to postpone Wednesday's announcement until we have re-examined the problems I have outlined. I am sure you will agree that we must be careful not to take on obligations which could limit our options in this crucial area.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



I am copying this letter to the members of 'H' Committee,
Michael Heseltine, Norman Tebbit, Michael Havers, John Gummer
and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Zu

Zu (KING)

CONFIDENTIAL

UN: Decade for Women
July 80

01 APR 1985

12 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

12 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

cc PC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 March 1985

Pl. copy to
Press office.COB
1573NBPM
COB 1573.

Dear Charles,

UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
Against Women

In your letter of 27 November 1984 you recorded that the Prime Minister was content that we should ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, subject to a number of declarations and reservations. The Foreign Secretary now has the agreement of his colleagues on 'H' Committee on the text of our declarations and reservations.

There has been some public and Parliamentary interest in the Government's intentions towards this Convention. In the last few months there has been increasing pressure for early ratification by the United Kingdom, as well as a modest counter-campaign in the opposite direction. In the light of this, we have carefully considered the public presentation of the Government's decision.

The Foreign Secretary proposes to announce the decision on Wednesday 27 March through an inspired Written Parliamentary Question and Answer. I enclose a draft. You will see that we propose to make available the full text of our reservations and declarations. These would be published in any case when we ratify. That point may be some months off as we still have to consult the Dependent Territories, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man about ratification. But we think it will be useful to be able to draw at this stage on the full text of our proposed declarations and reservations to meet specific queries.

In addition, Lady Young proposes to brief a number of MPs likely to be sympathetic to the Government's decision just before the announcement. She will also discuss the decision with Mrs Jill Knight. I enclose a checklist of the key points we shall be putting across in briefing. The Home Office and other Government Departments are briefed to deal with questions about our proposed declarations and reservations.

/I am

CONFIDENTIAL



I am copying this letter and its enclosures to Private Secretaries to the Members of 'H' Committee, the Private Secretaries to the Defence Secretary, the Attorney General and the Paymaster-General and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Question

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government intends to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

Answer

The Government has decided to ratify this Convention. Our ratification will be accompanied by various declarations and reservations. We do not envisage that it will be necessary to make changes to United Kingdom legislation to enable the United Kingdom to ratify. Before our instrument of ratification can be deposited we have to consult the Dependent Territories, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man to ascertain whether they wish to be included in our ratification and, if so with what declarations and reservations. We are now doing this. I have arranged to have copies of our declarations and reservations placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

(Also to be tabled, suitably amended, in the House of Lords)

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN:

THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE - KEY POINTS

1. The UK signed this Convention on 22 July 1981, before it entered into force. We intend shortly to deposit our instrument of ratification following the normal consultations with the Dependent Territories, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Sovereign Base Areas as to whether they wish the UK to ratify on their behalf also.
2. The Government believe that discrimination against women, both in the UK and in other countries, is wrong and we therefore support the basic objective of this Convention. We see the Convention as an important step in securing recognition of the rights of women by the world community. The UK was in fact one of the first countries to introduce national legislation to safeguard the rights of women in specific areas, and the UK has a good record in the promotion of ^{Equal opportunities.} equality. In many countries of the world, there is much that remains to be done.
3. In ratifying the Convention, we shall be joining countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada and several European countries, including France, Denmark, Greece, Austria, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. As of last month, the Convention had been signed by nearly 100 countries, and ratified by 65.
4. The Convention was hastily drafted and adopted. Whilst the Government's support for the basic principles of the Convention is not in doubt, we wish our position on particular aspects of it to be quite clear. It is in some regards imprecise, and we therefore intend, when we ratify the Convention, to enter a number of declarations and reservations designed to make clear the Government's position. When we consult the Dependent Territories and Islands, they may wish us to enter declarations and/or reservations on their behalf.

5. The declarations and reservations have been prepared following a careful and detailed consideration of the provisions of the Convention, and the obligations we will be under taking, in relation to existing United Kingdom legislation. We are satisfied that no further legislation is required to enable us to ratify.

UN : UN Decade for Women 7/80

[15 MAR 1985]

10 11 12 1
9 2
3

CONFIDENTIAL



CCPC

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
 Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
 Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Minister of State for Social Security and the Disabled

Our Ref: IOF 1
 Your Ref: FCS/84/279

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
 Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
 Downing Street
 LONDON
 SW1A 2AL

nbpm
 2ms
 18/1
 17 NOV 1985

Dear Geoffrey,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your minute of 26 November to Willie Whitelaw about the proposal to ratify the UN Convention on the Abolition of all forms of Discrimination against Women. I am sorry I have been unable to respond earlier.

I have no objection to the Convention being ratified but the UK still needs to enter a reservation on Article 11. The terms of our earlier reservation need to be amended because legislation passed since 1982 has moved further in the direction of equal treatment for men and women.

I attach a revised draft of part of the reservation on Article 11 to be substituted for that enclosed with your minute.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord President and members of 'H' Committee, the Defence Secretary, the Paymaster General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Newton

TONY NEWTON

CONFIDENTIAL



Amend the draft reservation on Article 11 as follows, beginning on page 8, line 6

The United Kingdom reserves the right to apply the following provisions of United Kingdom legislation concerning the benefits specified:

- a) Social security benefits for persons engaged in caring for a severely disabled person under Section 37 of the Social Security Act 1975 and Section 37 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Act 1975;
- b) increases of benefit for adult dependants under Sections 44 to 47, 49 and 66 of the Social Security Act 1975 and under Sections 44 to 47, 49 and 66 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Act 1975;
- c) unchanged;
- d) delete;
- e) becomes d).

This reservation will apply equally to any future legislation which may modify or replace any of the provisions specified in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d) above, provided that the terms of any such future legislation shall not in any respect be more restrictive than the provisions so specified.

UNITED NATIONS: World Conference
on Women: July 1980

18 JAN 1985



CONFIDENTIAL

cc/le



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

21 December 1984

R. White,

*MSM
Dr
28/12*

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

I have seen the Foreign Secretary's minute of 26 November to you recommending ratification of the United Kingdom of the Convention subject to the substantive reservations and interpretive declarations enclosed with his minute. I have now seen George Younger's letter of 13 December recording his view that the draft reservation to Article 2 should be altered to cover Scotland and Northern Ireland.

I agree, in principle, that we should ratify the Convention as the Foreign Secretary proposes, subject to agreement between officials about the terms of the proposed reservation to Article 2.

I also agree with the Foreign Secretary that we should announce our intention to ratify as soon as possible. The UN Decade for Women ends next year and there would, of course, be presentational advantage if we were able to make this announcement before the Nairobi Conference next summer to mark the end of the Decade: our record in the field of equal opportunities for women bears international comparison and I think it would be a missed opportunity not to do this.

One small point which I should perhaps make, but which does not affect the drafting of the reservations, is that the Sex Discrimination Act does, of course, provide for the Equal Opportunities Commission to review only the workings of that Act and the Equal Pay Act 1970.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, other members of 'H', the Defence Secretary, the Paymaster General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Wm,
L*

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw, CH., MC.

CONFIDENTIAL

UN : world conf on UN decade for
women
7/80.

7 8 9 10 11
28

NAME ~~CEPC~~

D

ex m.

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
 Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
 Secretary of State
 Foreign and Commonwealth Office
 Downing Street
 London
 SW1A 2AL

21 December 1984

Dear Foreign Secretary

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF
 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Thank you for sending me a copy of your minute of 26 November to the Lord President of the Council.

I have since seen colleagues' comments generally welcoming your approach, subject to the reservations made in their respective fields. For my part, I am happy with the revised reservations to Articles 2 and 13 and to leave comments on the social security aspects of Article 11 to Norman Fowler. Subject to the various reservations, I am content to see the Convention ratified and for you to announce our intention to ratify.

I am copying this letter to other members of H Committee, to the Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, John Gummer and Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely

for PETER REES

[Approved by the Chief Secretary]

UN: UN Decade for Women Mys80!

CONFIDENTIAL

CC PC



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

14 December 1984

Dear Jeffrey.

nbpw
DUB
18/12

**UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

Thank you for your letter of 26 November proposing the terms on which the United Kingdom should ratify this Convention.

I am sure you are right to want to make progress, and I hope that those colleagues who have not yet commented will do so very quickly. You will have seen that the Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Defence are content, and I understand that the Secretaries of State for Employment and for Education and Science, and the Attorney General are too. I understand that the Secretaries of State for Social Services, Scotland and Northern Ireland and possibly the Home Secretary have some points of substance to make, and you will wish to consider those - together with any comments from the Chief Secretary, Treasury - before proceeding further. If you are able to reach agreement with them there is no need to come back to the Committee again.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the members of H Committee, to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Minister without Portfolio, the Paymaster General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Howe
Larkin

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP

CONFIDENTIAL

UNITED NATIONS : World Conference of the UN decade: July 80



18 DEC 1984



SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

cc/c
NBIM
CD
— 14/xii

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw CH MC
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 0AT

13th December 1984

Dear Willie,

UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

I am generally content with the course of action proposed by the Foreign Secretary in his minute of 26 November. There is, however, one point I should like to make concerning the proposed reservation to Article 2 at page 4 of the Appendix.

This reservation will retain for the UK the right to continue to apply the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 1956 and the Street Offences Act 1959. If such a reservation is thought to be required in relation to the law of England and Wales on sexual offences, then it would seem necessary for this reservation to apply also to the law of Scotland and presumably also to that of Northern Ireland. I therefore suggest that we can leave it to officials to agree upon a suitable amendment to this reservation either in terms of the law of the UK generally on sexual offences or specifically in terms of the law of each jurisdiction in this area.

I am sending copies of this letter to other Members of H Committee and to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Paymaster General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

George.

UN July 80

WOMEN

ccpc



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

11/12/84
000 13/mi

C R Budd Esq
Private Office
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
LONDON SW1

12th December 1984

Dear Colin,

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS
OF DISCRIMINATION

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has seen the Foreign Secretary's minute of 26 November about the ratification of this Convention. Mr Hurd is generally content to proceed on the lines the Foreign Secretary proposes. He would be glad, however, if the second paragraph of the reservation to Article 2, which protects the Street Offences and Sexual Offences Act, could also refer to the equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland. Officials here will be in touch with yours about the drafting of this reference.

On minor drafting, line 9 of general reservation (b) should refer to "the Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 (as amended)".

Copies of this letter go to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, other members of H Committee, the Defence Secretary, and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

Neil Ward.

N D WARD

UN July 1980

Woman

13 DEC 1984

11 12 1
10 2
9 3
8 4
7 5
6



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-928 9222
FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

ce/c

NBPM

CDP

11/12

Miss Janet Lewis-Jones
Private Secretary to the
Lord President of the Council
68 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AT

11 December 1984

Dear Janet,

UN CONVENTION OF THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

My Secretary of State has seen the Foreign Secretary's minute of 26 November to the Lord President. He is content that the Government should ratify this convention on the basis now proposed.

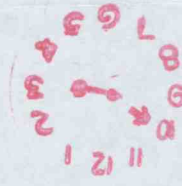
Copies of this letter go to Charles Powell (No 10), the Private Secretaries to the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, members of H Committee and to the Paymaster-General, and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours,

Elizabeth

MISS C E HODKINSON
Private Secretary

UN July 1980
WOMEN.



17 DEC 1984

CONFIDENTIAL

cc/NO



HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

6 December 1984

NBM
CDD 7/11

Dear Willie:

UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

I agree with the line proposed by the Foreign Secretary in his minute of 26th November 1984 and with the reservations which he appends to that minute. The reservations he proposes at (c) and (d) on page 2 of that Appendix and the reservation at pages 11 and 12 of it in relation to Article 16 meet our requirements well.

I have no need to take any points on property law or matrimonial law.

I am sending copies of this letter to the other members of H Committee and to the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary, the Paymaster General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yrs:

The Right Honourable
The Viscount Whitelaw, CH., MC.,
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office.

UN : world conference of un decade for women
July '80

10 11 12 1
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

- 7 DEC 1984



10 DOWNING STREET

c	LPO	DHSS	CO
	LCO	D/M	
	HO	DTPRT	
	DES	CWO	
	NIO	Ld Denham	
	SO	CDL	
	WO	PG	
	DOE	MOD	
	LPSO		

bc Sir PC.

From the Private Secretary

27 November 1984

UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

The Prime Minister has seen the Foreign Secretary's minute of 26 November to the Lord President in which he recommends ratification by the United Kingdom of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women with a number of substantive reservations and interpretative declarations.

Subject to the views of colleagues, the Prime Minister is content that we should ratify on this basis.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of H Committee, the Private Secretaries to the Defence Secretary and the Paymaster General and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(C.D. POWELL)

C.R. Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

JK



FCS/84/279

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

*Redundant - yes
not*

Prime Minister
You looked at earlier papers on this problem and seemed content.

Agree, subject to views of colleagues, but we should ratify the Convention while making extensive reservations?

CDP 26 xi

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination

Against Women

1. My predecessor circulated a memorandum (H(83)12) about this Convention which was considered by the Home and Social Affairs Committee on 3 March 1983. The meeting concluded that we should work towards ratification, but considered that the draft reservations proposed did not afford sufficient protection against some aspects of the Convention, and that it might not be possible for reservations to be drafted which both afforded the necessary protection and were compatible with the object and purpose of the Convention (the test of their admissibility under international law). The meeting instructed officials to reconsider the draft reservations.

2. This has now been done. The draft reservations and interpretative declarations that it is envisaged we would submit on behalf of the metropolitan territory, should we decide to ratify, are enclosed. Officials believe that these offer the maximum protection possible while being at the same time admissible. The Solicitor-General has expressed the view that they are not incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.



3. The Convention was drafted in very general terms and is not, in certain respects, clear; this is one reason why the proposed reservations are so numerous. Nevertheless, the intent of the Convention is clear; it is that states party to the Convention undertake an obligation progressively to eliminate discrimination in all areas of life, by all means, including legislation. Our officials have sought to protect us against pressure for unnecessary or unwelcome changes in the law in two ways. Our first draft reservation to Article 2 reserves to us the right to give effect to the central obligation referred to above by keeping under review such of our laws as still embody significant differences of treatment between men and women; and our specific reservations to other articles of the Convention also provide us with a basis for resisting unacceptable change.

4. We do in fact keep legislation under review. Our Sex Discrimination Act contains explicit provisions for the Equal Opportunities Commission to do so and recommend amendments. We have recently made changes in the Equal Pay Act, to provide for equal pay for work of equal value, and the Scottish Law of Husband and Wife has been reformed. It seems likely that in the normal course of events other relevant aspects of our law will come under review from time to time. Review does not imply any certainty of change. Nor would we be committing ourselves to any particular form or method of review.

5. So far 57 countries have ratified this convention. The United States is not considering ratification at present. Domestic interest there is still focused on the Equal Rights Amendment. But Australia and Canada have ratified and so have several European countries (France, Denmark, Greece, Austria, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden). All the remaining Community countries intend to ratify and are working

/towards



towards it except for Ireland, which will be unable to do so for some time. We should be almost completely alone if we decided not to ratify.

6. Nevertheless, the proposed draft reservations are exceptionally numerous and we should consider whether they would undermine the impact of a decision to ratify. Most of the countries which have ratified have made few reservations though some of them are sweeping and France has made a dozen. Internationally, this situation would be likely to give rise to comment in the Committee established under the Convention and some states parties might consider objecting to our reservations (as we might to some of theirs), but I do not think it would have significant repercussions elsewhere. Domestically, most of those who want us to ratify are probably simply keen to see us standing with those who oppose discrimination; they will not be concerned by a number of our reservations and may indeed think some of them positively desirable.

7. We signed the Convention in 1981 because we thought it right, given the domestic pressure and the risk of international isolation, that we should be seen to be opposed to discrimination against women. Since signature, there has been steady, if undramatic, pressure to ratify. Recently we have had some representations against ratification, but some of the points made would be dealt with in our reservations and others are based on misconceptions.

8. We have three choices: to decide to ratify now (it would still be many months before we could complete consultations with the dependent territories, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man and actually ratify); to decide

/not



not to ratify; and to postpone a decision. I do not think we should stall. We have been studying the Convention since 1979 and women's organisations will find it hard to understand further delay. A decision not to ratify would leave us isolated internationally and create difficulty domestically. I believe the right course is to decide to ratify and to announce this as soon as possible. I should be grateful to know whether you agree.

9. I am sending copies of this minute to other members of 'H' Committee and to the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary, the Paymaster General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

(GEOFFREY HOWE)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
26 November 1984

DRAFT RESERVATIONS

- (a) The United Kingdom understands the main purpose of the Convention, in the light of the definition contained in Article 1, to be the reduction, in accordance with its terms, of discrimination against women, and does not therefore regard the Convention as imposing any requirement to repeal or modify any existing laws, regulations, customs or practices which provide for women to be treated more favourably than men, whether temporarily or in the longer term; the United Kingdom's undertakings under Article 4, paragraph 1, and other provisions of the Convention are to be construed accordingly.
- (b) The United Kingdom reserves the right to regard the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978, the Employment Act 1980, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, the Industrial Relations (No 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1982, the Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended) and the Equal Pay (Northern Ireland) Act 1970 (as amended), including the exceptions and exemptions contained in any of these Acts and Orders, as constituting appropriate measures for

the practical realisation of the objectives of the Convention in the social and economic circumstances of the United Kingdom, and to continue to apply these provisions accordingly; this reservation will apply equally to any future legislation which may modify or replace the above Acts and Orders provided that the terms of such legislation shall not in any respect be more restrictive than those currently existing.

- (c) In the light of the definition contained in Article 1, the United Kingdom's ratification is subject to the understanding that none of its obligations under the Convention shall be treated as extending to the succession to, or possession and enjoyment of, the Throne, the peerage, titles of honour, social precedence or armorial bearings, or as extending to the affairs of religious denominations or orders or to the admission into or service in the Armed Forces of the Crown.
- (d) The United Kingdom reserves the right to continue to apply such immigration legislation governing entry into, stay in, and departure from, the United Kingdom as it may deem necessary from time to time and, accordingly, their acceptance of

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Article 15(4) and of the other provisions of the Convention is subject to the provisions of any such legislation as regards persons not at the time having the right under the law of the United Kingdom to enter and remain in the United Kingdom. ((The United Kingdom also reserves a similar right in regard to each of its dependent territories.))

ARTICLE 1

With reference to the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and other applicable legislation, the United Kingdom's acceptance of Article 1 is subject to the reservation that the phrase "irrespective of their marital status" shall not be taken to render discriminatory any difference of treatment accorded to single persons as against married persons, so long as there is equality of treatment as between married men and married women and as between single men and single women.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

ARTICLE 2

In the light of the substantial progress already achieved in the United Kingdom in promoting the progressive elimination of discrimination against women, the United Kingdom reserves the right, without prejudice to the other reservations made by the United Kingdom, to give effect to paragraphs (f) and (g) by keeping under review such of its laws and regulations as may still embody significant differences in treatment between men and women with a view to making changes to those laws and regulations when to do so would be compatible with essential and overriding considerations of economic policy. In relation to forms of discrimination more precisely prohibited by other provisions of the Convention, the obligations under this Article must (in the case of the United Kingdom) be read in conjunction with the other reservations and declarations made in respect of those provisions including the declarations and reservations of the United Kingdom contained in paragraphs (a) - (d) above.

With regard to paragraphs (f) and (g) of this Article the United Kingdom reserves the right to continue to apply the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 1956

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

and the Street Offences Act 1959; this reservation will apply equally to any future legislation which may modify or replace the above Acts provided that the terms of such legislation shall not in any respect be more restrictive than those currently existing.

ARTICLE 9

The British Nationality Act 1981, which was brought into force with effect from January 1983, is based on principles which do not allow of any discrimination against women within the meaning of Article 1 as regards acquisition, change or retention of their nationality or as regards the nationality of their children. The United Kingdom's acceptance of Article 9 shall not, however, be taken to invalidate the continuation of certain temporary or transitional provisions which will continue in force beyond that date.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

ARTICLE 10

The United Kingdom reserves the right to take such steps as may be necessary to comply with its obligations under Article 2 of the First Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed at Paris on 20 March 1952 and its obligations under paragraph 3 of Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights opened for signature at New York on 19 December 1966, to the extent that the said provisions preserve the freedom of parental choice in respect of the education of children; and reserves also the right not to take any measures which may conflict with its obligation under paragraph 4 of Article 13 of the said Covenant not to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject to the observation of certain principles and standards.

Moreover, the United Kingdom can only accept the obligations under paragraph (c) of Article 10 within the limits of the statutory powers of central Government, in the light of the fact that the teaching curriculum, the provision of text-books and teaching methods are reserved for local control and are not subject to central Government direction; moreover, the acceptance of the objective of encouraging co-education is without prejudice to the right of the United Kingdom also to encourage other types of education.

CONFIDENTIAL

ARTICLE 11

The United Kingdom interprets the "right to work" referred to in paragraph 1(c) as a reference to the "right to work" as defined in other human rights instruments to which the United Kingdom is a party, notably Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 19 December 1966.

The United Kingdom interprets paragraph 1 of Article 11, in the light of the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article 4, as not precluding prohibitions, restrictions or conditions on the employment of women in certain areas, or on the work done by them where this is considered necessary or desirable to protect the health and safety of women or the human foetus, including such prohibitions, restrictions or conditions imposed in consequence of other international obligations of the United Kingdom; the United Kingdom declares that, in the event of a conflict between obligations under the present Convention and its obligations under the Convention concerning the employment of women on underground work in mines of all kinds (ILO Convention No.45), the provisions of the last mentioned Convention shall prevail.

The United Kingdom reserves the right to apply all United Kingdom legislation and the rules of pension schemes affecting retirement pensions, survivors' benefits and other benefits in relation to death or retirement (including retirement on grounds of redundancy), whether or not derived from a Social Security scheme.

CONFIDENTIAL

This reservation will apply equally to any future legislation which may modify or replace such legislation, or the rules of pension schemes provided that the terms of any future legislation shall not in any respect be more restrictive than those currently existing.

The United Kingdom reserves the right to apply the following provisions of United Kingdom legislation concerning the benefits specified:

a) Social security benefits for

i) invalidity under section 36 of the Social Security Act 1975 and section 36 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Act 1975;

ii) persons engaged in caring for a severely disabled person under section 37 of the Social Security Act 1975 and section 37 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Act 1975;

b) increases of benefit for dependants under sections 41 to 47 and 64 to 66 of the Social Security Act 1975 and section 7(3) (c) and (d) of the Industrial Injuries and Diseases (Old Cases) Act 1975 and under sections 41 to 47 and 64 to 66 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Act 1975;

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- c) retirement pensions and survivors' benefits under the Social Security Acts 1975 to 1982;
- d) supplementary benefit under the Supplementary Benefits Act 1976;
- e) family income supplements under the Family Income Supplements Act 1970 and the Family Income Supplement Act (Northern Ireland) 1971.

This reservation will apply equally to any future legislation which may modify or replace any of the provisions specified in sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) above, provided that the terms of any such future legislation shall not in any respect be more restrictive than the provisions so specified.

ARTICLE 13

The United Kingdom reserves the right, notwithstanding the obligations undertaken in Article 13, or any other relevant article of the Convention, to continue to apply the income tax and capital gains tax legislation which:

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

i) deems for income tax purposes the income of a married woman living with her husband in a year, or part of a year, of assessment to be her husband's income and not to be her income (subject to the right of the husband and the wife to elect jointly that the wife's earned income shall be charged to income tax as if she were a single woman with no other income); and

ii) requires tax in respect of such income and of chargeable gains accruing to such a married woman to be assessed on her husband (subject to the right of either of them to apply for separate assessment) and consequently (if no such application is made) restricts to her husband the right to appeal against any such assessment and to be heard or to be represented at the hearing of any such appeal; and

iii) entitles a man who has his wife living with him, or whose wife is wholly maintained by him, during the year of assessment to a deduction from his total income of an amount larger than that to which an individual in any other case is entitled and entitles an individual whose total income includes any earned income of his wife to have that deduction increased by the amount of that earned income or by an amount specified in the legislation whichever is the less.

CONFIDENTIAL

ARTICLE 15

In relation to Article 15, paragraph 2, the United Kingdom understands the term "legal capacity" as referring merely to the existence of a separate and distinct legal personality.

In relation to Article 15, paragraph 3, the United Kingdom understands the intention of this provision to be that only those terms or elements of a contract or other private instrument which are discriminatory in the sense described are to be deemed null and void, but not necessarily the contract or instrument as a whole.

ARTICLE 16

As regards sub-paragraph 1(f), the United Kingdom does not regard the reference to the paramountcy of the interests of the children as being directly relevant to the elimination of discrimination against women, and declares in this connection that the legislation of the United Kingdom regulating adoption, while giving a principal position to the promotion of the children's welfare, does not give to the child's interests the same paramount place as in issues concerning custody over children.

The United Kingdom's acceptance of paragraph 1 of Article 16 shall not be treated as either limiting the freedom of a person to dispose of his property as he wishes or as giving a person a right to property the subject of such a limitation.

CONFIDENTIAL

World Conf. of the U.N. decade for

women: UN. July 80

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

1984



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 November 1984

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE
ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Thank you for your letter of 19 November on the question of ratification of this Convention.

I note that Sir Geoffrey Howe intends to raise the matter at a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has refreshed her memory on the papers and has not raised any objection to the idea of ratification. But a formal nihil obstat had better await circulation of the Foreign Secretary's minute to his colleagues.

(Charles Powell)

Len Appleyard Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL

GR PPS?



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 November 1984

G.H. recommends ratification
of this Convention. He will
discuss with you at a bilateral.

I attach the Convention (A)
and two letters (B & C) which you sent Jill Knight
Dear Charles, to deal with her worries about it.

nr

C.D.P. 21/11/84

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination Against Women

As you know, we are approaching the point where we can take a decision on whether to ratify this Convention.

H Committee looked at it in March 1983. They asked for further work to be done to tighten up the reservations that we would make if we ratified. This work has now been completed and the Foreign Secretary is ready to circulate the revised reservations to his colleagues. They protect the present state of the law in all necessary respects and make it clear that while we would accept an obligation to keep the law under review we would not agree to make any unreasonable changes.

We have been under steady pressure to become a party to this Convention ever since it was adopted at the General Assembly in 1979. This pressure comes not just from the less sympathetic feminist groups but also from organisations such as the British Federation of University Women. While some of these people may hope to use the Convention as a stick to beat us with (an aim that would be frustrated by our reservations) the majority seem to be simply anxious to see the Government give its broad support to the notion that discrimination against women is wrong, both here and in other countries.

The recent opposition to ratification seems to stem largely from the work of one NGO, the Responsible Society. This has some distinguished medical people among its sponsors but its paper on the Convention is a poor piece of work. Mrs Gill Knight MP included a number of the Society's points in two letters to the Prime Minister. In her replies on 3 August and 13 September, the Prime Minister pointed out some of the misconceptions. Mrs Knight's anxieties on various other points would, as the Prime Minister assured her, be dealt with by reservations.

/There

GR PPS 11

CONFIDENTIAL



There may be little in the Convention about the protection of family life, but that is not its subject. We can certainly say that there is nothing in it that would undermine family life. Some of the criticisms of the Convention are pretty wild, for example the suggestion that it outlaws single-sex hospital wards or toilets.

Sir Geoffrey Howe has concluded after looking carefully at this subject that the balance of advantage lies in ratifying the Convention, and he would like to have a word with the Prime Minister at one of their regular meetings before he circulates his minute to colleagues. As regards those who have reservations about the Convention, he would be glad to arrange for Mrs Knight and indeed for the Responsible Society itself to be fully briefed about our attitude to the Convention at the time that an announcement of ratification is made. He believes that the explanations we could offer about the nature of the Convention and the scope of our reservations would do much to set their anxieties at rest. Moreover, a number of serious countries, such as Australia, Canada and France, have already ratified.

Yours ever,

Len Appleyard

(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL



UNITED NATIONS

**Convention
on the Elimination
of All Forms of
Discrimination
Against Women**



“... the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.”

INTRODUCTION

A major step towards the attainment of the goal of equal rights for women was taken on 18 December 1979, when the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The 30-article Convention sets out in legally binding form internationally accepted principles and measures to achieve equal rights for women everywhere. Its adoption climaxed consultations over a five-year period by various working groups, the Commission on the Status of Women and the General Assembly.

The comprehensive Convention reflects the depth of the exclusion and restriction practised against women solely on the basis of their sex, by calling for equal rights for women, regardless of their marital status, in all fields -- political, economic, social, cultural and civil. It calls for national legislation to ban discrimination; recommends temporary special measures to speed equality in fact between men and women, and action to modify social and cultural patterns that perpetuate discrimination.

Other measures provide for equal rights for women in political and public life; equal access to education and the same choice of curricula; non-discrimination in employment and pay; and guarantees of job security in the event of marriage and maternity. The Convention underlines the equal responsibilities of men with women in the context of family life. It also stresses the social services needed -- especially child-care facilities -- for combining family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life.

Additional articles of the Convention call for non-discriminatory health services to women, including services related to family planning; and a legal capacity identical to that of men, with States parties agreeing

that all contracts and other private instruments that restrict the legal capacity of women "shall be deemed null and void". Special attention is given to the problems of rural women.

The Convention sets up machinery for the international supervision of the obligations accepted by States. A committee of experts, to be elected by States parties and serving in a personal capacity, will consider the progress made.

Opened for signature on 1 March 1980, the Convention will enter into force after 20 States have consented to be bound by its provisions, either through ratification or accession.

The full text of the Convention is set out in the pages that follow.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women

The States Parties to the present Convention,

Noting that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,

Noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex,

Noting that the States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights,

Considering the international conventions concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

Noting also the resolutions, declarations and recommendations adopted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

Concerned, however, that despite these various instruments extensive discrimination against women continues to exist,

Recalling that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity,

Concerned that in situations of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs,

Convinced that the establishment of the new international economic order based on equity and justice will contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality between men and women,

Emphasizing that the eradication of apartheid, of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggresssion, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women,

Affirming that the strengthening of international peace and security, relaxation of international tension, mutual co-operation among all States irrespective of their social and economic systems, general and complete disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control, the affirmation of the principles of justice, equality and mutual benefit in relations among countries and the realization of the right of peoples under alien and colonial domination and foreign occupation to self-determination and independence, as well as respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, will promote social progress and development and as a consequence will contribute to the attainment of full equality between men and women,

Convinced that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields,

Bearing in mind the great contribution of women to the welfare of the family and to the development of society, so far not fully recognized, the social significance of maternity and the role of both parents in the family and in the upbringing of children, and aware that the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination but that the upbringing of children requires a sharing of responsibility between men and women and society as a whole,

Aware that a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women,

Determined to implement the principles set forth in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, for that purpose, to adopt the measures required for the elimination of such discrimination in all its forms and manifestations,

Have agreed on the following:

PART I

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 3

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

Article 4

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

Article 5

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

Article 6

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

PART II

Article 7

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Article 8

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Article 9

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

PART III

Article 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

Article 11

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;

(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and

participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connexion with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

Article 13

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to family benefits;

(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;

(c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of this Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

2. The members of the Committee shall be elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States Parties. Each State Party may nominate one person from among its own nationals.

3. The initial election shall be held six months after the date of the entry into force of the present Convention. At least three months before the date of each election the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a letter to the States Parties inviting them to submit their nominations within two months. The Secretary-General shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated, indicating the States Parties which have nominated them, and shall submit it to the States Parties.

4. Elections of the members of the Committee shall be held at a meeting of States Parties convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters. At that meeting, for which two thirds of the States Parties shall constitute a quorum, the persons elected to the Committee shall be those nominees who obtain the largest number of votes and an absolute majority of the votes of the representatives of States Parties present and voting.

5. The members of the Committee shall be elected for a term of four years. However, the terms of nine of the members elected at the first election shall expire at the end of two years; immediately after the first election the names of these nine members shall be chosen by lot by the Chairman of the Committee.

6. The election of the five additional members of the Committee shall be held in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this article, following the thirty-fifth ratification or accession. The terms of two of the additional members elected on this occasion shall expire at the end of two years, the names of these two members having been chosen by lot by the Chairman of the Committee.

7. For the filling of casual vacancies, the State Party whose expert has ceased to function as a member of the Committee shall appoint another expert from among its nationals, subject to the approval of the Committee.

8. The members of the Committee shall, with the approval of the General Assembly, receive emoluments from United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the Assembly may decide, having regard to the importance of the Committee's responsibilities.

9. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall provide the necessary staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the present Convention.

Article 18

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee, a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and on the progress made in this respect:

(a) Within one year after the entry into force for the State concerned; and

(b) Thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.

2. Reports may indicate factors and difficulties affecting the degree of fulfilment of obligations under the present Convention.

Article 19

1. The Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

2. The Committee shall elect its officers for a term of two years.

Article 20

1. The Committee shall normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order to consider the reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the present Convention.

2. The meetings of the Committee shall normally be held at United Nations Headquarters or at any other convenient place as determined by the Committee.

Article 21

1. The Committee shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities and may make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from the States Parties. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be included in the report of the Committee together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

2. The Secretary-General shall transmit the reports of the Committee to the Commission on the Status of Women for its information.

Article 22

The specialized agencies shall be entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the present Convention as fall within the scope of their activities. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities.

PART VI

Article 23

Nothing in this Convention shall affect any provisions that are more conducive to the achievement of equality between men and women which may be contained:

- (a) In the legislation of a State Party; or
- (b) In any other international convention, treaty or agreement in force for that State.

Article 24

States Parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 25

1. The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States.
2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is designated as the depositary of the present Convention.
3. The present Convention is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
4. The present Convention shall be open to accession by all States. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 26

1. A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any State Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
2. The General Assembly of the United Nations shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such a request.

Article 27

1. The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

2. For each State ratifying the present Convention or acceding to it after deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 28

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.
2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.
3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to this effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States thereof. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received.

Article 29

1. Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court.
2. Each State Party may at the time of signature or ratification of this Convention or accession thereto declare that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 1 of this article. The other States Parties shall not be bound by that paragraph with respect to any State Party which has made such a reservation.
3. Any State Party which has made a reservation in accordance with paragraph 2 of this article may at any time withdraw that reservation by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 30

The present Convention, the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts of which are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, duly authorized, have signed the present Convention.

ua

PRIME MINISTER

Discrimination against Women

The attached H paper by the Foreign Secretary proposes that, having signed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, we should now ratify it after consulting dependent territories. He He proposes that we should also accept the commitment in the Convention to search for ways of "further reducing discrimination with a view to its eventual elimination", but that we should avoid giving the impression that this was an area in which extensive further legislation was envisaged or indeed appropriate.

TIM FLESHER

21 February, 1983

RECORD of a Meeting held in Committee Room 4B,
The House of Lords, on
THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER 1982 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT

IN THE CHAIR

The Baroness Gardner of Parkes, United Kingdom Representative on the United Nations Status of Women Commission

SPEAKERS

The Baroness Young, Government Co-Chairman, Women's National Commission
Dr M T Spens, Overseas Development Administration, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
The Baroness Lockwood, Chairman, Equal Opportunities Commission
Mrs Marianne Haslegrave, Co-Cordinator of NGO Activities at Women's World Conference, Copenhagen, July 1980

PARTICIPANTS

Ms D Ainger	International Planned Parenthood Federation
Ms M Alexander-Sinclair	Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights
Ms H Allison	War on Want
Mrs G Ashworth	Decade Network
Mrs U Bagri	Sangam
Miss D Bailey	Fawcett Society
Miss J Baird	Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association
Mrs I Beardsall	National Housewives Association
Ms D Bellerby	National Labour Women's Committee
Mrs U Bhatt	Sangam
Ms J Bidder	Woman's Own
Mrs W Birkbeck	United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF
Ms C Blackwell	The 300 Group

Ms S Blumhardt	Oxfam
Mrs Bodley	Married Women's Association
Mrs B Bradby	Women's Advisory Council, United Nations Association
Mrs A Brayton	Women's Corona Society
Mrs E Bridge	Fawcett Society
Mrs S Brown	Women in Media
Mrs W Brown	Wages for Housework Campaign
Ms J Bumstead	Women's Action Group
Miss A M Burridge	United Kingdom Home Economics Federation
Mrs A Bush	National Association of Women Citizens
Ms S Butterworth	Women in Publishing
Mrs A Cadbury	Young Women's Christian Association of Great Britain
Mr N Carter	United Nations Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Mrs L Casinader	International Alliance of Women
Mrs N Catchpole	British Federation of University Women
Mrs S E Charles	National Free Church Women's Council
Ms G Chester	A Woman's Place
Mrs J Cholmeley	Women in Publishing, Advertising Working Party
Mrs J Clarke	Commonwealth Institute
Mrs G Collinson	Standing Conference of Women's Organisations
Mrs E Coram	Associated Country Women of the World
Mrs D Cossey	Family Planning Association
Ms S Curtis	UK Committee for UNICEF
Ms K Davies	Scottish Convention of Women
Ms A Dawe	Women's Media Action Group
Mrs C Dennis	Fawcett Society
Mrs E Dobbie	National Advisory Centre on Careers for Women
Miss J Dobson	Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland
Mrs H Edwards	Women's Advisory Council, United Nations Association
Miss R Elliott	International Association of Journalists of the Women's Press
Baroness Faithfull OBE	
Mrs C Faulder	Women in Media, Women's Action Group
Mrs J Finlay	Equal Opportunities Commission
Ms S Francis	Housewives in Dialogue
Ms A Godfrey	Women's International Zionist Organisation
Miss J Griffith	Home Office

Mrs M Halcrow	Social Democratic Party
Mrs G Handyside	Standing Conference of Women's Organisations
Dr H R Harris	Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Mrs M Hart	Scottish Joint Action Group for the Decade for Women
Miss E Hedger	Commonwealth Countries League
Mrs J Hemer	National Association of Widows
Miss D Hewitt	British Association for Early Childhood Education
Mrs A Hill CBE	The Spastics Society
Miss N Hodgson	National Board of Catholic Women
Mrs W Hogg	United Kingdom Federation of Business and Professional Women
Ms J Holland	Christian Aid
Mrs D Holloway	National Union of Teachers
Miss A Hooper	Conservative Women's National Committee
Ms S James	Wages for Housework Campaign
Ms E Jones	The Association of Women Solicitors
Mrs T Kothari	United Kingdom Asian Women's Conference
Baroness Lane-Fox	
Mrs Letman	Women for Social Democracy
Mrs K Lewis	British Association of Women Executives
Ms J McNally	Voluntary Service Overseas
Mrs M Mayne	National Council of Women of Great Britain
Miss M L Medcalf	Secondary Heads' Association
Ms B Munson	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Mr J Murphy	International Division of the Labour Party
Sister Nelson	Church Army
Mrs C Noble	Scottish Women's Rural Institutes
Mrs E Noble	League of Jewish Women
Ms V Novarra	Equal Opportunities International and National Organisation for Women's Management Education
Ms R O'Brien	Women in the Civil Service
Ms P Orr	
Ms J Oliver	The Association of Carers
Mrs Pemberton	Associated Country Women of the World

Mrs B Pepper	Scottish Convention of Women
Ms M Rabagliati	ATD Fourth World
Dr M Rendel	International Political Science Association
Mrs J Robinson	Conservative Women's National Committee
Dr R Rue	Medical Women's Federation
Ms C Sherriff	TUC - Woman's Advisory Committee
Mrs E Sidney	Women's Liberal Federation
Ms M Sindell	Equal Opportunities Commission
Mrs A Stanger	National Association of Widows
Mrs M Stott	Women's Action Group
Ms J Tait	War on Want
Mrs N L Terek	British Association of Women Executives
Mrs H Trew	International Federation of Business and Professional Women
Baroness Trumpington	
Baroness Vickers DBE	
Miss E Waller	International Alliance of Women
Mr J Wattan	United Nations Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Mrs M White	Royal College of Nursing of the United Kingdom
Miss C M Williams	Elected Co-Chairman, Women's National Commission
Mrs A Wilson	European Union of Woman
Ms D Wilson-Smillie	Commonwealth Secretariat
Ms N Wise	Equal Opportunities International
Mrs C Woodroffe	Family Planning Association

SECRETARIAT

Miss A G Toulmin	Women's National Commission
Miss M M Goatley	Women's National Commission

CONTENTS

ITEM NO		PAGE
1	WELCOME	1
2	EXPERIENCE FROM 1975 AND 1980 WORLD CONFERENCES FOR WOMEN	2
3	PREPARATIONS FOR 1985 CONFERENCE	3
4	OPEN DISCUSSION - FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE CONSULTATIONS	5
5	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	14

1. WELCOME

.BARONESS GARDNER opened the meeting by welcoming all those present, who included women peers, representatives of many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and members of the press. She regretted the unavoidable absence of British women members of the European Parliament, which was in session, and of one woman MP whose Party Conference was in progress.

BARONESS YOUNG, Government Co-Chairman of the Women's National Commission (WNC) and leader of the United Kingdom delegation to the United Nations Women's World Conference in Copenhagen in 1980, congratulated Baroness Gardner on her enterprise in arranging this meeting with representatives of NGOs well before the End-of-Decade Conference in Nairobi planned for 1985. She was pleased to see a number of familiar faces from both the Copenhagen NGO Forum and the main conference, including Baroness Trumpington, the former United Kingdom representative on the UN Status of Women Commission, who had been a member of the United Kingdom delegation to Copenhagen.

Baroness Young recalled that one of the conclusions reached by all concerned after the Copenhagen Conference had been that preparations for an End-of-Decade Conference, to be effective, must begin well before 1985. It was therefore particularly encouraging to see NGOs already considering how they could best contribute to preparations for 1985. She was pleased, too, to see that both the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) were present: Baroness Lockwood, the Chairman, would later address the meeting.

Baroness Young explained that the Secretariat of the WNC had undertaken to provide NGOs both inside and outside the Commission with information on the progress of preparations and agenda for Nairobi and to advise organisations on projects to which they might like to contribute. The WNC would not, of course, attempt to act as a mouthpiece for NGOs, but rather to help them to speak for themselves in the most effective way. At a world conference it was, of course, almost impossible to devise measures which would benefit the women of all countries, since different countries have different needs. However, there were always areas of broad agreement in which unanimity could be achieved. This meeting provided a valuable opportunity for NGO representatives to discuss projects of common interest on which they could work together. She wished them every good fortune in the joint undertakings which she hoped would emerge from the meeting.

BARONESS GARDNER explained that invitations to the meeting had been sent to a very large number of women's organisations. Even so, there were undoubtedly other bodies, such as the Spastics Society and the Women's Cancer Control Campaign, which were concerned with the health, welfare and future of women and would wish to make a contribution to the Decade. She urged those present to seek the co-operation of any such organisations known to them.

2. EXPERIENCE FROM 1975 and 1980 WORLD CONFERENCES FOR WOMEN

DR SPENS, Overseas Development Administration, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, described herself as a survivor of two world conferences (Mexico 1975 and Copenhagen 1980). She recalled that many participants had emerged from these conferences somewhat battered, with mixed feelings of achievement and disappointment. This was true of representatives of other countries besides the United Kingdom. Copenhagen had left participants with a determination to make the End-of-Decade Conference the most successful of all. There were a number of practical lessons to be learned. Firstly, a world conference is not "a workshop writ large". We all want to share experiences and discuss common interests, but we must remember that such a conference is a meeting between Governments, and members of delegations have to speak to briefs prepared beforehand and in consultation with Government Departments. This puts some constraint on spontaneity, and generates a mass of papers, all of them translated into all the UN languages. The number of interpreters available (normally three teams) means that the main conference cannot be broken down into sub-groups as much as we would like.

Secondly, we cannot avoid the political dimension. This is a worry, but should not be too serious a one. There is a political dimension to women's affairs, both national and international, and it is easy, by referring to "our suffering sisters", to introduce any subject into a women's conference. Time should not be wasted seeking political solutions to questions which are being discussed by other United Nations bodies. The more vitality women bring to their conference, the less side-tracking there will be. As Lady Young had said, one clear lesson from Copenhagen was that the progress of the 1985 Conference would be determined at an early stage - probably as early as the meeting of the UN Status of Women Commission in February 1983.

Finally, Dr Spens mentioned the comforting fact that what happens during a conference is less important than what happens before and after. She herself had witnessed in Kenya the pre-Mexico preparations at village, district and national meetings discussing matters never discussed before by the women of Kenya. There had been real and vital discussions after Mexico too, by men as well as women. In general, Dr Spens would like to see more men involved in women's affairs, since the improvement of women's status is an enrichment of the whole of society.

Dr Spens hoped that NGOs would be able to make a full contribution to the Nairobi Conference. Any Conference reviewing and appraising the achievements of the UN Decade for Women calls for the time and energies of women throughout the country. Looking further ahead, 1985 might well provide the baseline for a further appraisal of the status of women at the end of this century.

3. PREPARATIONS FOR 1985 CONFERENCE

(a) NGO Contribution

BARONESS GARDNER emphasised that the aim of this meeting was to hear the views and wishes of the NGOs - it was their meeting. After Copenhagen a good deal had been heard of what people did not like about the conference - and it was always easier to criticise than to make a positive contribution. This time, NGOs must be given the opportunity to conduct their own studies and express their own views. Baroness Gardner touched on the important question of the timing of an NGO Forum posed by Mrs Shahani, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, on her recent visit to this country: do the NGOs want five minutes of glory at the World Conference or real influence? The former would be offered by a Forum at the same time and place as the main conference, the latter by a Forum held in advance. This question would be discussed later in the meeting.

Baroness Gardner reminded NGOs of the need to take a wide view and not pursue narrow sectional interests. There was no way that everyone could be satisfied by the outcome of a conference; indeed, some opposing views were represented at the present meeting. The Government, for their part, must take account of constructive work done by NGOs. As

Dr Spens had said, political items were bound to come up at the conference; we must try to have a balanced view to put forward. Some NGOs in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) would have an opportunity to address the main conference; others would speak through the NGO Forum.

(b) Evaluation of the situation of women in Britain at the end of the Decade in comparison with 1975

BARONESS LOCKWOOD, Chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), suggested that the EOC's best role would probably be that of a resource for NGOs. She summarised the kind of help the EOC could offer. All the broad areas of concern regarding the status of women listed on the form distributed at this meeting fell within the EOC's remit. For instance, the education, training and employment of women had been the subject of cases assisted by the EOC in courts of law in the UK and in the European Court of Justice. The Commission had a collection of relevant information which could be of help to NGOs. In addition, the EOC had worked in other ways in these and related areas - for instance in a research project undertaken jointly with the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) on obstacles to women's equality; and in other research projects commissioned by the EOC. The Commission also gave financial assistance to voluntary organisations applying for grants under Section 54 of the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA). Thus, the EOC could be a powerful resource in a number of areas.

Baroness Lockwood suggested that a useful starting point for research would be the Annual Report of the EOC. This contained an Appendix which attempted to monitor the relative position of men and women in British society each year. It also contained valuable statistics and lists of publications and visual aids available to all. The EOC's Information Centre at its Manchester HQ had a good collection of documents and materials and is linked to the Fawcett and other libraries through the Bibliofem system. The Information Centre is open to all: it is advisable to make an appointment beforehand.

Expanding her reference to Section 54 of the SDA, Baroness Lockwood explained that the EOC disposes of limited annual funds. Every year it receives more applications for financial assistance than it can meet. Applications for assistance with UN Decade projects will have to take

their turn with the rest. Applications are reviewed twice yearly - in October and April - by a Committee chaired by Jane Finlay, Deputy Chairman of the Commission. Criteria are strict. NGOs are encouraged to apply, but projects will have to meet the EOC's normal conditions.

Baroness Lockwood suggested that organisations wishing to apply for grants should write initially to Marion Sindell, Chief Executive of the EOC, Overseas House, Quay Street, Manchester M3 3HN.

4. OPEN DISCUSSION - FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE CONSULTATION

(a) Priority aims for the World Conference

BARONESS GARDNER invited those present to express their views. If clear-cut ideas emerged, she would be able to put these forward at the United Nations Status of Women Commission meeting in February 1983.

BERYL MUNSON, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), expressed her conviction that peace is necessary to improve the status of women. She wondered whether it would be useful for WILPF to make an input under various headings (eg the effect of militarism on education) rather than a single contribution to peace.

EDITH HEDGER, Commonwealth Countries League, referred to a resolution calling on the United Nations to mount a world disarmament campaign. Disarmament was important; and peace was the Cinderella theme of the Decade. The Secretariat of the UN Branch for the Advancement of Women was appointing experts to study the effect of peace on the status of women.

HILDA TREW, International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW), suggested a project concerned with women helping other women, showing tolerance of different cultural patterns, races and individual characteristics. A mission for women to help other women might form a contribution under the heading "Women in International Action".

ISABEL BEARDSALL, National Housewives' Association, made two specific recommendations:

- (i) a statutory requirement for boards of directors of public corporations to include at least one woman executive and one woman non-executive director. Women had to get into positions of power to get things done;
- (ii) parental leave (in place of maternity leave) to be paid by the state, not the employer, and taken by either father or mother, giving them a choice which of them would be employed outside the home.

BARONESS GARDNER noted that these proposals could form part of a contribution under the heading "Employment".

MAIDIE HART, Scottish Convention of Women (SCOW) and Scottish Joint Action Group for the Decade, told the meeting of special consultations already held in Scotland. She hoped that women in Scotland would be given an opportunity to bring forward specific Scottish priorities.

ELIZABETH CHARLES, National Free Church Women's Council, spoke of the special situation of Wales. She had been at Copenhagen and found it a great experience. We must seek the co-operation of the media, mount regional conferences and make up our minds to work hard for the Decade.

(b) NGO Forum

MARIANNE HASLEGRAVE, Co-Coordinator of NGO Activities at Copenhagen, told the meeting of her experience of Copenhagen and of what a Forum is. She traced the origins of the idea of Forums or Tribunes, open to all, attached to UN Conferences, since not everyone can be directly involved in such a conference. A Forum cannot take positions because it is not a representative meeting, but rather a networking. A year or so before Copenhagen, international NGOs had agreed to have a Forum, organised by international NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. About 34 such organisations formed a planning committee, and held consultations with people from both developed and developing countries. Local arrangements were made by Danish women under the Danish Council of Women. The Committee decided to hold a Forum and to have a Forum newspaper. Marianne had been a co-ordinator in New York, liaising with the UN Conference Secretariat.

The agenda for Copenhagen included the themes of the Decade - Equality, Development and Peace - and the sub-themes - Employment, Health and Education. It also included, at the suggestion of NGOs, racism and

sexism, the family, immigrants and refugees. The Forum staged 100 - 150 workshops a day: there were 1000 altogether, offering a tremendous choice of issues. On the other hand, the lack of resolutions at a Forum inevitably creates frustration. How can one get over this? Views can be channelled into the main conference via consultative NGOs. There was a contrast between the 20-ring circus of the Forum and the main conference of Government delegates working on wording and detail.

A Forum is very expensive. The language problem has to be tackled: at Copenhagen there was interpretation into Spanish, French and English. Communication was very important. At Copenhagen there were about 100 panellists and resource persons, but even these were not enough. Running the newspaper was expensive, but was important for communication between Forum and Conference. The women of the world will want some kind of Forum for Nairobi but have not yet decided exactly what kind. Could there be a Forum in Nairobi at the same time as the Conference? There had been 8022 women at the Copenhagen Forum. At a recent Energy Conference in Nairobi, with a Forum of 600, the limited accommodation available had been tested. Should the Forum be in advance? It would have more influence on delegates. (There had been an advance Forum for the recent UN Conference on Ageing). Marianne found this a difficult question to answer.

BERTHA BRADBY, United Nations Association (UNA) Women's Advisory Council, expressed her pleasure that NGOs were being consulted at this early stage and her gratitude to Baroness Gardner for arranging this meeting. In this country, the 50 or so organisations on the UNA Women's Advisory Council all worked at local level and were in a position to study education, employment and other subjects in their home towns. In the international field, Mrs Bradby referred to the IFBPW suggestion about women helping women and recalled how the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Women had originated at the Mexico Conference. This Fund, which helps with women's income-generating activities in the poorest countries, is still going well: the UK contributed £600,000 over three years. Might this meeting request the Government to support the Voluntary Fund? NGOs should support the Fund too, and thus show solidarity with less emancipated women. The UNA WAC was collecting contributions to the Fund.

CONSTANCE BLACKWELL, 300 Group, noted that each topic called for fresh research. To whom should information be sent?

ANN TOULMIN, Secretary WNC, said that the WNC Secretariat would collate the information provided by those who filled in the forms distributed to those attending this meeting.

BARONESS GARDNER stressed the importance of those present filling in a form and sending it to the WNC, even if they had spoken at this meeting. The resources offered by the EOC were a splendid asset, but the work of NGOs would be needed too, perhaps building on the EOC's work, to compare the beginning and end of the Decade.

GAIL CHESTER, A Woman's Place, recalled how amazing it had been at Copenhagen to meet thousands of women from all over the world. She would like to go to Nairobi but hadn't much money. Would NGOs be subsidised to attend? Would subsidies go to organisations which have funds? Regarding the time and place of a Forum, she would like it to be in Nairobi at the same time as the main conference. This would be the only opportunity for women from the developed world to meet women from the developing world. If the Forum were at a different time and place, participants would not meet the widest possible variety of women.

BARONESS GARDNER told the meeting that they should decide today whether they wanted a simultaneous or an advance Forum. No Government subsidies would be available to enable NGO representatives to attend the Forum.

SELMA JAMES, Housewives in Dialogue, spoke of her experience of the Forum at Copenhagen and noted that participants in the main Conference had been divided by the policies of their Governments. All at the Forum had agreed that women's work should be counted in a country's gross national product (GNP). Women formed two-thirds of the world's workforce, had 5 per cent of the world's income and one per cent of its assets. An input by the anti-war movement was needed on all subjects. Copenhagen had given women new power, but their joy had been tempered by frustration. The main conference at Nairobi must take women seriously. Asked by Baroness Gardner whether she wanted a simultaneous Forum, with its joy and frustration (which was inevitable, since Government delegations have to work to pre-set formulae), Selma said that she did.

MARGHERITA RENDEL, International Political Science Association, supported a Forum at the same time and the same place as the main Conference. She noted that at Copenhagen some official delegations had included non-governmental members who had acted as links between Conference and Forum. It is not true that nothing can be changed during a conference: links between Forum and Conference delegates are important.

AMY BUSH, National Association of Women Citizens, reminded the meeting of the need to be practical. Where in Nairobi could accommodation be found for 6,000-8,000 women? She recalled that some members of the United Kingdom delegation at Copenhagen, such as Baroness Trumpington, had had contacts with the Forum and had been available for consultation.

ETHEL CHIPCHASE, former Co-Chairman WNC and Secretary TUC Women's Advisory Committee, expressed her gratitude to Baroness Gardner for inviting her to this meeting. In 1975 and 1980 there had been nothing like this. The purpose of this meeting was not to conduct a post-mortem examination, but to ensure that the women of this country can make a good input in 1985. She suggested taxation as an additional item, with particular reference to the older woman and the pensioner. She recalled that 1975 (International Women's Year) had been a wonderful year, with a great upsurge of support and enthusiasm. The Government had produced a number of special booklets by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and other bodies. It would be a good idea to take these 1975 reports and see what had been achieved since. Miss Chipchase recalled the symbol of International Women's Year (IWY). Thousands of badges had been sold: she herself had sold 50,000 through the TUC.

BARONESS GARDNER paid tribute to Miss Chipchase's constructive contribution to IWY and to the welfare of women generally.

WENDY HOGG, United Kingdom Federation of Business and Professional Women, supported the idea that one organisation should co-ordinate the work done on a particular subject. The UKFBPW would be happy to help in this way.

MARY RABAGLIATI, ATD Fourth World, had been at Mexico and Copenhagen. It was important to see the effects of such conferences on women at all levels of society. We should study what is happening to the most disadvantaged women. ATD Fourth World would be glad to help.

DR RUTH HARRIS, Soroptimist International, favoured a concurrent Forum. She felt that a preliminary Forum would lack topicality. She noted that Soroptimist International had consultative status, as an international body, and would therefore concentrate on broad issues. Priorities varied in different countries: in developing countries health was particularly important. Peace, too, was important, and we should pursue it in practical ways, travelling and getting to know each other. Sanitation, nutrition, employment and education of women were other high priority subjects.

At this point, BARONESS GARDNER asked if all present favoured a simultaneous Forum.

CAROLINE WOODROFFE, Family Planning Association, believed that an advance Forum would have more effect on the Conference, though a simultaneous Forum would be a more exciting experience.

SUZANNE BLUMHARDT, OXFAM, thought that links between the Forum and the national delegation could ginger up the latter: many countries had had this experience at Copenhagen. The Press would be an important influence on public opinion, and a Forum is likely to pass unnoticed unless it is held in parallel with the main meeting. Government delegations do respond to Press reactions: a Forum slightly in advance of the main conference and overlapping with it might be the answer, preceded by preparatory work of the kind being discussed tonight.

MISS D BAILEY, Fawcett Society International Committee, thought that a Forum in the same place but immediately before the main conference might be ideal, perhaps with some Government representatives present. Baroness Gardner judged that official delegates would not be able to spare the time for an advance Forum in addition to a long conference.

An overwhelming majority of those present favoured a Forum at the same time and the same place as the main conference if this was physically possible.

MARY STOTT, Women's Action Group, agreed with the UKFBPW that it could be desirable for one organisation to provide co-ordination and stimulus

in a particular field. Women's Action Group was already doing this and would gladly take on a co-ordinating role (possibly with some EOC funding). We must make recommendations to Government some 6 months before the conference.

ALMA HILL, Spastics Society, spoke of her organisation's preventive work for women. Better health education could reduce the perinatal mortality rates in cities. Ethnic minorities have special problems, and members of other cultures and other faiths do not always take handicap as seriously as we do. She agreed with Dr Spens that an improvement in the situation of women was an enrichment of all society. In this country, it was important that married women should be eligible for the Invalid Care Allowance: the EOC had done good work in this field.

DILYS COSSEY, Family Planning Association, referred to world population growth as a priority area which is already on the agenda of many world conferences. The Decade offered an ideal opportunity to make women's views known.

JANE CHOLMELEY, Women in Publishing, viewed violence and the threat of violence against women as another high priority. Baroness Gardner noted that this subject had been raised at the last meeting of the UN Status of Women Commission, but that Mrs Shahani, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, had commented that this subject "was only of interest to the Western world".

MRS D WILSON-SMILLIE, Commonwealth Secretariat, reported that the issue of violence is important for the women of the Commonwealth: she urged that it be on the Nairobi agenda.

CAROLE SHERRIFF, TUC Women's Advisory Committee, made a special plea for high priority to be given to women's employment, education and training, both in the United Kingdom and internationally. No country has yet solved the problems of job segregation and low pay.

ANNE CADBURY, YWCA, reported that the YWCA has done research on the unemployment of girls and women. She suggested that WNC members be invited to help the WNC Secretariat with the collation of information received from NGOs.

KATH DAVIES, Scottish Convention of Women and Women in Media, Scotland, asked about the timetable for submitting opinions. She saw violence and the stereotyped images of women in the media as priority subjects. She asked that advance information about the conference be distributed in a short succinct format. On timing, Kath recalled that although Scottish preparations for the Mid-Decade Conference of 1980 had began in 1977, time had proved too short and the Scottish Plan of Action had not been completed until 1981.

In reply, BARONESS GARDNER said that on general issues likely to be discussed at the meeting of the UN Status of Women Commission in February 1983, information about NGO views should be sent to the WNC by the end of December 1982. Detailed reports for consideration before the End-of-Decade Conference should be submitted by the end of 1984. The WNC Secretariat was acting as a post box, but anyone who wished could write direct to Baroness Gardner herself, at the House of Lords. Everything sent to either address would be considered, and all reports would be seen by the relevant Government Departments. The briefing material for the United Kingdom delegation to the Conference would be prepared by a number of different departments.

BERYL MUNSON, WILPF, asked if NGOs would receive a list of groups working on Decade projects, and advice about whom to write to. Baroness Gardner explained that all information sent in on forms would be collated and disseminated.

MRS JANE FINLAY, Deputy Chairman EOC, expressed satisfaction that this meeting was full of ideas and enthusiasm. As a former Co-Chairman of the WNC, she believed that it was important for the small WNC Secretariat to receive some extra staff to help with additional duties connected with the Decade.

EDITH HEDGER, CCL, expressed willingness to help with office work.

LAUREL CASINADER, International Alliance of Women, had been at Mexico City and Copenhagen. She felt that the Copenhagen Forum had discussed too many subjects on the same day, making choice difficult. Would it be possible to confine discussion to one subject each day? The effect of technology on the lives of women in all countries was an important subject for study. She urged that people from the Forum be given a chance to contribute to the discussions at the main Conference: at

Copenhagen NGO representatives had not addressed the main Conference until the very end. Baroness Gardner again stressed the importance of influencing the delegation before the Conference.

BARONESS GARDNER spoke of the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which the United Kingdom had signed, but had not ratified. Would the meeting like her to write to the Foreign Secretary on their behalf calling for ratification by the United Kingdom as soon as possible? Those present enthusiastically supported this proposal.

MRS GEORGINA ASHWORTH, Decade Network, spoke of the work done by the Network in exchanging and pooling ideas. She mentioned a number of priority issues: the inclusion of the value of household labour in GNP; violence; the media, including their portrayal of women; and Government strategies to advance women (with positive examples).

MRS NANCY CATCHPOLE, British Federation of University Women, noted that the meeting had spoken of a long list of priorities, some of them very broad. She suggested some lines of approach within these broad fields. We should look back and see how far we had come since 1975. We should seek to pinpoint particular matters needing top priority, to get an idea of where the real problems are. This would make it possible to state what we think should be done in a particular field. The BFUW would be happy to assume a co-ordinating role.

BARONESS GARDNER suggested that at a later stage it might be possible to arrange for a member of the Government Department responsible to meet the Working Group studying a particular subject. We must make an input of ideas first. NGOs should not feel that the Government were running them; the aim was to formulate what the NGOs felt was important.

MRS TARA KOTHARI, UK Asian Women's Conference, spoke of the special needs of Asian women. She called for laws to be made simple so that they could be understood by people whose mother tongue was not English. The main problems of Asian women in employment were those of language and unskilled labour; they needed to be taught the English language and skills. The UN Conference should discuss the protection of women and children in troubled places like Beirut. Women should press for changes in the immigration and nationality laws. Women must press for

peace. Mrs Kothari also believed that the law on legitimacy should be changed. Baroness Gardner believed that with the new shortened birth certificate the stigma of illegitimacy had almost disappeared.

MRS PEMBERTON, Associated Country Women of the World, outlined the special position of international organisations like her own. She stressed the need for international recommendations to be related to national ones, and drew attention to the special conference themes put forward by ACWW: equality of opportunity and rural development (including rural communications and media, and women as entrepreneurs).

In preparing to close the meeting, BARONESS GARDNER urged those present to write to her about anything of concern to them - particularly if they had not had an opportunity to express their views fully during the meeting. She asked if people would like another meeting on these lines after the meeting of the UN Status of Women Commission in February 1983: the idea was welcomed by all.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

JULIA CLARKE, Commonwealth Institute, drew attention to a Commonwealth Institute/UNICEF exhibition "Women: the 25-Hour Day".

DEBORAH AINGER, Fawcett Society and IPPF, spoke of the special problem of tourism and prostitution.

BARONESS GARDNER concluded that it had been a good meeting which left a lot to think about. She urged NGOs to get thinking and working, and supported Ethel Chipchase's suggestion that 1975 documents should be taken as a baseline for comparison, to see what had and had not happened since 1975.

The meeting rose at 7.30 pm.

Cabinet Office
London SW1

3 November 1982



House of Lords · Westminster

The Baroness Gardner of Parkes

UN 2
Prime Minister:

JB

ms

12/8.

UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN (1976-85)

As you may know I succeeded Lady Trumpington earlier this year as the United Kingdom Representative on the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In this capacity I led the British delegation at a meeting of the Commission in Vienna last February/March.

In Mexico in 1975 the World Conference for the International Women's Year proposed the UN Decade for Women. In 1980 the Women's World Conference in Copenhagen reviewed the Decade for Women at its mid-term point.

Now the preparations are in hand for the 1985 end-of-Decade World Conference in Nairobi. I consider it particularly important that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should have the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the preparations for the 1985 Conference.

My experience of the Commission's recent meeting has made clear to me that if we are to attempt to influence the conference's agenda we need to consider without delay what the 1985 Conference should aim to achieve and what areas of women's interests might usefully be discussed. The first preparatory meeting for the Conference will be held in Vienna in the Spring of next year. The UK must then be ready to take a full part in these discussions, and so we must begin to coordinate our views now.

I therefore propose to hold a meeting of interested parties in a Committee Room at the House of Lords at 5.00 pm on Thursday, 14 October 1982. I should be grateful if you would indicate by returning the attached slip, whether you will be represented at this meeting.

One of the first things to be done, is to decide what line the UK would wish to take as to the timing of the Nairobi NGO Forum. Representatives from some NGOs have strongly supported a concurrent meeting of the NGOs and the governmental World Conference in Nairobi, as in Copenhagen. Others have equally strongly requested the NGO Forum 3 to 6 months in advance of the Conference. I am anxious to have your views on this.

/If



House of Lords · Westminster

If you are unable to come your written comments would be most welcome. These should be sent to the Women's National Commission who are acting as the focal point for co-ordination in the UK. A note on their role is attached.

I look forward to seeing you on October 4.

Trixie Gardner

Circulation:

The Prime Minister
The Leader and Women Members of the House of Lords
Women MPs
Women MEPs
Non-Governmental Organisations
Members of the Women's National Commission
Equal Opportunities Commission
Representatives of the Press

(Name and organization).....

~~Will~~/will not be attending the meeting in the House of Lords

at 5pm on Thursday 14 October.



Women's National Commission

An Advisory Committee to Her Majesty's Government

Government Offices, Great George Street, London SW1P 3AQ

Telephone 01-233 4208

Co-Chairmen:

The Rt. Hon. Baroness Young
Miss Catrin M. Williams, FRCS

Secretary: *Ann Toulmin*

Ann Toulmin

Ann Toulmin
WNC(82) 35

THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: PREPARATIONS FOR END-OF-DECADE CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI IN 1985

Note by the Secretary, WNC

It has been decided that the Women's National Commission (WNC) will act as a focal point of contact between Government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for the rest of the UN Decade for Women (including the End-of-Decade Conference) and as a channel for views between the two. This note recalls the two earlier UN World Conferences which have marked the Decade and suggests ways in which NGO resources can be mobilised to make a full contribution to the End-of-Decade Conference in 1985.

2. Readers will recall that International Women's Year (1975) was marked by a UN World Conference in Mexico City in June-July 1975. This Conference produced a World Plan of Action which reviewed the needs and rights of women world-wide in the light of the commitment to human rights in the UN Charter. The main themes set for the UN Decade for Women which followed were Equality, Development and Peace.

3. The World Conference of the UN Decade for Women held in Copenhagen in July 1980 (the Mid-Decade Conference) reviewed national and international progress in implementing the World Plan of Action during the first half of the Decade (1976-80) and set targets for the second half of the Decade (1981-85). It adopted as sub-themes Employment, Health and Education. The Conference also adopted over 40 Resolutions, many of them proposed by NGOs, relating to specific or local problems and hardships affecting women.

4. It will be the task of the End-of-Decade Conference to review progress since 1980 in implementing the Programme of Action and to establish guidelines for continuing action for women by the UN and member countries. It will, like its predecessors, be an inter-governmental conference at which the delegates will represent the Governments of UN member countries. However, the UN Secretary-General has emphasised the important part which NGOs can play in the implementation and monitoring of the aims of the Decade.

5. NGO participation at Mexico City and Copenhagen took the form of a simultaneous Tribune of NGOs (at Mexico City) and NGO Forum (at Copenhagen). Representatives of a number of international NGOs in consultative status with the UN attended the main conferences as observers, and some of them were able to address plenary sessions of the conferences.

6. The Copenhagen experience made clear the importance of NGOs making their views known to Governments well in advance. It will be much easier for Government Departments to brief delegates to Nairobi well and comprehensively if they are aware of the views of women and NGOs in the country generally. It is to study how best to make these views known that Baroness Gardner is convening a meeting of NGO representatives on 14 October 1982.

7. The Agenda for Nairobi has not yet been prepared. We hope that it will not contain too many politically controversial items of the kind which distorted the Copenhagen Conference by turning many of its sessions into international political debates rather than constructive discussions of the situation of women in the world today. However, even without an Agenda, we can be sure that much of the Conference will be devoted to the objectives of the Copenhagen Programme of Action. These include:

Employment

Full and equal opportunities, equal pay and equal educational opportunities.

Health

Increased participation of women and girls in policy decisions concerning health; the equitable urban and rural distribution of health care; collection of data on mortality and morbidity among women; improved hygiene; family planning.

Education

Equal access to educational and training opportunities at all levels for girls and women; career guidance and general educational provisions free from sex stereotyping.

International

Technical co-operation, training and advisory services; research and data collection; dissemination of information and experience.

We plan to distribute a fuller summary of the Programme of Action at Lady Gardner's meeting on 14 October.

8. One profitable way in which NGOs might prepare for Nairobi would be by monitoring progress in the United Kingdom since 1980 in certain selected fields relating to the themes and sub-themes of the Decade. Some NGOs are already conducting studies and projects on Decade-related subjects. Would individual organisations volunteer to co-ordinate work on specific projects of particular interest to them? Research and fact-finding projects at both national and local level could be a valuable contribution to the monitoring of progress made since 1980. Clearly it will be best if NGO views are presented to Government Departments in co-ordinated form. The WNC will be happy to advise NGOs about the Government Departments to which they should convey their views on particular subjects, and to give general advice. We should discuss possible subjects of study at Lady Gardner's meeting.

9. Those who wish to study the progress of the Decade in greater detail may wish to see the following reports by the UN Secretary-General:

Activities for the Advancement of Women: UN Decade for Women:
Equality, Development and Peace (E/1981/32, 13 April 1981)

World Conference of the UN Decade for Women (A/36/564, 13 October 1981)

Review and Appraisal of Progress made at the National Level
(E/CN.6/1982/2, 14 January 1982)

Preparations for the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the
Achievements of the UN Decade for Women (E/CN.6/1982, 12 February 1982).

These documents may be obtained from the UN London Information Centre,
14-15 Stratford Place, London W1N 9AF.

ANN TOULMIN
Secretary WNC

Cabinet Office
London SW1

6 August 1982

Earl
M.
de Press Office

12 August 1980

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 8 August, reporting the efforts of our delegation to the UN Decade for Women Conference to raise the case of Ida Nudel.

She is most grateful that the delegation has found a way of doing this effectively. She has commented that she hopes that the press are aware of this.

M. A. PATTISON

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

98



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 August 1980

Prime Minister

MAD 11/8

Dear Mr. Mitter,

You wrote to us on 8 and 10 July about the Prime Minister's wish that our delegation at the United Nations Decade for Women Conference last month should raise the case of Ida Nudel. The Prime Minister asked to be informed after the Conference of what had been done.

The British delegate in the second committee of the Conference raised the case of Ida Nudel, along with those of two other Soviet women, on 28 July, in the context of a Polish draft resolution on the role of women in preparing societies for life in peace. I enclose a copy of the British delegate's statement, a summary of which was made available in a press release by our Embassy in Copenhagen immediately afterwards.

Yours truly

(P Lever)

*I am most grateful
I trust the press
know.*

M Pattison Esq
10 Downing Street

Ke

UN CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

STATEMENT MADE IN COMMITTEE 2 ON DRAFT RESOLUTION
ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PREPARATION OF SOCIETIES
FOR LIFE IN PEACE (C2/L9 Rev 1) ON MONDAY, 28 JULY

I have asked for the floor in order to explain my delegation's position and vote on the draft resolution C2/L9 Rev 1, tabled by Poland and a number of other delegations. The United Kingdom continues to uphold the principles elaborated in GA Resolution 33/73. My delegation has, however, a number of difficulties with this draft before us. You will not wish me to dwell on each in detail at this point in our proceedings, given the constraints of time under which we are working. They include references to documents the UK government cannot endorse. They include quite a few points of phraseology, some of which have been somewhat improved in the text we have before us in L9 Rev 1. They include - and this is the very major fault in my delegation's view - a wrong emphasis throughout the draft. To put it simply, in our view the draft is strong on peace but weak on freedom, strong on the duties of states but weak on the position of the individual. I think especially of the sections on the media, information and education. I am thinking of the little weight given to basic human rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of movement. That these freedoms are relevant to - indeed, essential for - "the preparation of societies for life in peace" might be taken as self-evident. But, unfortunately, it cannot be so taken. Not while there are in the world well-documented cases of suppression of precisely these rights. A case, for example, of a woman geologist who for almost 10 years has fought for human rights in her country, only to be repeatedly imprisoned and, now, sentenced to internal exile. Another case of a woman economist, a fighter for prisoners of conscience and for the end of persecution of Jewish activity, who has sought for nine years simply to leave her country, a request which has led to persecution and abuse of a kind which has seriously undermined her health. Exiled for 4 years, 6,000 miles from her home, she lives in the most primitive conditions. She is alone, preferring this to the alternative of sharing accommodation with male criminals. There are well-founded reasons to fear for the life of this brave woman who seeks freedom to leave a society which clearly does not share her values in favour of one which does. A third case is that of a nun, a religious activist, who for over 30 years has been harassed for such activities as making and selling for the benefit of nuns and needy Christians, belts embroidered with words from one of the Psalms. She has been sentenced to an indefinite term in a special psychiatric hospital, under which treatment her health has seriously deteriorated. Madam Chairman, I could mention others, but will leave the cases of Malva Landa, of Ida Nudel and of Sister Valeriya Makeeva - all citizens of the Soviet Union - to speak for themselves and to explain why my delegation is unable to support the draft resolution before us.

W.N.

BY BAG

F C O 061025Z

na

MA

RESTRICTED

TO CERTAIN MISSIONS TELNO GUIDANCE 85 OF 6 AUGUST

WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN:
COPENHAGEN 14-30 JULY 1980

1. The Conference ended with the adoption by majority vote of a Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade. It was regrettable that this central conference document could not be adopted by consensus, due to undue politicization. Voting was 94 in favour, 4 against (Israel, US, Canada, Australia) and 22 abstentions (EC, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Austria, Switzerland, Holy See, Peru, Paraguay, Chile, Guatemala and Thailand).

LINE TO TAKE

UK Attitude to Outcome of the Conference

2. We very much regret that it was not possible to reach a consensus. We, together with many other countries, worked hard and constructively both in the preparations for the Conference and at the meeting itself with a view to agreeing a Programme of Action which would be relevant to the needs of women throughout the world.

3. Unfortunately the Programme was made unacceptable through the inclusion of certain political elements extraneous to the purpose of the Conference: notably references to Zionism and the role and status of the PLO.

UK Attitude to the Second Half of the Decade

4. Although we and the Nine had to abstain on the Programme as a whole, a large part of it is acceptable to us. It was for this reason that the Nine, in the Presidency's explanation of vote, undertook to abide by the national and international policies in the Programme of Action that were genuinely relevant to women.

BACKGROUND (to be drawn on as appropriate)

5. The World Conference of International Women's Year took place in 1975 in Mexico City and a ten year World Plan of Action was adopted. In 1975 the General Assembly proclaimed 1976-1985 as the UN Decade for Women with the themes equality, development and peace. It called for a Mid-Decade Conference to be held in 1980 to review and evaluate the progress made in the first half of the Decade and to approve a Programme of Action for the second half based on the sub-themes of the Decade: employment, education and health.

6. The UK delegation at Copenhagen was led by Baroness Young, Minister of State in the Department of Education and Science, with Dame Anne Warburton, British Ambassador to Denmark, as Deputy Leader. Other senior members of the delegation included Baroness Trumpington, the UK representative on the Status of Women Commission, and Baroness Lockwood, Chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission.
7. The Conference turned out to be unwieldy, messy and politicised. The revised Programme of Action failed to secure the consensus support for which Western delegations had hoped because the Arab States, actively supported by radical non-aligned countries and the USSR, insisted on using their block vote to insert pro-PLO and, especially, anti-Zionist references of a kind which were unacceptable to most Western countries. Although many Third World countries, especially from Africa and Latin America, disliked this turn of events, they were unable or unwilling to bring sufficient pressure to bear in order to prevent it. The device used at the Mexico Conference of putting contentious political matter in a separate declaration proved unacceptable in Copenhagen.
8. In contrast to the Arabs, the African group did not try to insert political references unacceptable to the West into the Programme of Action but channelled them into separate resolutions where differing opinions could be expressed in votes.
9. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. There was a signing ceremony for the Convention at the Conference: UK and Ireland were the only members of the Nine who did not sign. In answer to any questions you may say:
- a) UK voted for the Convention at the 1979 General Assembly, while expressing concern at the hurried way this legal instrument had been formulated and adopted.
 - b) Some difficulties still remain but we are examining the Convention with a view to signature and ratification.
 - c) It is our policy not to sign unless we intend to ratify, and we were unable to take a decision on signature in time for the Copenhagen Conference.

CARRINGTON

FCO/WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

OID

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

GUIDANCE

CONFIDENTIAL

SAVING TELEGRAM

BY BAG

FROM COPENHAGEN

CONFIDENTIAL

TO FCO TELNO 13 SAVING OF 1 AUGUST INFO SAVING TO UKMIS NEWYORK AND
UKMIS GENEVA

242/1

UN WORLD CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN: ROUND-UP

1. The Conference - which could be called the PLO's Conference - turned out as expected to be unwieldy, messy and politicised. Although some good work was done in the Committees, the revised Programme of Action disappointingly failed to secure the consensus support for which Western delegations, at least, had hoped. This was solely because the Arab states, actively supported by radical non-aligned countries and the USSR, insisted on using their block vote to insert pro-PLO and, especially, anti-Zionist references - the latter equating Zionism with racism, neo-colonialism etc - unacceptable to Western countries in general and most especially to the US. Although many Third World countries, especially from Africa and Latin America, disliked this turn of events, they were unable or unwilling to bring sufficient pressure to bear to prevent it. Perhaps they did not altogether share the Western view that consensus was essential if the Programme of Action was to benefit them. Still, probably only the Arabs were really satisfied by the outcome.

2. The 1975 Mexico Conference may have been organisationally messier but it did reach consensus on a Programme of Action. However, the Mexico device of putting contentious political matter in a separate declaration proved unacceptable in Copenhagen, despite sustained efforts up to the last - both by groups of delegates and by the Danish President of the Conference, Mrs Lise Østergaard. Arab demands simply increased and at the end of the day it looked as though professions of willingness to negotiate may have been intended mostly to string the West along. Encouraged, inevitably, by the glare of publicity focused on the PLO delegation (including the notorious Leila Khaled), the Arabs forced a vote on the pro-PLO passage in Committee at the end of the second week of the Conference. With that success under their belt, it would have taken remarkable self-restraint for the Arabs to resist going also for a success on anti-Zionism. This had all along been most strenuously opposed by Israel and the US and in the event the price of Arab victory was that the Programme of Action as a whole - on which there could otherwise have been consensus - was adopted with four votes against and twenty two abstentions (my telno 196).

3. In contrast to the Arabs, the African group did not try to insert political references unacceptable to the West into the text of the Programme of Action. Such references were incorporated in separate resolutions, where differing opinions could be expressed in votes.

/4.

CONFIDENTIAL

4. Apart from the political polemics, the main thrust of the Third World as a whole at the Conference was to introduce their concepts on international economic relations, especially in connection with the new international economic order and the new international development strategy. Spearheaded by India as the leader of the G77, they succeeded in expanding these concepts throughout the draft programme submitted by the Prepcom, but in many cases the references became more acceptable in negotiation. The national and international sections of the Programme of Action do contain much substance and some of the 60 or so resolutions adopted on a broad range of subjects also deal with a number of practical matters, although others were blatantly political and some rather bizarre (texts and, where appropriate, voting slips available in FCO).
5. The USSR and other East Europeans stirred the pot actively against the West - their large delegation worked hard at their contacts throughout the Conference, partly in close support of the Arabs (a Russian even visibly directed the Senegalese efforts in the last session to get anti-Zionism into the Programme of Action). They worked equally hard and with some success to insert their tendentious language on peace, disarmament, détente etc into the Programme of Action, although some of these references were toned down in negotiation. The blandness of Communist propaganda for their system added to the satisfaction in executing our instructions to raise publicly certain human rights cases in the Soviet Union. This exercise caught them unawares and there was never any real come-back, so we avoided any charge of ourselves introducing politics while earning credit both with friendly delegations and with pro-Zionist NGOs (my telno 190 reports).
6. Probably all Western delegations came to the Conference genuinely seeking a generally acceptable Programme of Action making practical recommendations of direct relevance to the women of the world and at the same time reflecting genuine preoccupations of other groups. Most coordination was carried out in the "like-minded" group, under efficient Dutch chairmanship. The Nine met separately, as necessary to seek common positions and to prepare joint statements, but Luxembourg resources were severely stretched. Many Western delegations included advocates of women's rights and/or feminists, who tended to press their enthusiasms beyond official briefs (a real problem particularly for the Australian, New Zealand and Dutch delegations). These delegates were necessarily the most disillusioned by the outcome and their final failure to rally their "sisters" in Third World delegations to the common cause.
7. In considering the performance of individual delegations, a few stand out. The US fielded a large and highly political delegation but it lacked unity and was surprisingly ineffective, partly because much energy went on internal coordination. Japan also had a vast team for little apparent reason but was noticeable for going all the way with the Arabs against Israel. Contrariwise, Australia and the Netherlands toughened their opposition to the Arabs as the crunch approached, although the Dutch stayed with the agreed Community position. Some EC delegates questioned whether many more common positions on Middle East issues would prove possible. The Indian delegation was exceedingly active in support
/of

of the PLO and similar causes: the leader of the Philippine delegation commented privately that ASEAN countries no longer regard India as non-aligned. Among the wilder voices were those of St Lucia and Grenada, but some other Caribbean delegations, as well as some African and Asians, spoke in private with considerable moderation and even sometimes distanced themselves from the radicals in public, giving perhaps some hope of growing common sense for the future. (The leader of the Cameroon delegation told us that her (half-successful) move to amend a resolution condemning discrimination based on racism by adding condemnation of sexist governments and all discrimination other than apartheid was aimed at the Ayatollah and reflected indignation at the position of women in Arab delegations.) Zimbabwe's presence for the first time at a UN conference, led by Mrs Sally Mugabe, attracted much attention during the general debate stage: the tone they took was disappointingly though unsurprisingly militant. Baroness Trumpington is kindly preparing a supplementary report on the General Debate, in which the Minister of State's speech on the second day was well timed; the more serious delegations showed encouraging interest in it.

8. The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen elected to the various Committees were a pretty poor lot, ranging from total incompetence (India) through deviousness (Senegal) to efficient partisanship (Bulgaria). The Danish President of the Conference mustered unflinching patience and managed to be optimistic almost to the end: but one wished for more firmness, for example in denying the PLO so many occasions to speak, and she has come under strong criticism from opposition MPs on her delegation for going as far as she did in negotiating with the Arabs. The Secretariat were not impressive, even allowing for difficulties of working in ad hoc accommodation. Returning to the New York-based UN world after nearly 20 years, I was depressed to find the Secretariat at least as partisan as their UNCTAD colleagues; indeed, a Secretariat member on the podium was seen clapping a PLO success. The Secretariat perhaps under-estimated in some respects the facilities they asked the Danes to provide in the Conference Centre, notably the number of seats at and behind each delegation desk.

9. On the political side, the non-event was Cambodian credentials, on which the Soviet assessment was clearly that they could not get much support this time round. Nor was there any stir at all over Afghanistan. To the distress of the Pakistan delegation, even their draft resolution on refugees in Asia was taken over by the Arabs.

10. The military coup in Bolivia was a three-day wonder in the Conference, heightened by unfortunate roughness by security officers with demonstrators who advanced on the Bella Center from the alternative Forum. The Bolivian delegation were accorded an emotional hearing in Plenary - in fact, their credentials were not withdrawn and they saw the Conference out. The President thought it necessary to receive a delegation opposing the new Bolivian regime, one of whom unexpectedly turned out to be a Northern Ireland militant who also stirred up discussion at the Forum about the "dirty protest" women prisoners. The only other intrusion of Northern Ireland issues was a one-woman interruption of the Irish Minister's Plenary speech.

/11.

11. The Forum itself attracted more than 8,000 participants for a period of 10 days. Inevitably the organisation was pretty chaotic, but among the welter of subjects discussed was something for everyone and some, at least, of the talk and work was serious and apparently helpful to the participants, eg discussions among women from different South Pacific countries and territories. Helped by a surprisingly well produced daily paper and reasonable proximity, the Forum did do something to ginger up the Conference.

12. In accordance with instructions, the UK delegation maintained a relatively discreet though practical and, I think, useful role at the Conference, especially in behind the scenes contacts and within the like-minded Western group. Others will, I think, have seen us as seeking to play a quietly positive part in trying to help to get things moving and to support the search for consensus based on sensible work. Thanks to good talent-spotting in New York, the Minister of State's dinner brought together key constructively-minded delegates from all groups for useful talk early in the Conference in a way no other gathering did and we were warmly thanked by the Secretary-General and the President for contributing to a good initial atmosphere. I think the composition of the delegation turned out just about right for what we had to do at this Conference.

13. British NGOs may regard our public profile as too low. Their representatives - and many delegates - were certainly critical that we were not ready to sign the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which almost all Western countries and all the Nine except Ireland have now signed. The NGO representatives here regarded our attitude as excessively legalistic: if we are subsequently going to sign, we certainly gave away a major PR point by not doing so during this Conference. Without going so far as to sign without intending to ratify, would it not be worth lowering our standard from 100 to, say, 90% certainty of ratification? Timing is, optically, also of the essence. There was undoubtedly also some feeling that we indulged in nit-picking on substance which partly obscured our positive spirit. We were nick-named the "where appropriate" delegation, from the frequency of our interpolation of that caveat. On the plus side, I hope the NGO representatives - with whom we kept in touch as much as we could - did recognise that we were trying to stick to substance and avoid politicisation of the Conference. I am sure it will have helped with them that we were authorised to co-sponsor two of the more practical resolutions. And the Soviet human rights exercise also earned us credit with some of them. As to the media, after the flurry of the first few days there were only local British representatives here and I believe that such notice as the Conference got in Britain did not criticise the UK's part in it.

14. At the outset of this Conference of ¹⁴⁵ ~~about 140~~ delegations - numbering ~~more than~~ ^{almost} 10 times as many delegates, relatively few of whom knew each other or had even previously participated in such an international gathering - it seemed doubtful that in 2½ weeks any coherence at all could be created. The regional group system in fact worked poorly, partly for policy reasons and partly on technical grounds such as accidents of chairmanship and shortage of interpretation for group coordination. It is therefore almost a surprise that, although the political issues described /above

CONFIDENTIAL

above prevented consensus and inevitably coloured perceptions of the outcome of the Conference, the final Programme of Action which emerged - the product of much hard work and negotiation before the Conference and in its Committees - is largely acceptable to us and even an improvement on the original draft. It was for this reason that the delegations of the European Community, in their explanation of vote, undertook to abide by the national and international policies genuinely relevant to women indicated in the programme, even though they had ultimately to abstain on it as a whole. Perhaps the head of the Ghanaian delegation, seen at the airport on departure, had it right when she said: "The Conference had been so well prepared that we had time to talk a lot of nonsense and still to come away with a useful result".

15. If there is a further Conference at the end of the Decade - and, whatever reservations the West and even East Europeans have about its value, my hunch is that it will be irresistible - then it should be in a developing country. Despite the stout efforts of the Danes and the hospitality they offered, high-cost Copenhagen inevitably presented difficulties to many delegates. Moreover, the realisation of prior fears that the Arabs would take-over the Conference meant that the Danish initiative in hosting the Conference back-fired for them. The only bid so far made for 1985 is from Kenya, pressing Nairobi's claims hard. We could do worse.

Advance to UN Department and P/S to M/S, DES.

WARBURTON

[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]
[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

LIMITED
UND
ECD (E)
ERD
NENAD
NAD
SAFD
NEWS D

LEGAL ADVISERS
PS
PS/LPS
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
SIRE YOUNG
LORD NG LENNOX
MR JC MOBERLY

COPIES TO
PS/LADY YOUNG
DEPT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
MR B THOMAS NGA 3 DIVISION
DEPT OF EMPLOYMENT
MR I DUNCAN
SCIENCE AND INTERN BRANCH
DEPT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
MR PJ BURTON
BILAT, AID AND RURAL DEV DIVISION
DDA
MR J PARKER
IRD D+SS.

UN Decade for Women
Conference July 1980



File

Ida Nudel

DEG

Subject copy in GIR.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 July 1980

I wrote to you on 8 July about the Prime Minister's wishes on the handling of the Ida Nudel case during the United Nations Decade for Women Conference later in the month.

The Prime Minister has asked to be informed after the Conference of what the delegation have managed to do.

M. A. PATTISON

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

VLS

TMP



Subject copy in G/R.
(Nat. Council for Soviet Jewry
Mr. Moonman etc)

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 July 1980

Dear Paul

We spoke about representations to the Prime Minister over Ida Nudel. in G/R.

As I told you, the Prime Minister has now written to two correspondents, making it clear that she expects our delegation to the United Nations Decade for Women Conference to raise the matter, although she is content to leave to the delegation the choice of how to achieve this.

I would be grateful if you could ensure that the delegation is appropriately briefed. I enclose copies of the two letters of exchange in question.

Yours ever

Mike Paterson

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SS



IT8.7/2-1993
2009:02

Image
Access

IT-8 Target

Printed on Kodak Professional Paper
Charge: R090212