

## Short report on the CEDAW Workshop held in Anguilla from 27 – 29 October 2010 (by Julene Banks)

This workshop was held in the context of the project to build human rights capacity in the British Overseas Territories. The workshop had four objectives:

- To examine how CEDAW operates in practice, and to hear the experience of BVI and TCI in implementing CEDAW;
- To review co-operation with the UK in reporting on CEDAW (the next report being due in 2011);
- To examine any technical obstacles to extending CEDAW to the four Caribbean territories that have yet to extend – Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Montserrat
- To draw up outline plans for working on CEDAW in each territory over the next three years.

The workshop was assisted by expert advisers from UNIFEM (Roberta Clarke and Glenda Simms), and Celia Reed, head of the international team in the UK's Government Equalities Office.

The first day, chaired by Elizabeth Marsh of the Commonwealth Foundation, focussed on the operation of CEDAW, its contribution to protecting the human rights of women, and the experience of those territories that have already accepted extension, BVI and TCI. Roberts Clarke, Director of the Caribbean UNIFEM Office, opened with a brief history of the development of CEDAW, how the rights of women are being taken more seriously at the UN, are a key element of the MDGs, and now frame the dialogue for protecting and promoting the human rights of women internationally and domestically. There was a general discussion about the situation of women in the Caribbean, especially economic, social and cultural, and how gender perceptions might be changed. In the evening, the Governor hosted a reception at Government House for participants, members of the Government and other dignitaries.

The second day, chaired by Mrs Justice Charles-Etta Simmons of the Bermuda Supreme Court, focussed on the situation of the territories that have not yet extended as regards the legislative, social and economic situation of women and the state of gender equality. Presentations were made on behalf of public officials and civil society from Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands and Montserrat. This was followed by a session led by Glenda Simms and Celia Reed on the requirements for implementation of CEDAW, as regards legislation, policies, education, politics, resources and guidance, examining the various articles.

The third day, chaired by Dawn Richardson of the Anguilla Attorney-General's chambers, focussed on the role of the UK in reporting on CEDAW, including its cooperation with the OTs, and how this could be improved. This session was led by Celia Reed of the UK GEO. She examined what would be required of territories that had not yet extended, how priorities could be determined, and what support could be provided for implementation work in the OTs. The final session, led by Glenda Simms of UNIFEM and Selina Goulbourne of the Commonwealth Legal Education Association examined the basic requirements that each territory would need to meet in order to ratify. They concluded that all the territories complied with these. There was discussion on what appeared to be differences in treatment of the OTs by the FCO when it came to accepting or refusing their bids to extend CEDAW. Finally, each of the participating territories set out a skeleton plan for work they

proposed to undertake to implement CEDAW during the next three years, on the assumption that all those territories that had not yet done so would extend CEDAW before too much longer.

There was very lively discussion during each session and the evaluations by participants revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the workshop, with some regret that so few men had participated in it. All participants had learned from each other and expressed a commitment to taking forward the issues discussed. The Anguillian hosts were congratulated on the excellence of their organisation.

Annexes:

1. Welcome message from the UK Equalities Minister and Home Secretary
2. List of participants
3. Outline plans of each territory

**Message of support to the CEDAW workshop – to be read out on behalf of the UK Minister for Women and Equalities – Theresa May**

I have asked Celia Reed, from the UK Government Equalities Office to deliver this message of goodwill and encouragement on my behalf since existing diary commitments have prevented me from doing so in person.

First, I would like to thank the Commonwealth Foundation, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development, the Commonwealth Legal Education Association and representatives from the British Overseas Territories who have made this important event possible.

The UK Government is strongly committed to fulfilling its international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which it views as an essential lever to progress gender equality for women and girls worldwide. Since ratifying the Convention in 1986, we have come a long way and have made significant progress in a number of areas. But we must not be complacent. Inequalities still remain and we are committed to progressing gender equality and women's rights across all policy areas, both domestically and internationally.

We want women in the Overseas Territories to enjoy the same human rights as women in the UK. As the UK Coalition Government has made clear since it took office, we see the residents of the Overseas Territories as part of the British family, and equality and fairness are key parts of our relationship.

The UK Government is working to bring renewed focus to the UK's overall relationship with the Overseas Territories and the important strategic, historic and cultural links that we share. Respect for human rights - including the commitment to implement and report on international human rights legal instruments - is an important part of this relationship. I am aware that the Overseas Territories have made political commitments over the last few years to extend to CEDAW, the last of the major UN human rights Conventions that remains to be extended to most of them. However, only three have managed to complete the extension of CEDAW to date so we clearly want to see intentions become action as soon as possible. This workshop, with the participation of the Government Equalities Office, affords the time and the environment to look at the practical obstacles to extension that exist in each territory and to identify the steps needed in order to remove them.

We know that the Governments of the Territories that made those commitments remain committed to extending to this Convention. We hope that remaining obstacles can be overcome, and the remaining Caribbean Territories can complete this work before the project ends in December 2011.

I know that some challenges remain. But the UK Government is committed to providing political support to those Governments that need it, just as we are providing practical support through this project. I know that this workshop will be a success. I thank you for all the important work that you do to make a difference to the lives of women in the Overseas Territories.

List of Participants

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>Anguilla</b>		
Lana Hoyoung		Soroptimist Club/MCCA
Ernie Hodge-Carty		National Council of Women
Ursil Webster-Brooks		National Council of Women
Ijahnya Christian		National Council of Women
Lolita Davis Ifill		National Council of Women
Hyacinth Augustine		Dept. Youth and Culture
Sandra Fahie		Education Department
Zulma Webster		Labour Department
Ms. Catherine Firth	Head of Office	Governor's Office
Dr. Bonnie Richardson-Lake	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Social Development
Daphne Hodge		Department of Social Development
Clive Smith		Department of Social Development
Sonia Skellekie		Department of Social Development
Dawn Richardson	Senior counsel	Attorney General's Chambers
Kenneth Hodge	PAS Home Affairs	Ministry of Home Affairs
Ensor Gumbs	PAS Home Affairs	Ministry of Home Affairs
Lisa Rey		Radio Anguilla
Shamella Vanterpool		Royal Anguilla Police Force
Bernadette Carbon		Royal Anguilla Police Force
Gilda Samuels	Executive Director	Anguilla Hotel and Tourism Association
Maria Armantrading		Department of Disaster Management
<b>Cayman Islands</b>		
Reshma Sharma	Senior Counsel	AG Chambers
Tammy Ebanks Bishop	Senior Policy Adviser	Ministry of Community Affairs
Alexa Thomas	Member	Business and Professional Women's Club
Julene Banks	Member	Constitution Commission
<b>Bermuda</b>		
Ellen Shiell	Executive Director	Centre against Abuse
Dorothy Williams	Executive Director	Women's Resource Centre
Miriam Rogers	Asst Parliamentary Counsel	AG Chambers

Deborah Blakeney	Director	Dept of Home Affairs
Deborah Bradford	Project Assistant	Dept of Home Affairs
Charles-Etta Simmons	Justice	Supreme Court of Bermuda
<b>Montserrat</b>		
Denise Phillip	Labour Commissioner	Ministry of Labour
Oris Sullivan	Senior Counsel	AG Office
Rose Willock	President	WSG10
Anne Thomas	President	Red Cross Society
<b>BVI</b>		
Patricia Hackett	Head	Gender Affairs Office
Angela Herbert	Officer	Ministry of Health & Social Development
<b>TCI</b>		
Doreen Quelch-Missick	President	Human Rights Commission
<b>Commonwealth Foundation</b>		
Elizabeth Marsh	Senior Programme Manager	Commonwealth Fdn
Peter Ashman	Consultant BOT HR Project	Commonwealth Fdn
<b>UNIFEM</b>		
Robert Clarke	Director	UNIFEM Regional office
Glenda Simms	Consultant	
<b>Government Equalities Office</b>		
Celia Reed	Head International Team	UK Government Equalities Office
<b>Commonwealth Legal Education Association</b>		
Selina Goulbourne	BOT HR Project Partner representative	CLEA

## **Extension/Implementation Plans**

### Montserrat

Discussion with Chief Minister and Minister responsible for Women's Affairs about extension of CEDAW to Montserrat.

Submission of Information Paper (on CEDAW and its implications) to Executive Council

Establish a National Machinery (Gender Affairs Unit) – Multisectorial Team

Submit Action Plan in respect of funding and technical support

Educational Outreach & Training Programmes for officials and civil society

Research and Data collection

Revision of Legislation - Labour Code

### Bermuda

Meeting with Premier

Guidelines and information Paper

Report on needs

Involvement of Women's Council

Training on technical aspects

Revision of laws

Review UK CEDAW reservations

Develop questionnaire on policy and practice

### British Virgin Islands

Revision of legislation, especially regarding domestic violence and children

Surveys on domestic violence, and the economic and social situation of women

Review trafficking laws

Awareness-raising, especially among policy-makers

Review Labour Code

Sexual harassment policies to be extended to private sector

Develop OTs CEDAW Facebook page

Have CEDAW section on Gender Office website

### Cayman Islands

Review of legislation

Joint presentation on CEDAW to stakeholders

Education programme for all

Produce information booklets (including for schools)

Secure passage of Gender Equality Promotion Bill

Training for public service

Data collection

Develop civil society involvement in gender equality

### Turks and Caicos Islands

Strengthen national machinery

Review of legislation

Civil society involvement – aim to create National Council of Women

Review trafficking laws

Data collection

Establish resource centre

Education programmes, especially for police

Develop sexual harassment policies for private sector

### Anguilla

Audit of legislation and policy

Develop institutional skills

Examine OECS model laws, manuals and protocols for adaptation to Anguilla

Training for public officials and civil society

Create a legal family support officer

Data collection

Establish a Gender Affairs Unit by 03/11

Develop a Gender Affairs Commission and a gender plan

Revive the National Council of Women

Public awareness-raising programme

Develop policies for equality at the workplace