



Women and Equalities Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From the Chair

Ms Dalia Leinarte

Chair, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

52 Rue des Pâquis

1201 Geneva

23 January 2019

Dear Ms Leinarte,

The Women and Equalities Committee in the UK Parliament is holding an inquiry into the CEDAW Committee's eighth periodic review of the UK. The UK Government has a strong commitment to women's equality and has led the way internationally in key areas. In relation to employment, for example, there has been an increase in the employment rate for women, a fall in the gender pay gap and an increase in the number of women on FTSE100 boards. The establishment in 2015 of this Committee as a dedicated equalities committee is an example of this commitment.

We are aware that a wide range of issues pertaining to women's rights under the CEDAW Convention have been covered in the UK State Report, and raised in the shadow reports to your Committee from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as well as civil society organisations. The focus of our inquiry, therefore, is on key overarching issues relating to women's rights in the UK under the Convention.

On 14 November 2018, the Committee took [oral evidence](#) from witnesses Viv Hayes of the Women's Resource Centre, Umme Iman of the Angelou Centre, and Andrea Murray and Hayley Willingale of the EHRC. We received further evidence from the EHRC and Women's Resource Centre following the session.

We believe that progress on fulfilling women's rights under the Convention will be supported through:

- The UK working with the EHRC and civil society organisations to develop a strategy for implementing CEDAW in the UK. This would ensure a more consistent approach with the UK's approach to women's equality overseas where there is a gender equality strategy.
- The development of a monitoring mechanism for ensuring that women's rights are fulfilled under the Convention between review cycles. This might include mechanisms for gathering evidence from local areas about actions following each review. In our recent report on the Government Equalities Office, we recommended that it should be moved permanently to the Cabinet Office. This move is now underway, presenting opportunities for putting in place such a centralised monitoring mechanism.

Your Committee may be interested in our previous reports which have considered rights under the Convention. These include:

[Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools](#)

[Sexual harassment in the workplace](#)

[Sexual harassment of women and girls in public places](#)

[Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK](#)

[Pregnancy and maternity](#)

You may also be aware that our Committee is currently holding an inquiry into [Abortion Law in Northern Ireland](#) which focuses on the CEDAW Committee's report published in March 2018 and what action the UK Government will take to comply with its obligations under the Convention in this regard. We anticipate publishing a report of the inquiry before the summer.

Please do not hesitate to contact Holly Dustin, manager of our inquiry into CEDAW, at dustinh@parliament.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Rt Hon Maria Miller MP

Chair, Women and Equalities Committee