

2010

The Scottish Women's Convention

Shadow Report to Beijing +15:
A 15 year review of the implementation
of the Beijing Declaration and Platform
for Action

January 2010

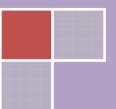


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Introduction

It was at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, that the Platform for Action (PfA) was agreed by all attending Governments. The PfA sets out what needs to be done to improve women's lives. The United Nations are holding a conference in March 2010 to assess how issues identified in the PfA have improved for women all over the world.

The purpose of this report is to outline what the Platform for Action says Governments should be doing, what they have done and what women in Scotland have told the Scottish Women's Convention they still feel needs to be done in order to achieve the goals of the PfA.

The purpose of the Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) is to communicate and consult with women in Scotland to influence public policy. Through the Convention's policy work, round table and celebratory events the SWC strives to have contact with women and relevant organisations. The SWC aims to provide an effective way of consulting with a diverse range of women in Scotland.

The Scottish Women's Convention has a network of over 300,000 women from relevant organisations throughout Scotland. This report is a reflection of the voices of women from all over Scotland who have attended roadshows, conferences, round table and celebratory events held by the Scottish Women's Convention.

Agnes Tolmie

Chair, Scottish Women's Convention

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. Every year representatives of the Member States gather at the UN Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide.

The Commission on the Status of Women was responsible for setting up the four world conferences on women – Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995.

The Platform for Action (PfA) was created at the Fourth World Conference on Women which was held in Beijing in 1995. The PfA identifies 12 critical areas of concern for women – poverty, education, health, violence, conflict, the economy, women in power, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment and girls – which are seen as global and universal issues affecting women all over the world. It is primarily up to Governments to implement the PfA; however they must do this along with the public, private and non-governmental sectors.

The CSW systematically reviews progress in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the PfA in its annual sessions, and has adopted action-orientated recommendations, in the form of agreed conclusions, to facilitate increased implementation at all levels.

POVERTY

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Provide adequate safety nets and strengthen State-based and community-based support systems, as an integral part of social policy, in order to enable women living in poverty to withstand adverse economic environments;
- Generate economic policies that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both formal and informal sectors and adopt specific measures to address women's unemployment, in particular their long-term unemployment;
- Introduce measures to integrate or reintegrate women living in poverty and socially marginalised women into productive employment and the economic mainstream;
- Enable women to obtain affordable housing;
- Create social security systems with a view to placing individual women and men on an equal footing, at every stage of their lives;
- Ensure access to free or low-cost legal services, including legal literacy, especially designed to reach women living in poverty.

Government at the UK level has:

- Introduced the national minimum wage which has helped to close the gap between men and women's pay;
- Entitled part-time workers to equal pay;
- Published 'Real Help Now for Women' in March 2009 which provides information for women on finances, childcare, benefits, skills and training and health;
- Implemented changes to the Pensions Act 2007 which will reduce the number of years needed to build up a full basic State Pension and will provide for credited contributions for caring which will be recognised equally with contributions to work.

Government at the Scottish level has:

- Launched 'Taking Forward the Scottish Government Economic Strategy: A Discussion Paper on Tackling Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland' in February 2008, intended to help inform the Scottish Government's development of a framework for delivering aspects of the Government Economic Strategy related to tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation;
- Set the target of increasing overall income and the proportion of income earned by the three lowest income deciles as a group by 2017 through the Economic Strategy;
- Launched 'Achieving Our Potential', a framework aimed at tackling poverty and income inequality in Scotland;

- Provided £50 million for local authorities to begin building new homes through the Incentivising New Council Housing Building Fund. This is the first such central government support to councils in a generation;
- Announced its intention to abolish the 'right to buy' scheme for all new council and social housing tenants.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- There is a lack of universally affordable childcare in Scotland, with access to appropriate facilities described as an acute problem. Child tax credits do not reflect the true outlays for many families.
- A lack of integrated public transport in Scotland, particularly in rural areas, severely curtails opportunities for women. A gender-focused impact on transport policies in Scotland is necessary so that public transport becomes more accessible and affordable.
- The assessment and processing criteria for welfare support in the UK is overly complicated and too rigid. Tensions between benefit payments and work or study discourage too many women from entering employment or education. Greater dissemination of information on welfare entitlements, in a format which is accessible to all women, would encourage take-up.
- There is a distinct lack of affordable housing and suitable rental accommodation in Scotland with housing often being of poor quality and badly insulated. More social housing needs to be built, taking into account proximity to services, shops and transport.
- In-work poverty is prevalent, especially in households headed by women. A living wage should be provided, based on cost of living, and should be applicable regardless of the recipient's age.
- Credit unions are a valuable local service providing support and access to affordable credit. The establishment of credit unions in all communities should be encouraged.
- The role of caring is critically undervalued in society. As so many families rely on the support of kinship carers this must be supplemented by tax credits or benefits.
- Too many families in Scotland are faced with the choice of whether to 'heat or eat'. Subsidised utility costs and provision of the winter fuel payment for those on low incomes would alleviate fuel poverty significantly.
- Universal free school meals should be provided to all children in Scotland.

EDUCATION

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Take measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender;
- Create a gender-sensitive education system in order to ensure equal education and training opportunities and full and equal participation of women in educational administration and policy and decision-making;
- Promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers that impeded the schooling of pregnant adolescents and young mothers, including, as appropriate, affordable and physically accessible child-care facilities and parental education to encourage those who are responsible for the care of their children to return to or continue with and complete schooling;
- Improve the quality of education and equal opportunities for women and men in terms of access in order to ensure that women of all ages can acquire the knowledge, capacities, aptitudes, skills and ethical values needed to develop and to participate fully under equal conditions;
- Make available non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive professional school counselling and career education programmes to encourage girls to pursue academic and technical curricula in order to widen their future career opportunities;
- Develop and implement education, training and re-training policies for women, especially young women and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their employment opportunities;
- Provide information to women and girls on the availability and benefits of vocational training, training programmes in science and technology and programmes of continuing education;
- Develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness about the status, role and contribution of women and men in the family; promote equality, cooperation, mutual respect and shared responsibilities between girls and boys from pre-school level onward and develop, in particular, educational models to ensure that boys have the skills necessary to take care of their own domestic needs and to share responsibility for their household and for the care of dependants;
- Remove legal, regulatory and social barriers, where appropriate, to sexual and reproductive health education within formal education programmes regarding women's health issues.

Government at the UK level has:

- Worked to raise standards in schools – girls are outperforming boys at all levels and more women are entering further and higher education.

Government at the Scottish level has:

- Established the Curriculum for Excellence for children aged 3-18;

- Launched 'Experiences and Outcomes' on the Curriculum for Excellence website, which sets out how schools and Local Authorities should explore and debate issues with young people about relationships, sexual health and parenthood in a way that is appropriate for each stage of their learning. This will be fully implemented by August 2010;
- Launched 'Respect and Responsibility', the national sexual health strategy, which contains a number of actions for councils which have an impact on the provision of SRE in schools;
- Promoted careers in teaching to women. In 2005, 49% of secondary school teachers and 21% of secondary school head teachers were women.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- The increased provision of careers advice and guidance, delivered by specially trained advisors, in an atmosphere where young women are encouraged to discuss viable options for them would be a positive step forward.
- Disparity in content and delivery of sex education between Local Authorities and within schools can have a significant bearing on a young person's attitude to associations between sex and relationships.
- Sex education should be provided to all – for disabled women this is often curtailed or denied as it is assumed to be inappropriate.
- Fundamental barriers to education for women in Scotland are course fees, cost of materials, issues of distance and transport and confidence. Addressing these would significantly increase the uptake of education and training courses.
- Distance learning is a viable option however many women may not feel confident accessing courses in this manner. More information should be available for women, provided in a dedicated format, to encourage take-up.
- The provision of more social and financial instruction through education would be welcomed. Skills such as budgeting, managing a home and parenting should be part of the curriculum.
- Access to information on courses available and how funding and welfare payments are distributed would encourage more women to pursue education.
- Disabled women face discrimination in education and as a result are disproportionately disadvantaged in both educational opportunities and career choices.

HEALTH

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Provide more accessible, available and affordable primary health care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, which includes family planning information and services;
- Integrate mental health services into primary health care systems or other appropriate levels, develop supportive programmes and train primary health care workers to recognise and care for girls and women of all ages who have experienced any form of violence;
- Establish mechanisms to support and involve women's organisations, professional groups and other bodies working to improve health of girls and women, in government policy-making, programme design, as appropriate, and implementation within the health sector and all related sectors at all levels;
- Develop policies that reduce the disproportionate and increasing burden on women who have multiple roles within the family and the community by providing them with adequate support and programmes from health and social services;
- Adopt regulations to ensure that working conditions, including remuneration and promotion of women at all levels of the health system are non-discriminatory and meet fair and professional standards to enable them to work effectively.

Government at the UK level has:

- Provided free contraception and sexual health services on the National Health Service (NHS);
- Routinely asked women who access maternity services about domestic abuse;
- Ensured that all women can access screening services for breast and cervical cancer;
- Provided the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination for all 12-13 and 17-18 year old girls to protect them against cervical cancer.

Government at the Scottish level has:

- Asked all women when accessing mental health, Accident and Emergency (A&E) and addictions services about domestic violence;
- Launched the 'Better Health, Better Care' Action Plan in December 2007;
- Created a new sexual health website - <http://www.sexualhealthscotland.co.uk/> - to encourage Scots to be more open when talking about their sex lives and to talk about more sensitive issues such as Sexually Transmitted Infections and pregnancy.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- Accessing sexual health services in local health centres and GP surgeries, particularly in rural areas, can make women feel they are being judged by the community and as a result they will not return.
- 'One-stop' health access points, such as 'Well Women' clinics, encourage women to access a number of health services in a comfortable and confidential environment.
- Women who have experienced male violence must be able to request to see a female doctor.
- Mixed gender wards in hospitals can make women feel uncomfortable and unsafe, particularly women who have experienced male violence. These practices should be abolished in all hospitals.
- There are a number of contributing factors which can cause mental health issues for women. Too often practitioners rely on medication to treat these conditions when in many cases a more holistic approach would be more effective.
- Care for the elderly and mental health provision is often under-resourced and attracts lower funding priorities than other health issues.
- Disabled women face attitudinal barriers with regards to sexual relationships and reproductive rights. Improved training and impact awareness about disability for NHS workers would make support and communication more positive.
- Approximately 60% of Scotland's 660,000 unpaid carers are women. The daily struggle to maintain their own health and wellbeing in order to continue to provide care for their families would be alleviated through improved respite care.

VIOLENCE

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Provide women who are subjected to violence with access to the mechanisms of justice and, as provided for by national legislation, to just and effective remedies for the harm they have suffered and inform women of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms;
- Create or strengthen institutional mechanisms so that women and girls can report acts of violence against them in a safe and confidential environment, free from the fear of penalties or retaliation, and file charges;
- Ensure that women with disabilities have access to information and services;
- Provide well-funded shelters and relief support for girls and women subjected to violence, as well as medical, psychological and other counselling services and free or low-cost legal aid;
- Establish linguistically and culturally accessible services for migrant women and girls, including women migrant workers, who are victims of gender-based violence;
- Raise awareness of the responsibility of the media in promoting non-stereotyped images of women and men, as well as in eliminating patterns of media presentation that generate violence, and encourage those responsible for media content to establish professional guidelines and codes of conduct; also raise awareness of the important role of the media in informing and educating people about the causes and effects of VAW and in stimulating public debate on the topic.

Government at the UK level has:

- Made female genital mutilation illegal, regardless of where it is carried out;
- Ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Committed £15.6 million funding over two years to support key projects aimed at diverting women from prison.

Government at the Scottish level has:

- Identified tackling VAW as a ministerial priority for the advancement of gender equality;
- Published 'Safer Lives, Changed Lives', Scotland's framework on violence against women which provides a shared understanding and approach to guide the work of all partners in tackling violence against women in Scotland.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- A distinct lack of refuge facilities and rape counselling services in rural areas means that women experiencing male violence may have to travel up to 100 miles to access their nearest service. Issues of confidentiality and fear of community response in rural areas are a big deterrent to women reporting violence.

- A fundamental review of legislation on violence against women is necessary in Scotland. Only 10% of those convicted of crimes linked to domestic violence end up in jail in Scotland.
- The conviction rate for rape currently stands at 3.7%. This is the lowest in Europe and is completely unacceptable.
- Wider availability of pornographic images is skewing young men's perceptions of sexual relationships which, in turn, can encourage violent behaviour.
- A significant number of young people still believe there are instances where domestic violence is permissible. Education from an early age on the effects of violence against women should be taught as part of sex and relationship education.
- Refuge accommodation for Black and Ethnic Minority women is at a premium in Scotland and long-term funding is imperative. Access to refuge provision for women in fear of 'honour killings' is crucial.
- Women with no recourse to public funds are unable to access support and refuge services without service providers sustaining a loss of income. This should be abolished.
- There is a shortage of refuge accommodation that is accessible to disabled women.
- The purchase of sex should be a criminal offence.

CONFLICT

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Ensure that women take part equally in peacemaking processes;
- Ensure that women are fully involved in the management of refugee detention centres that include female detainees seeking asylum on the grounds of fleeing conflict;
- Recognise the vital importance of reuniting families after conflict;
- Make sure that women refugees are able to see specially trained women immigration officers.

Government at the UK level has:

- Played a leading role in the drafting and development of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325), and UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on Sexual Violence as a Tactic of War

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- Women refugees and asylum seekers fleeing conflict must be provided with sensitive treatment in terms of translation services and health, as well as more involvement in decisions which have a direct effect on them.
- Women and their children who come to Scotland seeking refuge from armed conflict should not be placed in detention centres such as Dungavel.
- Efforts must be made to ensure that refugee families arriving in Scotland are kept together especially if they are placed in detention or holding centres.
- Peacemaking and peacekeeping processes will only be successful if women are a key part of the process.

THE ECONOMY

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Enact and enforce legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;
- Adopt and implement laws against discrimination based on sex in the labour market, especially considering older women workers, hiring and promotion, the extension of employment benefits and social security, and working conditions;
- Take effective measures to ensure that pregnant women, women on maternity leave or women re-entering the labour market after childbearing are not discriminated against;
- Seek to develop a more comprehensive knowledge of work and employment through, *inter alia*, efforts to measure and better understand the type, extent and distribution of unremunerated work, particularly work in caring for dependants;
- Facilitate, at appropriate levels, more open and transparent budget processes;
- Eliminate occupational segregation, especially by promoting the equal participation of women in highly skilled jobs and senior management positions, and through other measures, such as counselling and placement, that stimulate on-the-job career development and upward mobility in the labour market, and by stimulating the diversification of occupational choices by both men and women; encourage women to take up non-traditional jobs; and encourage men to seek employment in the social sector;
- Increase efforts to close the gap between women's and men's pay, take steps to implement the principle of equal remuneration for equal work of equal value by strengthening legislation, including compliance with international labour laws and standards, and encourage job evaluation schemes with gender neutral criteria;
- Ensure, through legislation, incentives and/or encouragement, opportunities for women and men to take job-protected parental leave and to have parental benefits; promote the equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women;
- Develop policies, *inter alia*, in education to change attitudes that reinforce the division of labour based on gender in order to promote the concept of shared family responsibility for work in the home.

Government at the UK level has:

- Reduced the gender pay gap from 27.5% in 1997 to 22.6% in 2008;
- Reconvened the Women and Work Commission;
- Provided better statutory maternity leave and pay for pregnant workers;
- Afforded the right for parents of children 16 years and under to request flexible working;
- Added tax and childcare credits to child benefit to help with the costs of childcare, which covers up to 80% of costs for low to middle income families;

- Given the right to take unpaid parental leave from work;
- More than doubled maternity leave and maternity pay since 1997.

Government at the Scottish level has:

- Identified tackling occupational segregation as a ministerial priority;
- Supported the Modern Apprenticeship scheme through Skills Development Scotland;
- Produced a Cross-Government Group Report on occupational segregation and gender stereotyping and is currently taking forward actions from this.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- Flexible working is not encouraged within workplaces. There should be stricter requirements imposed by the Government on employers who refuse to grant flexible working. Employers should also be compelled to justify their decisions for refusing to grant flexible working.
- Too many employers hold negative attitudes towards women with family commitments or those in part-time positions. Assumptions are too often made with regards to flexibility, ambition and aptitude.
- Training and work programmes should be flexible in order to encourage women to undertake these initiatives. More information on the positive aspects of work-based learning would also be beneficial.
- Occupational segregation is entrenched in Scottish culture. This exacerbates the gender pay gap and must be addressed in tackling inequality between women and men.
- There is a broad lack of awareness of and access to the Modern Apprenticeship scheme for young women. Gender streaming and a continued imbalance in take-up discourages many from choosing this as a viable career option.
- Young men will not seek training in areas of “women’s work” due to poor pay returns and women will continue to be exposed to harassment in “male sectors”. Tackling occupational segregation would shift this imbalance.
- There are equal pay laws in place but not equal pay. The gender pay gap is 16.4% for full-time workers and 35.2% for part-time workers. All employers should be made to publish mandatory pay audits.
- Women are disproportionately affected by the current economic downturn with part-time and low paid jobs experiencing major cuts. Specific measures are needed to support women through this recession.

WOMEN IN POWER

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, *inter alia*, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions;
- Take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same level as men;
- Recognise that shared work and parental responsibilities between women and men promote women's increased participation in public life, and take appropriate measures to achieve this, including measures to reconcile family and professional life;
- Encourage efforts by NGO's, trade unions and the private sector to achieve equality between women and men in their ranks, including equal participation in their decision-making bodies and in negotiations in all areas and at all levels.

Government at the UK level has:

- Enshrined in statute the right of political parties to choose more women candidates through the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002;
- Got to the point where nearly 20% of MP's in Parliament are women and one third of UK elected Members of the European Parliament are women;
- Set a target for 50% of all new appointments to be public appointments to be women by March 2011.

Government at the Scottish level has:

- Promoted equality in candidate selection to the point where 35% of MSPs are women and 22% of councillors in Scotland are women. Women also hold 34% of all public appointments

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- Many women have a desire to be involved with the political process however issues such as childcare availability, caring responsibilities, working hours and where they live are fundamental barriers to participation.
- Parliamentary hours should be restructured in order to accommodate the responsibilities of family life.
- Capacity building initiatives aimed at increasing women's confidence would be welcomed as a means of encouraging progression through all levels of public participation.
- Young women are less inclined to vote in elections due to a lack of interest in politics and a perception that the political process is something far removed from their own lives.
- There is a critical lack of representation of black and ethnic minority (BME) women in public life. Additional barriers to participation as well as societal assumptions have a significant impact on involvement. Specific measures must be put in place to address this.
- The provision of women-only shortlists and the commitment from the UK Government to extend this is welcomed. Political parties at all levels must commit to endorsing women-only shortlists.
- The 'first past the post' system of voting often discourages the participation of women. Alternative voting systems should be considered as a means of increasing women's involvement in political life.
- Improvement in the position of women in Scotland is necessary. There is only one female Cabinet Secretary and only three female Ministers out of 16 in the Scottish Government. The number of women MSP's has decreased by 4% since the last Parliamentary Session.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Ensure that responsibility for the advancement of women is vested in the highest possible level of government, in many cases, this could be at the level of a Cabinet Minister;
- Based on a strong political commitment, create a national machinery, where it does not exist, and strengthen, as appropriate, existing national machineries, for the advancement of women at the highest possible level of government;
- Provide staff training in designing and analysing data from a gender perspective;
- Seek to ensure that policy decisions are taken and analysis of their impact on women and men, respectively, is carried out;
- Ensure the regular production of a statistical publication on gender that presents and interprets topical data on women and men in a form suitable for a wide range of non-technical users.

Government at the UK level has:

- Appointed a Minister for Women in the form of a Senior Cabinet Minister, supported by another minister and a Cabinet Committee;
- Set up the Government Equalities Office, responsible for co-ordinating policy on women and gender equality issues in Government;
- Set up a Gender Directors' Network made up of the four gender policy lead officers from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales;
- Introduced the Gender Equality Duty;
- Provided independent funding for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Women's National Commission (WNC).

Government at the Scottish level has:

- Established the Equality Unit (now known as the Equalities, Social Inclusion and Sport Directorate);
- Created a Cross Party Committee on Equal Opportunities which has an independent scrutiny role.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- Scotland should have a dedicated Minister for Women, operating at the same level of Government as the Minister for Women for the UK.
- Every public authority covered by the Gender Equality Duty must fully understand its obligations and ensure proactivity in demonstrating the fair and equal treatment of both sexes.
- The Scottish Government should be commended for using the Gender Equality Duty to monitor the progress of its own Ministers.
- The Equal Opportunities Commission has been absorbed into the Equality and Human Rights Commission and is now part of a much wider remit. Gender issues must continue to be of importance within this new structure.
- Public authorities are required to report against their Gender Equality Schemes every year and these reports must be published in a format that is easily accessible and understandable to women.
- Specific barriers are faced by certain women. BME women, older women, young women, disabled women and lesbian women experience real differences and the Government should look closely at this.

HUMAN RIGHTS

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Set up and fund national institutions which promote women's human rights;
- Train women on equal rights;
- Ensure that disabled women are given access to national reports on CEDAW in a format which is accessible for them, and translate reports into local languages;
- End child prostitution;
- Publish facts about women's rights in a format which is easy for all to understand.

Government at the UK level has:

- Established the Human Rights Act 1998, which enshrines the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- Ratified CEDAW and the Treaty of Amsterdam;
- Worked with other countries to improve human rights by encouraging other governments to put women's views into policy making;
- Spent over £1 million since 1998 through the Human Rights Projects Fund to promote human rights in other countries;
- Set up Human Rights Commissions in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- Make it clear that human rights apply to all women, irrespective of age, religion or belief, race, disability and sexual orientation.
- More information on the rights of women in Scotland, and how to exercise these rights, should be available. This information should be published in a format which all women can understand and which is easily accessible.
- Girls and young women should be taught about their rights at school. In order to promote gender respect from a young age, boys and young men should also be provided with this information.
- Victims of sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape must be fairly treated while giving evidence in court.
- Prostituted women should not be treated as criminals but should instead be seen as victims of male violence.
- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) should be made known to all women and should be accessible to them.

THE MEDIA

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Support women's access to all jobs in the media;
- Get equal numbers of women and men onto media watchdogs;
- Oppose sexist stereotypes;
- Support more programmes by and for women;
- Support women's groups who are active in information and communications technology;
- Encourage the use of CT to help women take more part in democracy;
- Make laws against pornography and the projection of violence against women in the media.

Government at UK level has:

- Required commercial broadcasters to promote equal opportunities in employment;
- Drawn up, through the Communications Act 2003, a Code of Standards which bans discriminatory treatment or language on the grounds of sex.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- Pornographic material is detrimental to gender respect. The media must look at further regulating the availability of sexually explicit content.
- The pressure to look like air-brushed celebrities causes a serious lack of self-esteem amongst women in Scotland. There should be more real women on television perceived in a positive light.
- Often the media is more concerned about what clothes female politicians are wearing rather than their policies. These women should be seen as positive role models and steps must be taken to ensure this happens.
- The media is a catalyst for influencing women. Celebrities seen living hedonistic lifestyles are highlighted much more than positive role models and have a greater adverse effect on women as a whole.
- Media influences are a hugely determining factor in influencing the sexual activity of teenagers and how they present and project themselves.
- Advertising mediums that convey young women as being more sexually mature than they are can suggest a sexual self-assurance that most teenagers lack physically or emotionally. This can have a number of unintended consequences. There is little compulsion on the media to acknowledge the possible long-term impact of what they are implying or communicating, especially to young people.

THE ENVIRONMENT

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Check the effects of policies on women before decisions are made;
- Empower women as consumers to take environmental action;
- Invite women to be involved with local planning;
- Fund research on the impact of pollution on women;
- Fund training for women on environmental technology.

Government at the UK level has:

- Set up the Department of Energy and Climate Change;
- Addressed climate change through international development work.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- More information on environmental issues such as global warming and pollution, and the effect such issues have on women, should be available.
- Long-term protection must be secured for the environment so that future generations have safe and clean towns and cities to live in.
- Public transport is, in the majority, used by women in Scotland. Transport policies and plans must have at their heart the needs of users and women should be involved in the creation of these.
- There should be more information in schools on the impact of environmental problems.
- Public buildings and facilities are not designed with the specific needs of women and children in mind. Women should be involved in planning with a view to the impact the facilities will have on them.
- The issue of climate change is becoming more predominant in the news. The gender impact of this must be assessed and the Climate Change Act must be looked at from a gender perspective.

GIRLS

As part of the Platform for Action's strategic objectives, Governments must:

- Ensure that girls are educated about the rights afforded to them;
- Prevent child prostitution and forced marriage;
- Ensure that girls are provided with comprehensive sex education;
- Protect girls from sexual abuse and child pornography, and give support to those subjected to violence;
- Educate boys and girls to share family responsibilities;
- Ensure that more girls are lifted out of poverty by enforcing child support laws;
- Provide affordable childcare to young mothers so that they may complete their education.

Government at the UK level has:

- Raised educational standards – girls across the board obtain higher results than boys;
- Produced a teenage pregnancy strategy to decrease the rate of conception in under 18's by 2010;
- Increased the number of teenage mothers in education, training and employment to 60%;
- Held the consultation 'Forced Marriage: A Civil Remedy', regarding a separate civil law against forced marriage.

Government at the Scottish level has:

- Produced a national sexual health strategy, 'Respect and Responsibility', which has as one of its aims a reduction in the rate of unintended teenage pregnancy in Scotland from 8.5/1000 in 1995 to 6.8/1000 in 2010. The most recent recorded rate was 8.1/1000 in 2006;
- Provided funding for the set up of 'Young Mums Units' in some local authority areas in Scotland.

What the women of Scotland have told the SWC:

- Sexual health advice in schools is mainly focused on preventing pregnancy. Comprehensive sex education must also include the dangers of sexually transmitted infections and effective methods of prevention.
- A framework of best practice in sex education should be developed which combines relationships and sexual behaviour. Respect between genders should be embedded into both boys and girls from a young age as part of sex and relationship education in schools.

- Sex and relationship education should be delivered through interaction. Peer educators supported by professional workers would provide a valuable means of delivering this education.
- In an attempt to reduce teenage pregnancy rates 'baby simulators' should be used as an effective tool in educating young women and young men about the reality of becoming a parent.
- Alcohol consumption is high among young Scottish women. Boredom and a lack of alternative leisure pursuits exacerbate this problem, which is also a factor in teenage pregnancy rates and the spread of sexually transmitted infections.
- Invaluable support is provided to many young women from 'Young Mum's Units' placed in certain secondary schools in Scotland. They are often the single contributing factor to these young women continuing with their education.
- Any strategy to support young mothers in society must be aligned with educating the public as to the long-term benefits facilities such as Young Mum's Units have on these young women and their children.
- The absence of a specific law on Forced Marriage in Scotland means that young women remain at risk of being forced into marriage. This should be addressed and a victim-centred approach to support for those forced to marry is necessary.



Scottish Women's Convention
6th Floor
Blythswood House
200 West Regent Street
Glasgow
G2 4DQ

0141 248 8186

www.scottishwomensconvention.org