

Introduction to CEDAW

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What is CEDAW?

- CEDAW is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- a landmark international legal agreement adopted by the UN
- It entered into force in 1981 after 20 countries had ratified (or agreed to be bound by) it
- States must report progress every four years

CEDAW Committee

- Assesses progress by states signed up to CEDAW
- Issues general recommendations
- Considers complaints from individual women or groups of women against states (the Optional Protocol)
- Investigates widespread/systematic violations of women's rights

Role of state equality machinery

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission is one of the UK's three national human rights institutions (NHRIs) with 'A' status accreditation at the UN.
- The EHRC gives the UN a 'list of issues'
- The Government Equalities Office is responsible for producing the state report

CEDAW Committee: 23 women's rights experts

- Read their previous recommendations, the state reports and shadow reports
- Listen to evidence from states and NGOs
- Question the Government
- Make recommendations for action in their concluding observations

CEDAW SHADOW REPORTS

- Engender Scotland
- Women's Equality Network Wales
- Women's Resource Centre England
- Max 6,600 words - about 14 pages
- Article by article OR thematic

Timeline

- UK Government report sent to the UN **December 2017**
- Consultation on shadow reports **February 2018**
- Shadow reports sent **June 2018**
- ‘List of Issues’ sent **July 2018**
- Committee meets and agrees key issues **July 2018**
- State reply/updated shadow reports **Oct-Jan 2019**
- Committee examines the UK **February 2019**
- Concluding observations issued **March 2019**

CEDAW Committee's last concluding observations

- Better access to courts
- Ratify the Istanbul Convention
- Make forced marriage a crime
- A national action plan on trafficking
- Better mental health care in prison
- End occupational segregation
- Close the gender pay gap