



MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT
& GENDER AFFAIRS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

A cluster of white butterflies of various sizes, some with blue markings, flying towards the right.

National Conference on Women: *Inspiring Change*

Conference Report

May 2014

Prepared by:
Gender Affairs Unit



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I Foreword

I.1 Message by the Hon. Tara Rivers, JP, MLA Minister for Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

The response to the first ever National Conference on Women in the Cayman Islands has been tremendous, and it is fitting that this momentous occasion served as the final activity for Honouring Women Month 2014.



The conference provided an opportunity to bring together a wide cross-section of our society to discuss the social, cultural, economic and political challenges that girls and women have experienced and continue to experience here in the Cayman Islands. It was an opportunity to exchange different experiences and perspectives, and to plant the seeds of change in us all. By all accounts, I believe that the objectives and planned outcomes of this conference have been achieved.

It is our goal to ensure that, as a result of this event, tangible action takes place to address the priority areas where discrimination against women and girls still lingers, often unseen or unacknowledged. Government has a great responsibility to ensure that this happens, but we cannot achieve full gender equality in our nation without the support of non-governmental organisations and the private sector and the conscious actions of individuals. Each one of us has a critical role to play as an agent of change.

As the Minister responsible for Gender Affairs, and as a woman, I have a keen interest in advocating for the continued advancement of women on an equal basis with men. Given that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (“CEDAW”) is a core international human rights treaty to which the Cayman Islands has yet to sign on and that greater gender equality is directly linked with many economic and social benefits, it not just my personal desire but also the goal of this administration to have CEDAW extended to the Cayman Islands as soon as possible.

Government’s most recent request to have CEDAW extended is a reflection of its commitment to ensuring equality between women and men and to promoting a culture of human rights in the Cayman Islands. Similar to the intended outcomes of CEDAW extension, this conference served as a catalyst to examine lingering areas of discrimination and develop strategies for solutions to address inequality between women and men and boys and girls.

Indeed, a collective effort is necessary when striving towards gender equality, and I ask you to join Government in our efforts as we work towards breaking barriers and closing gender gaps in all areas of society. Let us all do our part to spread and nurture the seeds that were planted at this conference to inspire change within ourselves and others. We owe it to ourselves and to our children to ensure that the future for our girls is bright, safe, rewarding, and valued as equally as our boys.



Honourable Tara Rivers, JP, MLA

I.2 Statement by Mary Rodrigues, JP, Chief Officer Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

The National Conference on Women was a significant accomplishment for our Ministry and we viewed it as a valuable opportunity to continue to identify and address the inequities that exist between men and women and boys and girls.



But, perhaps, more importantly, we believed that this conference would also have the potential to educate, to inspire change, and to empower individuals to make improvements in their own lives, which in turn will lead to many positive multiplying effects in many areas of our society. The buzz created by the conference was powerful, and the Ministry is committed to harnessing this energy to move forward and reinvigorate our efforts to promote gender equality.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Gender Affairs Unit for successfully organising the conference. Dr. Glenda Simms – who was in attendance from Jamaica as our guest speaker and is an expert on CEDAW and gender issues (having sat on the United Nations CEDAW Committee and travelled the globe as a consultant and advocate for gender equality) – lauded the conference as a model for inclusive consultation that will lead to meaningful action.

The conference provided attendees with an opportunity to have fruitful and open discussions, not only on the challenges and the problems experienced by women and girls, but also to identify and discuss the possible solutions. We are indeed grateful for the willingness of participants, to make the time to attend the conference, share their perspectives and experiences, and learn from one another. The message that there is an urgent need for change has been received loudly and clearly.

The Ministry, in conjunction with the Attorney General's Chambers, the Office of the Governor and other key stakeholders, has been working diligently to make extension of CEDAW a reality for the women and girls of the Cayman Islands. In anticipation of its extension to the Cayman Islands, and in the spirit of the Articles of CEDAW, the local legislative framework has been strengthened and a number of policies and programmes have been implemented over the years to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, in all forms, and in all areas of life.

I look forward to seeing how the information contained in this report will be utilised within the civil service, as we aim to mainstream gender issues across all subject areas. I trust that the inspiration that was received at the conference will assist us all in promoting gender equality in our personal relationships, our homes, our neighbourhoods, our schools, our workplaces, and our nation.


Mary Rodrigues, JP

2 Background

The **National Conference on Women** was an empowerment conference that brought together women and men and boys and girls of differing ages and backgrounds to address the social, cultural, economic and political challenges that women and girls experience in the Cayman Islands.

The response to the conference was overwhelmingly positive. Over one hundred and seventy-five people attended part or all of the conference (see **Appendix A**) and many reported that the opportunity for national-level dialogue on these important issues was informative, inspiring and empowering.



2.1 Conference Format & Objectives

Held at the Governor's Ballroom of the Westin Grand Cayman Seven Mile Beach Resort and Spa on Saturday, 29th March 2014 from 9:00AM to 3:00PM, there was no registration fee for the conference, which included complimentary continental breakfast and lunch. Attendees could also attend one or both sessions (see **Appendix B**), with registration limited to a smaller number for the morning focus groups.

The staffing of the conference reflected a true collaboration across governmental and non-governmental entities. Organised by the Gender Affairs Unit as an Honouring Women Month event, the conference received crucial support from every staff member of the Family Resource Centre, a section of the Department of Counselling Services under the Ministry of Community Affairs. Additionally, staff from the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Counselling Services, Department of Sports, Her Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service, Youth Services Unit, Sunrise Adult Training Centre and Cayman Islands Monetary Authority, and volunteers from the Business and Professional Women's Club and Rotaract Club of Grand Cayman, also assisted by serving as group facilitators, scribes and registrars.

With the theme *Inspiring Change* and through an interactive agenda, the conference sought to:

1. Bring awareness about the rights to which girls and women are entitled under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (“CEDAW”) (see **Appendix C**) in order to improve the lives of girls and women in particular and society in general;
2. Gather qualitative data in order to establish priority issues and identify any potential areas of concern in relation to CEDAW, which will assist in developing the Cayman Islands Government's implementation plan; and
3. Create a space in which to educate, inspire and empower individuals to be 'Architects of Change' at a personal level and within society and to promote messages of equality between men and women.

The morning session of the conference included an informative video by Harvard University about the many benefits of gender equality and was followed by focus group discussions and reporting. This method was specifically chosen in order to create a participatory approach to discussing and addressing the challenges and discrimination experienced by women and girls in the Cayman Islands. Such an approach ensures that people are not just listened to but genuinely heard, that their voices shape outcomes, and that individuals participate together in learning and then act upon that learning. It is also about respecting the local knowledge and experience of every member of a community, increasing trust and accountability between stakeholders, and empowering people to lead the way – which in turn makes for increased buy-in for solutions and changes that are better supported and longer lasting.

With a focus on empowering participants and inspiring change, the afternoon session utilised videos, a spoken word performance by local gender equality activist Lady Rabia, and inspirational speeches to motivate attendees. The keynote speaker, Dr. Glenda Simms, was considered by many as a highlight of the conference. Dr. Simms provided an entertaining yet thought-provoking address which challenged participants to become architects of change within their homes, workplaces and communities.

2.2 CEDAW Extension Efforts

After accepting the *National Policy on Gender Equity and Equality* in the Legislative Assembly in 2004, the Cayman Islands Government communicated to the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (“FCO”) that it wished for CEDAW to be extended to the territory. The FCO responded that the Cayman Islands would first need to prepare local enabling legislation.

Since that time, the *Gender Equality Law, 2011* has been enacted to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy and gender in employment and related matters and a number of other domestic laws and policies have been developed and reformed to promote greater equality between the sexes. The 2012 *Review of Cayman Islands' Legislation for CEDAW Compliance* (“CEDAW Legislative Review”) found nothing in the local legislative framework that would prevent extension of CEDAW, though it did highlight areas where further work could be done to promote substantive equality.

In December 2013, the Cayman Islands Government submitted another request through Her Excellency the Governor, Helen Kilpatrick, CB, to have CEDAW extended to the territory. This request is currently under review by the United Kingdom's Government Equalities Office and the Ministry anticipates a positive response to be forthcoming.

3 Focus Group Discussions

During the morning session, participants worked in small groups to discuss issues relevant to particular Articles of CEDAW and General Recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (“CEDAW Committee”). General Recommendations have been made on a number of issues affecting women to which the CEDAW Committee believes States parties should devote more attention. One group was also devoted to the special interests of girls and young women and another to the role of men and boys in ending discrimination against women and girls.

Each table had a rapporteur to lead the discussions and report on behalf of the group at the end of the morning session, and a scribe to take detailed notes on those discussions. Based on their expertise and experience and/or declared interests, participants were assigned to one of the following topics:

- Stereotyping & Discrimination
- Sports & Culture
- Girls, Women & Education
- Health & Family Planning
- Interests of Girls & Young Women
- Human Rights & Legislation
- Political & Public Life
- Employment & the Economy
- Marriage & Family Life
- The Role of Men & Boys

Each group was provided with information on how CEDAW impacted their focus area and a number of questions to help guide the discussions about their experiences and opinions. Some groups also received information on relevant legislation, topical videos, and local data or facts to consider. Participants were asked to identify issues and challenges in relation to their particular focus area and, wherever possible, solutions and the entity or organisation that would be best suited to carry out those possible solutions.

3.1 Stereotyping & Discrimination



Article 1 of CEDAW defines discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying women’s recognition, enjoyment or exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 5 of CEDAW encourages States parties to take appropriate measures to strive to eliminate cultural and traditional practices that perpetuate discrimination and gender stereotyping of girls and women.

Common stereotypes about girls and women in the Cayman Islands identified by participants included women as sex objects; mothers being unable to perform at work; every woman being expected to be married by a certain age and also to be a mother; women are weaker and dependent on men; women who earn more than their male partners are perceived negatively and seen as a threat to the man’s masculinity; and negative perceptions about unmarried mothers, in particular as ‘baby mamas’.

This focus group sought to explore these various stereotypes, discuss how stereotypes, prejudices and certain social practices contribute to discrimination, and brainstorm ways in which stereotyping and discrimination against girls and women can be effectively addressed.

Key Issues:

- Participation in sports is seen as masculine; female athletes are viewed as trying to be “manly” or asked why they are interested in activities that are not considered feminine, even if they are successful or receive tertiary academic scholarships because they have excelled in sports.
- In the workplace, administrative positions are seen as more appropriate for females and management positions are seen as more appropriate for males.
- Employers and managers assume, often incorrectly, that younger female employees or potential employees will have children soon and cost the organisation money for maternity leave.
- Maternity benefits versus paternity benefits, particularly paid leave, reinforce the idea that the mother is the sole or primary caregiver for children and the father is less responsible.
- Gender roles are still very rigid within the context of the family; women are expected to be nurturing mothers, and even if they have a full time job they are expected to do the ‘second shift’, managing all domestic responsibilities like cooking and cleaning as well as unpaid child care.
- Domestic work and service industries are perceived as women’s work and are not well paid.
- The media creates and reinforces stereotypes, particularly through gendered language, and has a very strong presence in the community and power to communicate messages and values.
- Television shows, movies, music and other media create and reinforce stereotypes.
- Stereotypes about health, sexuality and family planning; women are seen as sex objects; double standards between men and women when it comes to expectations of monogamy.
- It is a common stereotype that once a girl has gone through puberty she is ‘ready’ to have sex.

Possible Solutions:

- Parenting programmes for mothers and fathers to learn how to educate and socialise children within the home and reduce sex role stereotyping; education, support and resources are crucial because they need time and knowledge to properly socialise children to equally value males and females and programmes should be more accessible, consider more locations and outreach.
- Education and awareness, particularly about the family, should begin at an early age.
- Regulation, policies, training and awareness for employers and managers especially to prevent discrimination that is based on sex and/or gender stereotypes, e.g. asking female job candidates about their marital status, whether they have children or intend to have children, etc.
- Assign specific employees within a company to monitor discriminatory practices that stem from sex and gender stereotypes and advise on how to promote greater gender equality.
- Encourage employers to sponsor employees who get involved with programmes and seminars that promote gender equality, for example by covering the costs or allowing paid time off work.
- Public education about the age of consent, and consider raising this age to 18 instead of 16.
- Parents should encourage and involve both boys and girls in family responsibilities, e.g. chores.
- Educate the media about the importance of gender neutral and gender inclusive language, not objectifying women or using women and female sexuality to sell products and services, etc.
- Education, training and employability skills programmes for women to increase participation in the workforce (particularly occupations and industries that are traditionally dominated by men), break gender stereotypes, and encourage young girls and other women to enter those areas.

Article 4 of CEDAW allows States parties to institute special measures aimed at accelerating equality between women and men. These would not be considered discriminatory, as the measures are required

to be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity are met. Temporary special measures could include quotas, for example, instituting a policy that all government boards, committees, tribunals and councils require qualified females to be appointed to make up at least 30% of their membership.

In 1977, Harvard academic Rosabeth Moss Kanter developed a theory in her book *Men and Women of the Corporation* that once women reached a 'critical mass' in an organisation they would no longer be seen as women and their work as managers would be evaluated. 30% is widely recognised as the 'magic number' for a critical mass of female representation and has been the basis for quotas, whether that target is to be achieved in a company, management team, national parliament or governing board.

Key Issues:

- Quotas and other temporary measures may not be well-received by the general public.
- Women and girls, especially those who directly benefit from quotas, may be viewed as not deserving of their successes, even if they are qualified and effective in their roles.
- Women often shut out other women because they believe they have worked hard to get where they are and don't want someone else to take their place or get there with "less work".

Possible Solutions:

- Education and training within structured programmes for women to be able to take on roles traditionally held by men and ensure their qualifications and effectiveness are not in question.
- Women educating and supporting other women, especially in male-dominated arenas.
- Gather feedback from men about their mindset and what would make the uncomfortable or comfortable having a woman in their area that has been traditionally dominated by men.
- More open dialogue about stereotypes, gender roles and the objectives of special measures.

2.2 Human Rights & Legislation



Article 2 of CEDAW condemns discrimination against women in all forms and obligates States parties to fully eliminate discrimination which exist as a result of legislation, policy, institutional set up, and practice.

In 2012, the Cayman Islands Government commissioned a review of all local legislation for CEDAW compliance. This review found no direct forms of discrimination that would prevent extension of CEDAW.

However, recommendations were made to look beyond gender neutrality in legislation and toward legislative changes that would promote substantive equality between men and women.

Under CEDAW, States parties must undertake a number of steps to:

- include the principle of equality in constitution or other domestic legislation and ensure practical realisation of this principle through the use of other laws; and
- change or abolish all existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which are discriminatory against women, including repealing all discriminatory penal provisions.



In the Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities, section 16(2) of the *Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009* prohibits Government from discriminating against any person on the basis of sex in respect of his or her rights under that Part of the Constitution. The two groups discussing this focus area were asked to consider in particular the effectiveness of the *Gender Equality Law, 2011* and potential amendments to the *Penal Code (2013 Revision)* that would seek to better address sexual offences in particular.

Key Issues:

- Lack of policies and procedures to support legislation and inconsistent policy where it exists.
- Lack of enforcement of legislation and policies.
- Lack of knowledge of legislation, policies, procedures, rights and responsibilities.
- Sexual harassment is perceived to be part of ‘cultural norms’ and the Cayman Islands lacks comprehensive sexual harassment legislation and lobbying efforts for this protection.
- No champions in the workplace; human resources departments/personnel often seen as “soft”.
- Fear of being labelled a “troublemaker” and of other reprisals prevents persons from coming forward if they feel they have been discriminated against; disincentives to access arbiters like the Gender Equality Tribunal because there is no protection for the identity of the complainant.
- Insecurity and lack of assertiveness amongst persons who are affected by discrimination.
- Tendency for the courts to hand down what are viewed as lenient sentences for sexual offences.
- Lack of local data to inform revision/development of legislation, policies, programmes, etc.; initiatives are adopted from other jurisdictions that do not fit local needs or do nothing at all.
- Female immigrant workers are disadvantaged and often forgotten, e.g. low wage earners are separated from their children due to strict legal provisions regarding resident dependents for work permit holders and divorces are immediately referred to the Department of Immigration for enforcement of relevant provisions when residency and employment rights are lost.
- Domestic helpers are excluded from the legal requirement to have a pension account and contributions under the *National Pensions Law (2012 Revision)* and are often ill-treated.
- Teen mothers are penalised for their pregnancies but teen fathers are not.
- Legislative drafting continues to use only masculine terms in laws, relying on the *Interpretation Law (1995 Revision)* to provide that words importing the masculine gender include females.
- Women won’t go to court to seek or enforce maintenance orders because they feel the system is humiliating; accessing the court and legal advice can also be difficult due to the costs involved.
- Some men would rather go to prison than make maintenance payments.
- Rape victims suffering post-traumatic stress disorder often find it difficult to cope with trials.
- The feminisation of poverty; most people living in poverty in the Cayman Islands are women and mothers, which directly affects children and has far reaching effects on society.
- The right to non-discrimination is only in connection with another right in the *Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009* and there is no legal basis for promoting equality across the board.
- It is difficult to understand the full legal framework that deals with discrimination, particularly because separate laws seem to have been enacted to fill gaps rather than approaching the issue holistically, and people have limited resources (time and money) to stand up for their rights.
- Unequal pay for work of equal value continues to be an issue; study after study proves income gaps and pay discrimination exist but Government is not seen to be addressing this problem.
- Certain provisions in the *Adoption of Children Law (2003 Revision)* and *Adoption of Children Law, 2013* (the latter is not yet in force) are considered to be based on gender stereotypes.

- The *Employment Law, 2004* is not yet in force; the *Labour Law (2011 Revision)* is discriminatory and does not have adequate protections, e.g. for maternity leave and paternity leave.
- Only two discrimination complaints have been heard by the Gender Equality Tribunal in over two years, but there have certainly been more instances of prohibited discrimination.
- Lack of advocacy, particularly from private individuals and groups; not many champions for gender issues in the Legislative Assembly, but at the same time Government pushed for labour justice and human rights, not private individuals or organisations as in other countries.
- Employers do not want allegations or even hints about discrimination to be aired, and especially not to be made public, which can frustrate resolution of complaints or even queries from staff.
- Gender stereotypes have made it more difficult for a strong, outspoken woman to get a job and to climb the corporate ladder because she is perceived differently than a strong, outspoken man.
- The honest belief defence to a charge of defilement of a girl between the ages of 12 and 15 places the onus on the victim to state her age rather than on the perpetrator to ascertain her true age, which can allow for the potential exploitation of young girls by significantly older men.
- There is a high rate of child sexual abuse in the Cayman Islands, particularly of girls; legislation is perceived as giving the children hardly any rights and the perpetrator all of the rights and there can be very long time delays to deal with such allegations in the court system.

Possible Solutions:

- Require employers to develop policies and procedures that are consistent with legislation that prohibits discrimination and promote best practices for greater equality in employment.
- Mandatory training for persons who have roles that include intervention and enforcement where discrimination or sexual harassment is alleged, such as human resources personnel.
- Training and education for all persons on legislation, policies and procedures; consistent and targeted to change cultural perceptions that prevent people from standing up for themselves.
- Establishment of an Ombudsman to advocate for employees and provide a mechanism separate and apart from Government or the employer to deal with reviews/appeals/complaints.
- Consider keeping the name of a complainant before the Gender Equality Tribunal confidential if it is in the interest of natural justice, and allow evidence to be given *in camera*.
- Ensure appropriate protections for persons alleging discrimination and enforce penalties against those who perpetrate victimisation, which is criminalised in the *Gender Equality Law, 2011*.
- Review sentencing practices and guidelines for sexual offences; consider minimum sentences.
- When laws are drafted or amended gender neutral or gender inclusive language should be used.
- NGOs and private sector employers should help with education and lobbying and partner with public sector organisations to promote best practices, e.g. dealing with complaints.
- Public education to break stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls.
- Extension of CEDAW will help encourage reporting and accountability to make changes.
- There should be strict liability for defilement in all cases and higher penalties for girls under 12.
- Establishment of a hotline that is answered off-island for reporting sexual abuse (including suspected cases of defilement where the relationship is 'consensual' but the girl is underage).
- Publishing the names of sexual predators, timely assessment of reports of child sexual abuse, empowering the Department of Children and Family Service to act quickly on reports.
- Enact *guardian ad litem* programme and ensure other provisions of the *Children Law (2012 Revision)* are enforced to protect children, particularly in cases of child sexual abuse.

Article 6 of CEDAW states that all appropriate measures, including legislation, must be taken to suppress all forms of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution of women.

There was a consensus that these practices exist in the Cayman Islands but participants struggled with the definition of “trafficking” in particular and felt that it is important to get a clear idea of what is meant by the term. Examples were cited of women being brought into the jurisdiction from other countries for only one or two nights (and it was noted that their passports may be taken away while they are here and they may or may not be paid for sex work) and also that bartenders and servers may be brought into the jurisdiction on work permits but then are turned into prostitutes by their employers.

General Recommendation No. 18 of the CEDAW Committee recognises that eliminating all forms of discrimination against women includes ensuring disabled women and girls have equal access to education, employment, health services and social security and are able to participate in all areas of social and cultural life. Disabled women suffer “double discrimination” linked to their special living conditions and are considered a vulnerable group and area of special concern.

The focus group agreed that disabled girls and women are particularly vulnerable to experiencing discrimination because their basic rights have not been established and recommended enactment of disability legislation and public education and awareness on these issues.

General Recommendation No. 19 of the CEDAW Committee proposes compensation to victims of sexual violence. This can be achieved either through a State-funded victim compensation scheme or provisions within the Penal Code for damages to be paid by the perpetrator to the victim.

Currently, there are no such provisions in the Cayman Islands legislation and there was no consensus either in support of or against such a recommendation. Some persons only supported the idea if the perpetrator was financially responsible and others were very much against the idea in principle. The idea of alternative sentencing that would provide something for the victim was also discussed as a possibility.

2.3 Sports & Culture



Article 13 of CEDAW encourages States parties to eliminate discrimination against women in social arenas. This includes ensuring women have equal rights to participate in recreational activities, sports and cultural life, including the arts, religious practices and cultural rituals.

The focus group felt that it is important to ensure all women and girls have the opportunity to participate in recreational activities, sports and cultural life in a safe and supportive environment which preserves their dignity and upholds their rights and respect of the individual. Women and girls should also be more involved in these activities at all levels and in all functions and roles, as they are underrepresented and often behind the scenes when they are included. The knowledge of women and girls must be used to contribute to the development of sports and culture and women and girls must themselves recognise the intrinsic value of recreational activities, sports and cultural life and their contribution to personal development and the community.

Key Issues:

- Female athletes, administrators and sports teams receive unequal opportunities, support, pay and other benefits when compared with their male counterparts
- There is a lack of visibility for female athletes and sports teams, even when they outperform their male equivalents on a regional or international level.
- The local media does not provide equal coverage to female athletes, sports teams and leagues.
- Families are unable or unwilling to transport girls to sporting events, practices and training.
- Stereotypes about athletes as uneducated “jocks” incapable of also performing well academically.
- Sexual harassment of female athletes, including unwanted sexual advances and uncomfortable comments being made, which often seem based on the revealing athletic clothing.
- Lack of female coaches and support and lack of opportunities for those few female coaches.
- Lack of female role models and lack of empowerment of women in leadership positions and opportunities for them to be promoted within governmental entities.
- Older women in particular have fewer opportunities to be involved in sports and recreation.
- Little recognition of the important roles that women play behind-the-scenes.
- Lack of opportunity for female musicians, who may feel that they need to leave the Cayman Islands in order to seek better opportunities abroad.
- Organisations for cultural activities are not promoted well enough.
- Women who work in the music industry often have to stay out late in night clubs and bars; this is perceived negatively by society due to stereotypes but men do not face the same perceptions.

Possible Solutions:

- Government policy on athletic support with clear, transparent criteria and application procedures to equitably consider all elite athletes, e.g. basing decisions on rankings and performance.
- Support freelance female sports reporters to cover events and write articles on female athletes, sports teams and leagues; identify allies to volunteer their time and empower and train them.
- Promote women who are behind the scenes in sports as role models alongside the athletes.
- Female athletes should be more vocal in advocating for themselves and for gender equality.
- Community efforts to rally more female involvement, potentially through a women’s association.
- Public education and awareness about the importance and benefits of sports (physical activity, teamwork, platform for scholarships for higher education, etc.) so families prioritise sports.
- Develop a forum for female athletes to discuss sexual harassment and how women and girls can react to and combat unwanted sexual conduct or attention in athletics.
- The Ministries of Sports and Health and other stakeholders should work together to rebrand sports to highlight the health benefits of physical activity, positive impact on academics and self-esteem, and opportunity to learn important life skills such as teamwork, dedication and balance.
- Women in leadership positions and positions of power should use those positions to support other women and create the platform to empower and increase visibility for female athletes.
- Educate parents to break gender roles, norms and stereotypes (e.g. by assigning household chores equally among children instead of on the basis that boys are strong and girls are weak) and give their sons and daughters equal opportunities to participate in sports (e.g. arrange carpooling groups so athletes have easier access to training, games, sporting events, etc.).

- Employers should embrace the importance of sports and promote and facilitate employees' involvement in physical activities to create a happier, healthier and more productive workforce, e.g. by providing vouchers to offset costs; including sporting and recreational activities as part of their employee benefit programme (gym memberships, corporate sporting teams, etc.); providing or facilitating exercise classes at lunch time; allowing flexi-time to participate in activities, etc.
- Encourage girls and women with disabilities to be more involved in sports and recreational activities and better promote special needs athletes and programmes that currently exist.
- Encourage involvement of older women in sports by developing special events just for them; ensure that there is a safe and healthy environment for them to be involved in physical activity.
- Women in particular should support other women and girls and help them to obtain skills and qualifications for careers in sports, including coaching, sports journalism and sports psychology.
- More media coverage and visibility to increase participation in cultural activities.
- A central YouTube channel to promote local female musicians, dancers and other artists, with guidance on appropriate use and tips for internet activity by young girls to keep them safe.
- Older women in the community who have a lot of knowledge and skills can help with existing programmes or to form new ones to teach younger children about local culture.

The focus group also noted that many people, particularly younger kids, cannot identify what Caymanian culture is and there is a need for increased cultural education in schools for all ages. Caymanian artists, musicians, dancers, poets and others with a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience of Caymanian culture – particularly older persons who are no longer working – could serve as role models, assist with educational activities, and encourage students to pursue arts and cultural activities, including as careers.

General Recommendation No. 18 of the CEDAW Committee recognises that eliminating all forms of discrimination against women includes ensuring disabled women and girls do not face particular barriers or practices that limit their involvement in recreational activities, sports and cultural life. The focus group agreed the issues facing disabled girls and women in these areas are general discrimination issues relevant to all disabled people and not unique in relation to the experiences of disabled boys and men.

2.4 Political & Public Life



Article 7 of CEDAW encourages States parties to work towards eliminating discrimination against women in political and public life and to ensure women have the right to vote, to hold office, and to actively participate in political parties, lobby groups and NGOs.

Article 8 of CEDAW encourages States parties to take action to ensure women the opportunity to represent their governments at the international level and participate in international organisations.

Focus group participants agreed that over the last fifty years women in the Cayman Islands have “come a long way” in terms of their involvement in political and public life, largely due to the many strong female advocates. However, despite formal legal equality there are still a number of barriers and discriminatory practices preventing women from participating fully in these arenas. The group agreed that women still

need to be better represented and highlighted the importance of women being successful and supported by the community not purely based on sex but because they are the right women for the job at hand.

Key Issues:

- Competent and experienced women have run for political office in higher numbers in recent years and electoral slates have had an increasingly larger proportion of female candidates, but women are not any more likely to be elected and female representation has in fact regressed.
- Women may be reluctant to vote because they are not as confident in their ability to make an informed decision and/or they are frustrated and feel their vote has no influence on who is elected and on national decision-making; often, women will consult with male family members for advice and direction, even though there are usually more women voting in elections.
- Issues that women face after being elected are intimidating, so that even when women break through the challenges leading into an election they are reluctant to face these further issues.
- Younger women in particular face many barriers in the political arena and in public life, as patriarchy and stereotypes about youth and gender give those women “two strikes”.
- Women are still seen as having a primary obligation to their families and within the domestic sphere, and there are still perceptions that political and public life is the realm of men.
- Women – particularly single women – who have families and financial responsibilities take huge risks running for political office because of these obligations and the sacrifices that must be made in terms of their careers, finances and time spent with their families; single female heads of household in particular may not be able to risk giving up a stable source of income to pursue a political career or have the time, money or networks to campaign for office or be a legislator.
- Women are still largely responsible for unpaid childcare and work in the home and have many additional demands on their time and energy; men do not face these same issues and usually have the support of their families, particularly their wives, to manage the domestic sphere.
- Female politicians, legislators and other public officials are often held to a different standard than their male counterparts, particularly in terms of stereotypes about personal traits and how certain characteristics and behaviour are perceived in women versus men.
- Often, other women are the worst critics of female officials and are seen as more likely to make personal attacks on female political candidates, legislators and other public officials; women may also find it even more difficult to receive criticism from other women, even if it is legitimate.
- Traditionally feminine careers may prevent women from standing for election or taking on high-level positions, or women may pursue other careers to better financially support their families.
- Women tend to be more concerned about their reputations, what people think about them and protecting their families and loved ones, which may contribute to an unwillingness to enter political or public life which would automatically make them the object of scrutiny and critique.
- Objectification and sexualisation of females causes women in political and public life to be judged on their physical appearance rather than on their qualifications, experience, competence or performance and also to suffer sexual harassment; often, assumptions are also made about “what they did to get there”, i.e. assuming women must have used sex to their advantage.
- Women may not reach certain high-level positions in public life because of various assumptions and stereotypes about females, motherhood and family responsibilities, including concerns that they will need to take maternity leave and other time off care for their families and home life.

Possible Solutions:

- Empower and educate women about their rights, the investment and risks involved in entering politics and public life, and how to stand up for themselves and challenge discrimination.
- Educate all people about these issues and discrimination against women; include graphs and statistics to prove there is gender inequality and show what the problems are in these areas.
- Public education to break stereotypes about masculinity and femininity that cause characteristics such as boldness and authoritativeness to be seen positively in men and negatively in women.
- Give young girls more opportunities to voice their opinions on issues that matter to them.
- Use different methods and approaches, including social media, school-based activities and other avenues, to reach children specifically so they know and understand their right to vote, to have their voice heard, and to participate in political and public life and national decision-making.
- Promote education and awareness about mothers and fathers having equal responsibility for children and male and female partners having equal responsibility in the home so that women have the time, energy and willingness to be more involved in political and public life.
- Encourage the community, and particularly women, to support female political candidates, legislators and other public officials – not by agreeing with everything they do or say and not holding them to account, but by respectfully disagreeing when there is a difference of opinion, refraining from unfair criticism and backstabbing, and calling out discrimination when it occurs.
- Educate girls and young women on how women fought for the right to vote and the continuing struggle to fully participate in political and public life so they can better appreciate their rights, the importance of their vote, and their ability to effect change and to make a difference.
- Encourage the development of networks of women to support each other in political and public life and see one woman's success as an opportunity to create their own.

2.5 Girls, Women & Education



Article 10 of CEDAW encourages States parties to act to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in education. This includes giving women and girls and men and boys equal access to education and vocational guidance; the same curricula, examinations, standards for teaching and equipment; and equal access to scholarships and grants.

The focus group believed there were certain barriers and discriminatory practices in the Cayman Islands that affect the rights of girls and women to have the same access as boys and men to participate in all levels of the education system as well as in vocational training. Participants identified and discussed a variety of issues, many of which are also relevant to the educational system more broadly, as well as possible solutions to promote gender equality.

Key Issues:

- Cultural norms, gender stereotypes and convention seem to cause parents to discourage girls and women from taking practical subjects (e.g. woodwork) or pursuing technical and vocational courses and careers (e.g. plumbing), especially if they are academically inclined.
- Educators and guidance counsellors can sometimes limit options available to girls and women or discourage their dreams, as they see many subjects, careers and industries as being gendered.

- Educators and parents tend to influence students' choices of school subjects or courses based on convention and gender stereotypes rather than the individual's interests, strengths and goals.
- Negative perceptions about pregnant school girls and more mature single women who become pregnant while they are in the education system or single mothers pursuing their education.
- It is difficult for pregnant and parenting girls to stay in school and finish secondary education, especially if they are in private school, over the age of 16, or have to consider child care.
- Safety of female students in predominantly male educational environments.
- Fathers are not held accountable for teen pregnancies in the same way that mothers are and they are not as involved in parenting programmes and other interventions and support systems.

Possible Solutions:

- Career expositions should include female employees representing traditional male dominated fields to give girls and women role models and encourage them to train in practical subjects.
- Reach out to the wider Caribbean for examples of women in practical jobs that can serve as role models for local girls and women; consider cultural exchanges as a part of this initiative.
- Educate and empower parents, educators and other stakeholders to break gender stereotypes and encourage girls to pursue whatever subjects, course of study and career they would like.
- Schools can reach out to parents to encourage girls to do vocational options for their subjects.
- The curriculum should include a mandatory rotation for all students in subjects that are typically seen as masculine or feminine, e.g. home economics, woodwork, electrical technology, design.
- Listen to and respect students and parents who share their experiences and express concerns.
- The private sector should help Government determine labour market needs and communicate desirable courses, qualifications and skills that would then be considered in awarding Education Council scholarships and in advising girls and women about job and career opportunities.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective and improving the partnership between Government and the private sector on scholarships to ensure criteria, advertising and counselling is equitable.
- Promote technical and vocational opportunities in the Cayman Islands to girls and women.
- Public education and awareness about how gender stereotypes and cultural norms limit the opportunities that girls and women have to choose their educational path and careers.
- Comprehensively examine the process by which students choose their subjects in secondary school and also in tertiary institutions to ensure girls and women have the same opportunities as boys and men when choosing subjects, classes, qualifications and courses of study.
- Consider various options to assist with child care so girls and women can still attend school.
- Strengthen the wraparound support system for pregnant and parenting schoolgirls, especially for those over the mandatory school age, so that they can complete their secondary education.
- Review legislation, policies and programmes to identify ways that fathers can be encouraged to have more responsibility for their children to allow mothers to continue their education.
- Promote the achievements of single mothers who are positive role models for finishing their education, raising their families, having careers, and contributing to the community.

Participants were also generally concerned about underachievement, particularly in secondary schools, the quality of education for students in lower sets, and the stigma that surrounds the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre and its potential unintended consequence that students do not try to pass external examinations at the end of year 11 because they know they have a “second chance”.

General Recommendation No. 18 of the CEDAW Committee recognises that eliminating all forms of discrimination against women includes ensuring disabled women and girls do not face particular barriers or practices that limit their access to education.

The focus group agreed that there is a general lack of visibility of disabled people in the community and of attention to their specific needs. Physical access at school sites and accommodations for disabled and special needs students were highlighted as pressing issues. Mandatory proficiency examinations were also viewed as barriers for disabled girls and women pursuing vocational courses at tertiary institutions and registering for employment services. Participants highlighted the forthcoming National Disability Policy, legislation, lobbying and public education and awareness as possible solutions to these issues regarding disabled girls and women.

2.6 Employment & the Economy



Article 11 of CEDAW encourages States parties to eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace. Women must have the same employment rights as men and provisions for maternity leave and special protection against harmful work during pregnancy.

Article 13 of CEDAW encourages States parties to eliminate discrimination against women in the various economic arenas, such as ensuring women have equal access to family benefits, loans and credit.



The two groups discussing this focus area were asked to consider the impact of the *Gender Equality Law, 2011* on human resources practices; issues surrounding pregnancy, maternity leave and post-natal practices; and the economic benefits of gender equality alongside other pertinent issues. Participants agreed that if women have equal access to employment and economic opportunities there will be huge benefits for individuals, families, employers, the economy and the wider community because families will be healthier and more secure.

Key Issues:

- Policies and laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace are not adequately enforced.
- Glass ceiling for women at middle-level management, particularly in professional occupations, even though they have the ability and aspiration to develop and move further in their careers.
- Many women still view themselves and other women as not good enough to advance to managerial roles and think a man would do a better job, even if they are equally or more qualified and experienced and would be just as capable or even better in the role in question.
- Directors and partners in professional firms are overwhelmingly male and many companies and industries are not female-friendly or family-friendly and have an “old boys club” mentality.
- Female managers are concentrated in “soft” roles such as human resources.
- Decisions that could and/or should be made by a female employee or manager may be deferred to a male employee who is at the same level or higher up because the woman is not respected.

- Women and men often do not receive equal remuneration, even when they have the same qualifications and experience and are in the same role and performing equally well.
- Even when pay grades are established to encourage fair remuneration, the wide variations within grades still allow for significant gender gaps, and men also tend to receive higher bonuses.
- Commitment is often measured in terms of hours put in rather than outputs or achievements, which disadvantages women who work smarter and harder but put in fewer hours than men; many employers also focus solely on time clocked, billable hours and profits as indicators of an employee's contributions to a company rather than considering productivity, efficiency, etc.
- Company policies that prohibit employees from discussing their remuneration and bonuses, often on threat of dismissal, make it difficult for women to know if discrimination is occurring.
- Some jobs are still advertised as requiring male candidates.
- Even though women are becoming more educated and their labour force participation rate has steadily increased, society is slow to shift its view on gender roles and the place of women.
- Gender stereotypes about responsibility for unpaid childcare, elder care and domestic chores affect men as well, discouraging them from participating fully in their family life; in small and medium firms in particular men may be asked "Where is your wife?" if they do the "school run".
- Masculine language is used to describe many job categories and roles and is reinforced through various media, e.g. referring to policemen rather than police officers, "men at work" road signs.
- Women are seen as not committed to their jobs if they stay home with sick children or leave the office to collect children from daycare or school or to attend school reporting sessions, etc.
- Women who are breastfeeding or who otherwise need access to their children during working hours often find it difficult to get a job that allows them to attend to these responsibilities.
- Women are less likely than men to try and negotiate for higher starting salaries and remuneration packages, raises, bonuses and other benefits, which likely contributes to the gender income gap.
- On a fundamental level, work in the Cayman Islands economy is incompatible with marriage and family life; at every stage of having a family, women face discrimination in the workplace.
- Maternity leave is not adequate, particularly the amount of paid leave, and adoption leave is restrictive and does not cover families that foster children; adoption leave for private sector employees is particularly problematic because it can take many years for the process to be finalised but such leave is only mandated where the adopted child is under three years of age.
- Some women are fired from their jobs when they become pregnant, particularly if they notify their employer during their probationary period when no reason has to be given for dismissal.
- When children are sick the responsibility almost always falls to the mother to take care of the child or seek alternative arrangements, even if both parents are working in the paid economy.
- External factors can influence fertility rates and family choices, e.g. high costs of having children, immigration policies, motherhood is not seen as compatible with career goals, discouragement from mentors and supervisors (including other females) if they want to "move up".
- With more teen pregnancies and children born to younger mothers and the age of retirement increasing, grandparents and other extended family members are no longer able to assist with daycare or afterschool care for children as in the past because they are still working themselves.
- Childcare is very expensive and this makes it difficult for mothers to participate in the paid economy; single mothers are further marginalised from the paid economy for this reason.
- Women lose opportunities for experience when they take maternity leave or temporarily opt out of the workforce to care for their families and have a harder time re-entering the paid economy.

- Women are often not empowered to stand up for themselves in relationships and ask their husbands and fathers of their children to be equal partners in the home and make decisions about allocation of duties that are not based solely on gender; this also means children are growing up in these homes and having stereotypes reinforced about men and women do.
- It's harder for women to be accepted in corporate networking cliques outside working hours.
- For expatriate women workers, men may abuse the immigration system to harm past partners when a relationship breaks down and threaten their employment or residency status.
- Gender stereotypes place a lot of pressure on women to be primary caregivers and “good”, nurturing mothers, which conflicts with their participation in the paid economy and workforce; some women may also be afraid to leave their young children with caregivers.
- Some women have received deserved promotions only if males were not available; they were seen as the only option by management and suffered discrimination afterward as well as a result.
- Lack of awareness and understanding of the *Gender Equality Law, 2011*.

Possible Solutions:

- Better awareness and enforcement of laws and policies that promote gender equality; consider amendments to legislation and policies to make them more relevant and user-friendly and, in turn, make the labour market more equal, family-friendly and compatible with parenthood.
- Employers should be encouraged, or even legally required, to create written anti-discrimination policies that are relevant and create clear reporting lines and multiple routes for complaints.
- There needs to be a cultural paradigm shift in how we all think about gender roles.
- Public education and awareness, particularly of the younger generation, about gender issues in employment and participation in the labour force and paid economy and how gender roles, norms and stereotypes contribute to discrimination and inequality; this must be proactive and done in a way that people will understand (particularly with regard to language) and that will reach a wide cross-section of residents, e.g. through schools, churches and civil society groups.
- Promotion and public education and awareness about the benefits of greater gender equality and inclusiveness in the workplace, particularly how gender equality and family-friendly policies positively impact a company's bottom line and benefit its current and future employees.
- More buy-in from senior management and leadership to promote equality in the workplace.
- Unless there is a legitimate business need to set standard hours, encourage employers to allow employees to use flex-time to accommodate family and other responsibilities, leave the premises during breaks as necessary, and work from home; encourage employers to think creatively, utilise technology and develop necessary monitoring mechanisms to facilitate these benefits.
- Public education and awareness and incentives for fathers to share parental responsibilities.
- Larger employers or business complexes should consider providing on-site daycare and/or afterschool care for their (tenants') employees' children, either as part of their benefits or at a cost that is not prohibitive for employees; Government should lead the way in this regard.
- All employers should have a clean and private room for nursing mothers to breastfeed or express breast milk, which would include an area to store breast milk separately and safely.
- Employers can also support new parents in other creative ways, e.g. provision of car seats.
- Allow job sharing, especially for maternity leave cover, which would also allow mothers to potentially extend the time that they are able to stay at home to nurture their children.
- Improving workforce values, focusing on other positive indicators in addition to profits.

- Develop special classes within the curriculum at schools and colleges or provided by NGOs to prepare girls and women for the challenges that they will face in the workforce and give them tools to overcome barriers wherever possible, e.g. training in the art of negotiating.
- Include coverage of permanent birth control measures in all health insurance plans.
- Allowing Sunday trading could give women more options for working hours and shifts and more opportunities to earn income and also increase the amount of time that one parent is at home.
- Amend laws to provide more generous maternity leave and paternity leave benefits (4-6 months maternity leave was considered ideal for physical recovery, nursing and bonding) and introduce greater flexibility, e.g. in how the leave is taken and by which parent, allowing part-time return, ways to fund paid leave other than directly by the employer and based on the individual's salary.
- The private sector could consider creative savings or insurance schemes that would help people save money (that will earn returns) to be drawn down or allow them to pay premiums and then make claims when they have children or other life situations arise that require unpaid leave or temporary exit from the labour force, e.g. new insurance policies, supplements to health or life insurance policies, accounts linked to pensions, or other investments or insurance mechanisms.
- Explore the possibility of new revenue measures that would be earmarked for Government to provide financial benefits for maternity/paternity/family leave either at a basic rate (which should be above the poverty line) or tied to the employee's salary at the time of the leave being taken.
- Introduce more flexibility in allowances and policies for sick leave or compassionate leave so that employees can care for sick children or elderly relatives as necessary but still be paid.
- Build networks of women to help other women rather than compete against one another; women, especially managers, should support and mentor other women in the workplace and create opportunities for them, including promoting them when they are qualified and deserving.
- Review labour market conditions and consider strategies to make participation compatible with parenthood and the workforce more dynamic and flexible to ensure parents can meet the needs of employees as well as the needs of their families; consider legislative provisions where appropriate and necessary, as it is doubtful many companies will take the lead on their own.
- Government should look at employment and the economy holistically, in the context of what we as a society want to achieve, and mainstream gender in all its actions; it should also take the lead in implementing best practices and creating a more equitable and family-friendly workplace.
- Review courses, including syllabi, textbooks and other materials, for discrimination and other opportunities to create more equal opportunities for women and girls and men and boys.
- Ensure men and boys are also targeted in all initiatives; they must also receive messages that support gender equality and understand the importance of these issues and why they matter.

CEDAW Committee General Recommendation No. 18 recognises that eliminating all forms of discrimination against women includes ensuring disabled women and girls do not face particular barriers or practices that limit their access to employment. The focus groups agreed this is an issue and noted that women who are illiterate or have criminal convictions, health issues and/or substance abuse issues also face more discrimination in employment due to these circumstances and need additional support.

Participants noted women are now generally more educated than men and qualified females are reaching middle-management positions, raising questions about what will happen in the workforce over the next 10-20 years. They were optimistic that circumstances are improving for women but agreed much more

needs to be done to eliminate all forms of discrimination and reform the workplace and economy to be more accessible and compatible with family life. Participants also stressed that strategies should include realistic goals and be regularly evaluated to determine their effectiveness and how they can be improved.

2.7 Health & Family Planning



Article 12 of CEDAW encourages States parties to eliminate discrimination against women in health care and provide girls and women with equal access to health care services, including those services that are related to family planning.

The focus group discussed issues such as provision of family planning advice and methods; pre- and post-natal health care services; access to affordable, effective and wide-ranging family planning methods; treatment for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections; and teaching sexual and reproductive health to children and adolescents.

Key Issues:

- Stigma against girls and women who have HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Girls and women are often embarrassed or unwilling to seek reproductive health care and family planning services, particularly if they are young and/or unmarried or their parents don't approve.
- Waiting times for appointments can discourage access to services, particularly family planning.
- There are general concerns about confidentiality in the provision of health services and family planning advice; women who live in the Sister Islands are particularly concerned and may travel to Grand Cayman for medical treatment instead of seeking it at home due to these concerns.
- Women living in the Sister Islands and eastern districts don't have the same level of community support and access to many programmes and services, e.g. parenting classes; they generally have reasonable access to health care services, including family planning and prescription medication, because there are district clinics and many eastern district women travel to George Town daily for work, but they may need to travel farther than other women in order to access specialised services or if they have complications that cannot be dealt with at their local hospital or clinic.
- When girls and women do not access treatment and services it affects the accuracy of local data and statistics that could be used to ascertain health issues and develop effective responses.
- Lack of dissemination of information about available services and other relevant information.
- Only Caymanians have access to certain free contraceptive measures and there are a number of other barriers to access, which can lead to unplanned pregnancies and implications for the local economy, families and society when family planning information and methods are not accessible.
- Permanent birth control methods can be very costly (they are not included in the free family planning services that are provided to Caymanians) and are often not covered by insurance.
- Even though they must be covered in all health insurance policies, prescription contraceptives and contraceptive devices are still not affordable for most people (i.e. the co-pay if covered).
- Pressure from partners to not use certain contraceptive measures (condoms in particular).
- Substance use and abuse (including alcohol) is a barrier for successful contraception.
- Often, religious teachings within homes, schools and churches discourage contraceptive use.
- Schools affiliated with churches are less likely to teach sex education and contraceptive use.

- Parents are often uninvolved in their children's lives and education; many tend to be nonchalant or object to or do not support them learning about their health (including reproductive health) and family planning in school or accessing health care services and family planning services.
- There is no statutorily defined age at which young people can get access to sexual, reproductive or other health care without the consent of their parents, which erodes the rights of young women who wish to access contraceptives and other reproductive health services and can lead to higher rates of teenage pregnancy when girls are denied access to contraceptive methods.
- Girls under the age of 16 are denied access to contraceptive measures because they are legally unable to consent to sex, but they are still getting pregnant and often self-harm and/or do not seek proper pre-natal care because their pregnancies must be reported to the police as abuse.
- Women may seek medical attention following illegal abortion and health practitioners may treat them and not make a police report (procuring an abortion is a crime), but there is not enough information to know how common illegal abortion may be and what effects it may have on women and their health, or to know how many girls and women travel abroad for abortions.

Possible Solutions:

- Structured, factual, comprehensive and age-appropriate education about sex, health care, family planning, contraceptives and proper use, risky behaviour (including substance use), and the many resources that are available; the age at which children and adolescents are ready to receive this information will vary and parents should address these issues in the home whenever questions arise and the topic should be addressed in schools starting in year 6, the end of primary school.
- Coordinated and visible public education and awareness on availability of contraceptive methods and devices and their proper use; treatments and services available for sexually transmitted infections, particularly HIV; and the use and abuse of alcohol and other substances and how they impact decision-making, risks of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, etc.
- Provide information in areas where it is accessible and can be viewed or taken away more easily and without having to ask for it, e.g. outside the Health Services Authority hospitals and clinics.
- Include relevant incentives as part of public awareness campaigns, e.g. vouchers for pap smears.
- Education to eliminate taboos surrounding certain areas of health care and family planning.
- Doctors should provide all patients with more information and options for family planning.
- Improve ease of access to family planning methods and educate the public to remove the stigma around certain methods and around access, particularly by younger and unmarried women.
- Empower girls and women to take control of their bodies and reproductive health, including by providing them with all of the information necessary to make good decisions.
- Where safe and reasonable, allow pharmacists to dispense contraceptive refills without the patient needing to see the doctor again, which may be a barrier due to time, cost, etc.
- Expand the programme in schools where students have to care for a doll like a baby beyond those who take Child Development as a subject, e.g. as a part of Life Skills for all students.
- Develop legislative or policy provisions that would facilitate girls' and young women's access to confidential sexual and reproductive health services at as early an age as possible, and also consider allowing girls to access contraceptive methods at an earlier age than 16.
- Boys and men also need to be educated about these issues and responsible for reproductive health and family planning; some initiatives should be co-educational, for boys and girls together.

- Carefully review circumstances where doctors are legally able to terminate pregnancies, including consideration of the health and wellbeing of the mother and of foetal abnormalities.
- Develop systems to collect more and better quality data about health issues such as rates of sexually transmitted infections, access to health and family planning services and other metrics.

2.8 Marriage & Family Life



Article 16 of CEDAW encourages States parties to ensure that women and men have equal rights to choose a spouse and to marry; the same rights and responsibilities within marriage and on divorce; and equal rights in all matters relating to the birth, adoption and raising of children. States parties must also ensure that children are not betrothed or married and that a minimum age for marriage is established by law.

Article 9 of CEDAW encourages States parties to ensure women equal rights to change or retain their nationality and that of their children.

Key Issues:

- Women may be prevented from marrying because their family won't approve and continue to live with their parents, denied the same right to enter into marriage as their male siblings.
- Stereotypical gender roles are very pervasive in marriage and family life; some legal provisions are even based on the concept that men are superior to women, e.g. the *Marriage Law (2010 Revision)* allows a mother to consent to a child aged 16-17 to marry only if there is no father.
- Women who have legal residence through their husbands often stay in violent marriages in order to stay in the Cayman Islands and/or to not to lose rights in relation to their children.
- Some women may enter into marriages of convenience for immigration purposes because they are unable to obtain the right to work or security of tenure in their own right.
- Many women are dependent on husbands or partners for financial support; if the relationship breaks down they may be left destitute, especially if they are unemployed or were homemakers, and men often do not comply with maintenance orders for ex-partners and/or their children.
- After divorce or separation everyone expects children to live with the mother and the father to become the visiting or absent parent; fathers may not support children financially or emotionally either and women may feel "stuck" and not know their right to a more equitable settlement.
- Many women do not seek maintenance orders because the cost is prohibitive; sometimes the legal and court costs are even larger than the amount of maintenance that will be received.
- It is up to the person who is entitled to or has been ordered to receive maintenance to follow up; when the only option is coming back to the courts again and again to request enforcement, women may not do so because the process is difficult, costly, time consuming and frustrating.
- Some men will choose to remain unemployed and seek financial resources elsewhere (e.g. family or friends) or work "under the table" in order to avoid being ordered to pay maintenance.
- As women entered the paid workforce and expanded into other roles beyond stereotypical gender roles, femininity was restructured but masculinity was not; men are often unsure what their new role should be and may feel marginalised, especially if they are not the breadwinner.

Possible Solutions:

- The age for marriage should be 18 in all cases; parental consent provisions should be removed.
- Immigration legislation and policies should be reviewed with a gender lens for discriminatory provisions and requirements and considering the vulnerabilities of non-Caymanian women.
- Improve and promote the availability of legal aid for women to seek maintenance orders, etc.
- Include education about family planning, parental responsibility, healthy relationships, financial management, family life, gender stereotypes, etc. in the school curriculum for all students.
- Public education and awareness is needed to break gender stereotypes and women also need to be empowered to break these barriers in social interactions and demand equality.
- Men need to be held accountable for parental responsibility and housework and this could be encouraged by increasing incentives (e.g. providing more paternity leave, including with pay) for men to bond with their children and form more equitable partnerships with their spouses.
- Masculinity needs to be restructured so that the perspectives of boys and men can change and they are able to express the full range of human emotions and be better partners and fathers.
- A small claims court with a simple and inexpensive process to seek maintenance that is due.

General Recommendation 19 of the CEDAW Committee explicitly states that the definition of discrimination also extends to gender-based violence. This includes domestic violence, rape and other forms of sexual assault that are overwhelmingly perpetrated against girls and women. The CEDAW Committee recommends that sanctions, penalties and compensation for victims should be introduced to send a firm message by the State that these acts of violence against women will not be tolerated and also provide the recognition that girls and women are in need of special legal protection in these areas.

The *Protection from Domestic Violence Law, 2010* seeks to protect persons in domestic relationships and makes certain civil remedies (protection, occupation and tenancy orders) available to all persons in such relationships, regardless of their marital status. The Law repealed and replaced the previous *Summary Jurisdiction (Domestic Violence) Law (1998 Revision)* and also defines abuse as including all forms of coercion and deprivation of liberty; recognises economic/financial abuse as a form of domestic violence; provides for compensation as well as payment of medical expenses incurred by victims; and allows for persons such as police officers and social workers to apply for orders on behalf of victims of domestic violence.

Key Issues:

- Domestic violence is perceived differently than similar violence in other settings; people would agree that assault in general is a crime but many feel domestic violence is a “private matter”.
- Oftentimes, the onus is on the victim to “press charges” against the perpetrator instead of the police bringing the charges for the offence on behalf of the Crown, as with other crimes.
- If a woman makes a report to the police about being raped by her husband it may not be considered rape by the authorities or dealt with properly because of the spousal relationship.
- Police officers have not been given sufficient information regarding the procedural mechanisms to bring about a charge or to apply for orders on behalf of victims of domestic violence, and they have also not been told what evidence they would need to present in order to ensure a successful prosecution or protection order or to file criminal charges (e.g. for financial abuse).
- Senior officers are less likely to attend the Domestic Violence Intervention Training Programme and junior officers are being sent out unequipped to respond to reports of domestic violence.

Possible Solutions:

- Legislation to require mandatory prosecution of domestic violence.
- Public education about domestic violence so that people understand it is a serious crime.
- More training for all police officers on these issues, including the procedures to apply for civil orders on behalf of victims and requirements to bring criminal charges, and raising awareness to ensure all officers understand the seriousness of domestic violence and other crimes against women and that there is no exception in the *Penal Code (2013 Revision)* for marital rape.
- Legal provisions for compensation to be paid to victims of sexual and domestic violence.

2.9 Interests of Girls & Young Women



This focus group included a number of girls and young women and was dedicated to their special interests. Participants were asked to explore the issues, challenges and problems facing girls and young women in the Cayman Islands and propose ways to address them. In particular, they were asked to identify areas of discrimination in homes, in schools and in the workplace and methods to empower girls and young women to be agents of change and address the barriers that they may experience.

Key Issues:

- Peer pressure, lack of self-confidence and lack of recognition of achievements.
- Limited access to many different activities and resources, particularly due to lack of parental support, cost, and limited public transportation for girls and young women in eastern districts.
- Teen pregnancy and young motherhood.
- Girls have unequal access and encouragement to pursue certain services and opportunities (e.g. sports scholarships) that are available to boys and especially lack support from other women.
- Lack of programming to attend to personal needs (i.e. emotional and physical), and the programmes and services that do exist could be better promoted and structured.
- Lack of diversity in interests and hobbies that are seen as able to be pursued by females.
- Parents may live vicariously through their children; often have unrealistic expectations; view girls differently than boys and hold them to a different standard (e.g. regarding their “reputation”) and don’t treat all children equally (e.g. fathers having a beer with their sons for the first time).
- Messages in the media promote gender stereotypes and gender roles.
- Parents reinforce negative and limiting gender stereotypes in the home with words and actions.
- As girls get older, society thinks they should stop participating in sports and doing “masculine” activities and begin to concentrate more on their physical appearance and “feminine” things.
- Girls and young women do not have the same opportunities and career path options available to them as their male counterparts and behaviours are interpreted differently based on sex, e.g. girls and women will be called bossy or aggressive for doing things but boys and men wouldn’t.
- Sexual harassment and pay discrimination in the workforce; young women are also often seen as progressing in the workplace not because of their qualifications and performance but because of physical attractiveness, sexuality, being the “token female”, or affirmative action.

Possible Solutions:

- Accessible, long-term mentors; the programme should be active, consistent and sustainable.
- Including a mentorship component in other community- and school-based programmes.
- The Family Resource Centre could train companies and NGOs to provide parenting and other relevant programmes in the workplace for greater accessibility, reach and impact.
- Businesses could provide an after school family centre with care options for employees' children.
- Link programmes together for consistent messages in the home, school and community.
- Public education and awareness to change cultural norms and expectations based on sex.

2.10 The Role of Men & Boys



Discrimination against women and girls cannot be eliminated without involving men and boys. This focus group discussed the barriers that men and boys face in standing up and speaking out when they see women and girls experiencing discrimination and violence and how to change mind-sets and behaviour so they are more willing to advocate for girls and women in all areas of life. Participants also discussed their own perceptions about the key issues and challenges facing girls and women in the Cayman Islands and the role of men and boys in promoting gender equality more generally.

Key Issues:

- Lack of men and boys speaking about gender issues and discrimination and being advocates.
- Discrimination in employment, particularly how gender stereotypes affect career paths, lack of family-friendly policies in the workplace, and inadequate maternity leave and flex-time options.
- Discrimination against women and girls in education and in the school curriculum.
- Destructive language that perpetuates discrimination and violence against girls and women.
- Men and boys do not accept counselling as a solution to violence and avoid these services.
- Cultural norms about gender; societal expectations about what a boy/man is and what a boy/man does (e.g. boys/men aren't allowed to express their feelings, particularly sadness); historical influence of men going to sea and women staying home and taking care of the family.
- Objectification of women, and men and boys reinforcing stereotypes about women and girls.
- Women are the ones taking on supporting roles in the church, e.g. doing bake sales.
- Men not supporting their children financially or emotionally, including not paying maintenance.

Possible Solutions:

- Ensure there is zero tolerance for violence and discrimination against girls and women.
- Men need to challenge other men on these issues, especially violence against women, and there must be male champions of gender equality who are willing to publicly speak out on the issues.
- Men need to support the training, education and advancement of women in the workplace.
- Men and boys need to support and respect female leadership, e.g. in academics and sports.
- Ensure zero tolerance for destructive language and education about how powerful language is.
- Include education about gender and focus on equality in the early years curriculum of schools.
- Hold men and boys accountable for their role in ending discrimination against women and girls.

- Encourage partnerships between fathers and mothers in raising and socialising children, including through increasing maternity and paternity leave
- Parents must be educated from early on about equality, gender roles and healthy families; reinforce that all emotions are valid and their children do not need to conform to gender stereotypes.
- Fathers should ensure that they model proper behaviour in their relationships with the mothers of their children, particularly in terms of being supporting and inclusive and not violent.
- Encourage men to step outside of the “man box” and take on non-traditional roles.
- Men and boys who are involved in their churches especially should ensure that the Bible is not used to justify sexism and that the scriptures are properly applied.
- Mothers and fathers should treat girl children and boy children equally, including assigning chores, in the aspirations that they have for them, and expectations for performance.

2.11 Key Themes

A number of key themes emerged from these focus group discussions, both in terms of the issues that were raised and solutions that were proposed to address discrimination and promote gender equality.

In relating their own life experiences and the stories of their friends, family and colleagues, these diverse participants exposed the pervasiveness of discrimination against girls and women in the Cayman Islands.

A lack of **empowerment**, persistent gender **stereotyping** and the **fundamental inability** of our society to accommodate the needs of girls and women could be found across each of the focus areas.

There was also an overwhelming cry for –

- **public education and awareness** at all levels, for all ages and in all areas of life,
- **enforcement of legislation** and **championing of policies**,
- **development of more agents of change**, and
- **improved access to programming and services**.

Specific, targeted solutions and quick wins were identified alongside broader and longer-term goals, and participants agreed that **urgent action** is needed to address these issues and implement solutions.

More local data is also required to fully understand the status and circumstances of girls and women in some areas, set benchmarks and objectives, and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Government has a great responsibility in creating a society that promotes equality of opportunity and justice for all. However, employers, community and business leaders, the media, families, educational institutions, NGOs, churches and all individuals were also identified as having important roles to play in ending all forms of discrimination against girls and women.

This conference was seen as an important starting point for national-level dialogue on these issues by many participants, who are keen to ensure that this conversation continues and that everyone takes personal responsibility for their own actions and roles.

3 Next Steps

This Report will be used to further develop Government's implementation plan for CEDAW and reports to the CEDAW Committee. It will also inform the broader work of the Ministry and help mainstream a gender perspective throughout the entire public sector in order to identify and address these varied concerns through legislation, policy and programming.

It is further hoped that this information will be useful to various individuals, employers, NGOs and other community partners seeking to understand the mechanisms of discrimination against girls and women and develop additional strategies to promote gender equality.

A focus group was planned to be devoted to the interests of women and girls living in the Sister Islands and eastern districts of Grand Cayman as part of the participatory approach of the conference. However, due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict with the annual Cayman Brac Agricultural Show, persons from the Sister Islands were unable to attend the conference. Therefore, while a number of questions specific to their circumstances were included in focus group discussions and some unique issues of concern were identified in relation to certain topics, a meeting will be held in Cayman Brac in the near future to gather qualitative data regarding the experiences and perspectives of women and girls living in the Sister Islands.

The Gender Affairs Unit also encourages all local residents who were unable to attend the conference and participants that may have contributions that are relevant to other focus areas to provide additional information, perspectives and experiences to the Ministry in order to more richly inform this work.

A feedback form has been developed and is available online at www.genderequality.gov.ky and in hard copy from the main lobby of the Government Administration Building or by request from the Gender Affairs Unit. This form is intended to guide individuals in providing their comments and gather certain demographic data that will be useful in analysing responses, but use of the form is not mandatory.

Submissions can remain anonymous, but they must be in writing and should be received no later than **Monday, 30th June 2014** as follows:

By email to: genderequality@gov.ky

By mail or hand delivery to: Govt. Admin. Bldg. Box 108
133 Elgin Avenue
Grand Cayman KY1-9000

For more information please contact the Gender Affairs Unit as above or on 244-3226.

Appendix A – National Conference on Women Participants

Adriannie Webb	Daniella McGowan	Jodie Kelley
Alexis Carlson	Danielle Japal	Joy Merren
Alia Abdul-Hakim	Davina Wilson	Judith Seymour
Aliana Dodds	Dawn Howe	Julene Banks
Alicia (Jen) E. Dixon	Dawn McLean-Sawney	Julietta Beaupierre
Andrea Bryan	Deanna Look Loy	Julissa Castillo
Andrea Williams	Deborah Ebanks	Kacey Pellot-Rosa
Angela Sealey	Deborah Webb-Sibblies	Karin Thompson
Angella Graham	Debra Broderick	Dr. Karina Palmer
Ania Milanowska-Sedgley	Deirdre Seymour	Karlene Bramwell
Anika Conolly	Dianne Conolly	Katherine Whittaker
Anita Ebanks	Dianne Varona	Kathryn Dinspel-Powell
Annick Pasquali	Donna Bush	Kathryn Ebanks
Annie Mae Roffey	Dorothy Crumbley	Keri Walcott
Annie Multon	Elaine O'Donovan	Kimberly Kirkconnell
Annita Cornish	Dr. Elizabeth McLaughlin	Leyla Jackson
Aubrey Bodden	Elizabeth Talbert	Lisa Prendergast
Belinda Blessitt Vincent	Dr. Elsa M. Cummings-Williams	Lorna Blackman
Benedicta Conolly	Erin Hislop	Madhavi Mathura
Beverley Banks	Estrella Powery	Maliha Abdul-Hakim
Blake Clarke-Wint	Eziethamae Bodden	Marcia Hydes Urbina
Brenda Dawkins	Genevieve Tomlinson	Marilyn Conolly
Brendon Malice	Dr. Gillian Evans-Belfonte	Mary D. Walton
Camila Ferreira	Dr. Glenda Simms	Rev. Mary Graham
Caris Bramwell	Gloria Bell	Mary Rodrigues, JP
Carlie Rowell	Grace E. Wright	Mary Shelly Gittens
Carol Ateah	Gregory Smith	Maymunah Abdul-Hakim
Caroline Key	Heidi Kelman	Merta Day
Chantelle Day	Henry Hill	Miles Ruby
Charmaine Miller	James Myles	Miriam Foster
Cheryl Myles	Jamesette Anglin	Nancy Davey
Christen Suckoo	Janelle Syms	Natalie Watler
Claudette O. Webb	Jenifer Gager-Sterling	Nereen Thomas
Cydonie Mothersill	Jennifer Smith	Odette Samson
Dahlia Webb	Jenny Manderson	Paola Juarez-Machado
Dania Gall-Bennett	Joan West-Dacres	Patricia Estwick

Paulinda Mendoza-Williams	<i>Ad Kees</i>	<i>Lorna Phillips</i>
Rabia Abdul-Hakim	<i>Anna Johnson</i>	<i>Lucy Tibbetts</i>
Racquel Duhaney	<i>Annissa Sheow</i>	<i>Ludivene Dilbert</i>
Rebecca Paterson	<i>Beverley Nunez</i>	<i>Lynette Chand</i>
Regina Oliver	<i>Carla Bush</i>	<i>Marvalee Collins</i>
Reshma Sharma	<i>Carol Scott</i>	<i>Mary Bodden</i>
Sandra Langlois	<i>Carol Shaw</i>	<i>Monika Lawrence</i>
Sandra Tomlinson	<i>Christie Walton</i>	<i>Nadira Lord</i>
Shandi Sandoval	<i>Christina Bodden</i>	<i>Nancy Barnard</i>
Shari Smith	<i>Christsandra Mitchell</i>	<i>Paula-Grace Anderson</i>
Sheila Crosby	<i>Deandra Ebanks</i>	<i>Pearl Tibbetts</i>
Shekara Morrison	<i>Diana Tibbetts</i>	<i>Renda Cornwall</i>
Sheree Ebanks	<i>Doreen Trickett</i>	<i>Ritchie Michelle</i>
Tammy Ebanks	<i>Eva Donker</i>	<i>Robyn Joe</i>
Hon. Tara Rivers, JP, MLA	<i>Jennifer Petrie</i>	<i>Rochella Moya</i>
Dr. Tasha Ebanks-Garcia	<i>Jenny Catran</i>	<i>Sasha Hunte</i>
Teresa Silva	<i>Joey Hew, MLA</i>	<i>Sharon Williams</i>
Terryanne Iton	<i>Joyce Shaw</i>	<i>Shu Yu Zhang</i>
Timali Ebanks	<i>Judy Ebanks</i>	<i>Sonia Wallace</i>
Tishay Heath	<i>Karen Powery-Ebanks</i>	<i>Sonya Govan</i>
Vaughan Carter	<i>Dr. Laetitia Bush</i>	<i>Ushani Abeynayake</i>
Yolandé Hill	<i>LeShanna Green</i>	<i>Wade Mitchell-Evans</i>
Zena Merren-Chin	<i>Lois Kellyman</i>	<i>Winsome Wellington</i>

Notes:

- **Blue text** indicates persons who participated in the programme as speakers, performers, etc.
- **Green text** indicates persons who served as registrars for the conference
- **Bold text** indicates persons who facilitated the focus groups in the morning session by serving as rapporteurs and scribes (these persons may have also participated in the programme)
- *Italic text* indicates afternoon session attendees who did not participate in the morning focus groups

This list is accurate to the best of the knowledge and belief of the Gender Affairs Unit.
Please email genderequality@gov.ky or call 244-3226 to provide any corrections.

Appendix B – National Conference on Women Programme



MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT
& GENDER AFFAIRS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

National Conference on Women: *Inspiring Change*

Saturday, 29th March 2014

The Westin- Governor's Ballroom

Morning Session 9:00am-12:30pm

Master of Ceremony- Miriam Foster, Programme Coordinator, Family Resource Centre

Welcome

Mary Rodrigues, JP, Chief Officer
Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

National Song

Jamesette Anglin

Opening Prayer

Rev. Mary Graham

Gender Equality: The Smart Thing to Do

Video by Harvard University

Overview of Morning Session

Aubrey Bodden, Policy Officer (Gender Affairs)
Ministry of Education Employment and Gender Affairs

Focus Group Discussions

Morning Break

Focus Group Reporting

Lunch Break



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MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT
& GENDER AFFAIRS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

National Conference on Women: *Inspiring Change*

Saturday, 29th March 2014

The Westin- Governor's Ballroom

Afternoon Session 1:00-3:00pm

Master of Ceremony- Tammy Ebanks, Senior Policy Officer (Gender Affairs)

Equals

Video by www.weareequals.org

Opening Remarks

*Judith Seymour, Director
Department of Counselling Services*

Spoken Word Performance

Lady Rabia

Women as Agents of Change

Video by The Commonwealth

How We Can Become Architects of Change

*Dr. Glenda Simms
CEDAW Expert and Gender Consultant, Jamaica*

The Way Forward

*Hon. Tara Rivers, JP
Minister for Education, Employment and Gender Affairs*

Vote of Thanks

*Tammy Ebanks, Senior Policy Officer (Gender Affairs)
Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs*



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Appendix C – Summary of CEDAW & Its Articles

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** is a United Nations human rights instrument adopted by the General Assembly in 1979. Often described as an international “Bill of Rights” for women, it is one of the most widely recognised international conventions in the world.



Consisting of a preamble and thirty articles, this human rights instrument provides the framework to identify what constitutes discrimination against women and set up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. Its cornerstone is the principle of equality between men and women and prohibition of discrimination of the rights of men and women, being the corollary of equality.

Article 1: Definition of Discrimination

Defines discrimination against women as including any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex that affects women’s enjoyment of political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other rights – irrespective of marital status – on an equal basis with men.

Article 2: Policy Measures to be Taken

States parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms and will work to end it. Obliges States parties to take concrete steps (such as legislation) to eliminate discrimination against women.

Article 3: Guarantee of Basic Human Rights

Obliges States parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women not just by the State but by any person, organisation or enterprise.

Article 4: Temporary Special Measures

Allows States parties to adopt temporary special measures to accelerate equality for women.

Article 5: Sex Roles and Stereotyping

Recognises the role of culture and tradition and provides for the State to take appropriate measures to eliminate sex role stereotyping and practices that stem from the concept of inferiority or superiority of one sex over another. Also stresses the need for family education to recognise the social function of motherhood and the common responsibility for raising children.

Article 6: Trafficking and Prostitution

Requires States parties to suppress all forms of traffic in women and girls and exploitation of prostitution.

Article 7: Political and Public Life

Obliges States parties to eliminate discrimination in the political and public life of the country.

Article 8: Participation at the International Level

Obliges States parties to give women an equal opportunity to represent their governments and participate in the work of international organisations.

Article 9: Nationality

Addresses the rights of women and their children in relation to nationality.

Article 10: Equal Rights in Education

Obliges States parties to eliminate discrimination in education in relation to access and also to its substance.

Article 11: Employment

Recognises the right to work as a human right and that women are to be ensured equal rights with men in employment. Ensures the right to equal pay and treatment for work of equal value and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, maternity leave, marital status, etc.

Article 12: Health Care and Family Planning

States parties should take all appropriate measures to provide men and women equal access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

Article 13: Economic Life, Sports and Culture

Addresses discrimination in economic, social and cultural life (i.e. with regard to family benefits; bank loans, mortgages and financial credit; participating in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life).

Article 14: Rural Women

Addresses in particular discrimination against rural women in relation to access to services, training and employment opportunities, etc.

Article 15: Equality Before the Law

Guarantees women equality with men before the law (i.e. legal capacity in civil matters, right to enter into contracts, right to choose residence and domicile, etc.).

Article 16: Marriage and the Law

Seeks to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family laws (i.e. the right to enter marriage, rights during marriage and at dissolution, rights to children, etc.) and ensure that children are not betrothed or married and that a minimum age for marriage is established by law.

Articles 17-30: Procedural and Administrative Matters

Establish the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and address procedural and administrative matters such as reporting, ratification, revision, reservations and dispute resolution. Also provide that CEDAW does not affect provisions that are more conducive to achieving equality between men and women and that States parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realisation of the rights recognised in CEDAW.

For more information about CEDAW please visit www.genderequality.gov.ky or www.ohchr.org.

Appendix D – Definitions & Acronyms

The following terms and acronyms used within this report have the meaning assigned below:

CEDAW – the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, an international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979

CEDAW Committee – the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a body of twenty-three independent experts that is established in Article 17 of CEDAW for the purpose of considering the progress made in implementation of the treaty

CEDAW Legislative Review – *Review of Cayman Islands’ Legislation for CEDAW Compliance* by Jackie Sealy-Burke and Marilyn Conolly, completed in March 2012

FCO – the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office

gender – defined in the *Gender Equality Law* as the cultural, economic, social and political characteristics, roles and opportunities through which women and men are socially constructed and valued

guardian ad litem – a Latin term that literally means “guardian for the suit”, this legal term is used to describe a guardian appointed by the court for the duration of a legal action to protect the well-being of and represent the interests of a child or some other person who is unable to represent himself or herself in legal actions, who is known as a “ward”

in camera – a Latin term that literally means “in a chamber”, this legal term is typically defined as “in private” and is often used to describe procedures or processes in judicial or semi-judicial proceedings that are not open to the public or to all parties; for example, evidence can sometimes be given *in camera* where the judge or tribunal knows the identity of a person giving evidence but the other party does not

NGO – acronym for non-governmental organisation, normally refers to organisations that are not part of the government and also not part of conventional private sector, for-profit businesses; often set up by ordinary citizens and reliant on volunteers, NGOs can be funded by donations from governments, foundations or companies or through earned revenues and can be engaged in a wide range of activities

sex – defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “either of the two major forms of individuals that occur in many species and that are distinguished respectively as female or male especially on the basis of their reproductive organs and structures”

States parties – refers to the countries that have ratified a covenant or convention such as CEDAW and are therefore bound to comply with its provisions; as a territory of the United Kingdom the Cayman Islands is not able to sign and ratify international conventions and must have them extended through the United Kingdom, which is the State party that is then responsible for implementation