



REFERENCE: YH/follow-up/United Kingdom/60

20 April 2015

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honour to refer to the examination of the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the Committee's fifty-fifth session, held in July 2013. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations were transmitted to your Permanent Mission (CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/7). You may recall that in the concluding observations, the Committee requested the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to provide, within one year, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendation contained in paragraph 51 of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report received on time in November 2014 (CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/7/Add.1) under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its sixtieth session, held in February-March 2015 in Geneva, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 51** of the concluding observations that the State party “expedite the amendment of the anti-abortion law in Northern Ireland with a view to decriminalizing abortion, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 24, on women and health, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”: The Committee considers that the State party failed to take any steps towards the implementation of the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “ensure that legal abortion covers not only cases of threats to the life of a pregnant woman but also other circumstances, such as threats to her health and in cases of rape, incest and serious malformation of the foetus”: The State party indicated that the courts have decreed that it is lawful to perform an operation for the termination of a pregnancy where there is a risk of real and serious adverse effect on the mother's physical or mental health, which is either long term or permanent. Moreover, the Minister of Justice published a consultation paper on 8 October 2014 which recommends amending the law to allow for legal abortion in cases of a diagnosis of lethal abnormality of the foetus. The paper also sets out a

H. E. Mr. Julian Braithwaite
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations
Avenue Louis Casai 58
1216 Cointrin

Email: geneva_un@fco.gov.uk

discussion about whether or not abortion should be an option for women who are pregnant as a result of a sexual crime, including rape or incest. The Committee considers that the State party took some steps to ensure that legal abortion covers not only cases of threats to the life of a pregnant woman but also other circumstances, such as threats to her health and in cases of rape, incest and serious malformation of the foetus. The Committee considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented.**

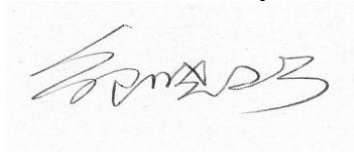
The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 51 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

- 1) Expedite the amendment of the anti-abortion law in Northern Ireland with a view to decriminalizing abortion; and
- 2) Ensure that legal abortion covers not only cases of threats to the life and health of a pregnant woman but also other circumstances, such as serious malformation of the foetus and in cases of rape and incest.

The Committee looks forward to pursuing its constructive dialogue with the authorities of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the implementation of the Convention.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Xiaoqiao Zou
Rapporteur on follow-up
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women