

SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS

75th STUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

DECISIONS

Amended Resolution No. 1 - Women, Families and Poverty

“That this Conference continues to be concerned at the great number of women and families who continue to face unacceptable levels of poverty in their daily lives. Whilst welcoming the priority that the Scottish Executive has given to dealing with deprivation and poverty, Conference believes that more requires to be done through the Scottish Executive’s social inclusion strategy, to help women and families in particular.

“Conference notes the recent TUC report released in September on Women and Poverty, which uses official data to demonstrate the ‘feminisation of poverty’. It analyses the results of surveys carried out by the Department of Social Security in 2001 to show that:

- women are more likely to live in poverty than men;
- women with children tend to be poorer than those without;
- men with children tend to be no poorer than those without;
- women pensioners, on average, receive lower incomes than their male counterparts.

“Conference is highly concerned, as this report demonstrates not only that women are more vulnerable to poverty throughout their lives than men, but it also demonstrates that women’s income levels are linked to children in a way that men’s are not.

“Conference believes that this is because women continue to play the primary role in caring for, bearing financial responsibility for, and providing for the welfare of children within families. Therefore, women’s issues and the ‘feminisation of poverty’ must be a key focus of any work being undertaken by the Scottish Executive to lift children out of poverty in Scotland. The STUC Women’s Committee is asked to continue to work closely with the Scottish Executive to promote tackling the ‘feminisation of poverty’ as a key part of the social inclusion agenda, but to also initiate discussions with other organisations working in this field, including the Scottish Poverty Alliance, and the Child Poverty Action Group.

“Conference welcomes the commitment from the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive, whilst recognising its limitations, to funding universally free, long-term care for the elderly. Conference believes that universal provision of support and resources to groups who are particularly vulnerable to poverty should be extended to a wide range of areas.

“Conference also notes the links between poverty and poor nutrition for children, and commends the work taken forward by the STUC Women’s Committee in support of the Scottish Parliament Bill on the Universal Provision of Nutritional, Free, School Meals and Milk and the Scottish Parliament Bill on Breastfeeding in Public Places. It is Conference’s view that both are initiatives aimed at improving children’s access to high standards of nutrition, thus breaking down the barriers caused by poverty. The STUC Women’s Committee is urged to continue to support both initiatives in the Scottish Parliament, and to continue dialogue with the Executive about ways in which they can improve the nutritional standards of, and access to, school meals in Scotland.

“In particular, Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- continue to work through the Close the Gap Campaign and Trade Union activity at both political and industrial level to tackle the root causes of pay inequality and achieve equal pay for women;
- highlight the links between women’s caring responsibilities and poverty and use this to support the case for the provision of more flexible affordable childcare;
- monitor the Scottish Executive’s implementation of free, long-term care for the elderly to ensure it provides the support required for older women living in poverty;
- continue to maintain a policy position in support of universally free school meals, and support all legislative steps towards this position;
- support the Scottish Executive’s plans to implement nutritional standards for school meals;
- lobby the Scottish Executive for initiatives to ensure that all nursery/primary school children receive free milk and fresh drinking water;
- support all initiatives aimed at widening access to, and improving quality of, free school meals;
- promote and monitor the success of examples of good practice in school meals provision, including Aberdeen City Council’s free milk pilot and Glasgow City Council’s free breakfast pilot;
- urge the Scottish Executive to implement the Scottish Community Diet Project;
- promote and encourage support for the Scottish Parliament Bill on Breastfeeding in Public Places;
- work with organisations dealing with women and families in different localities in Scotland on key areas of STUC policy in this area;
- promote the ‘feminisation of poverty’ as a key issue to the Scottish Poverty Alliance, the Child Poverty Action Group and others working in the field of social inclusion in Scotland;
- urge the Scottish Executive to carry out an audit of what improvements have been made to alleviate women’s poverty since the establishment of the Parliament; and

- seek discussions with the Scottish Executive to ascertain what additional steps might be taken to help those women and families who are most affected by poverty and deprivation.”

Composite A (covering resolution nos. 2, 23 & 24) – Single Equality Commission

“That this Conference welcomes the UK Government’s commitment to implement new legislation under Article 13 to protect people against discrimination on grounds of age, religion and sexual orientation. Conference believes that this will extend and strengthen UK anti-discrimination law in a positive manner.

“Conference recognises that the introduction of protection from discrimination on new grounds raises the need to put new supportive structures in place. However, it notes with concern the Government’s recent announcement of its intention to establish a Single Equality Commission, which would bring together the three current Commissions covering race, gender, and disability, and in addition would address the areas of age, sexual orientation and religious discrimination, for which new protective legislation is being introduced under Article 13.

“Conference supports the introduction of a single Equality Act and believes that this would simplify and equalise current anti-discrimination law against all disadvantaged groups, moving away from the present hierarchy of inequality that our current laws create and making the law in this area fairer, easier to understand and easier to enforce.

“Conference notes that the creation of a single body could help to facilitate the spread of best practice across the equalities agenda, for example, in relation to equal pay audits and multiple discrimination. However, Conference has reservations about this development. It believes that the existing Commissions have never been adequately funded and is concerned that the introduction of a single body without adequate safeguards and sufficient funding could lead to a significant dilution of the current body’s powers, responsibilities and support for specific disadvantaged groups.

“Conference notes that the 2001-2 Annual Report of the Equal Opportunities Commission indicates that gender based discrimination is still widespread and that women continue to experience discrimination, particularly in relation to pregnancy and maternity, equal pay, working hours and sexual harassment. In particular, Conference is concerned that the establishment of a Single Commission could mean that women’s issues receive less attention.

“Furthermore, Conference recognises that there has emerged since devolution a different role and function for the Scottish component of the current Equality Commissions, which has, in the past, been missed by the UK-based agencies whose current structures do not best fit Scotland’s new legal and constitutional requirements.

“The key reasons for this are as follows:

- the Scottish constitutional position is unique – particularly in the way it deals with equal opportunities;
- under Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act, the Parliament and Executive have the power to promote equality in a manner not shared by England, Wales, or Northern Ireland;
- the Scotland Act has a much wider definition of the possible grounds for discrimination, so in awareness raising work at least, a Scottish Commission would have a distinctly different role to a GB or UK Commission;
- Scots law gives a different legal context for all equality work undertaken in Scotland and there is a strong argument that service quality will be enhanced by local control over the new Commission's service delivery;
- Scotland has distinct and different networks, stakeholders and interest groups that are mainly focused around the work of the Scottish Parliament rather than Westminster;
- a precedent had already been set in that it has been agreed Scotland should have its own Human Rights Commission; and
- Northern Ireland already has its own Equality Commission and Human Rights Commission.

“Conference, therefore, believes that should the Government decide to go ahead with establishing a Single Equality Commission, it should include a commitment to meet Scotland's distinct constitutional and legal requirements and ensure that adequate funding is available to such a body.

“Conference further believes that any move towards establishing a single equality body should make provision for the following:

- the introduction of a single Equality Act;
- measures that ensure a protected and sufficient budget are secured;
- a clear identity and status as an independent body, including all stakeholders and trade unions represented at board level;
- a mandate which is clearly separate from the Scottish Human Rights Commission;
- structures that allow for a clear and equal voice across each distinct equality strand or disadvantaged group; and
- arrangements that cover the whole range of functions carried out by existing Commissions, including equity in relation to enforcement, protection and promotion of best practice across all areas of discrimination.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women's Committee to lobby hard for the principles set out above to be adopted in the Government's proposals, should it maintain its commitment to establishing a Single Equality Commission.

“In particular, Conference calls on the STUC Women's Committee to ensure that:

- (i) the views of working women in Scotland are taken into account by the Government's review;
- (ii) proper consideration is given to the impact of devolution in any reorganisation of the Equality Commissions; and
- (iii) any move towards a Single Equality Commission maintains a distinct and separate focus on gender equality supported by adequate funds and resources."

Amended Resolution No. 3 – Equal Pay

“That this Conference is deeply concerned that, over 30 years after the introduction of the Equal Pay Act, there remains a disparity between male and female earnings.

“Conference believes that this situation can only be effectively addressed by Trade Union bargaining and equal pay audits at the workplace and a strengthening of equal pay legislation, including provisions for:

- the speedy processing of equal pay claims by reforming the complex system while ensuring the right for applicants to present their evidence to tribunals;
- allowing the taking of collective equal pay cases;
- allowing the intervention of the CAC where contracts are discriminatory;
- placing the burden of proof on employers in equal pay cases; and
- placing an obligation on employers to carry out equal pay reviews and ensuring that contracts are not discriminatory.

6.

“Conference also believes that legislative measures should tackle the underlying reasons for the gender pay gap and that governmental bodies, including the Scottish Parliament, should lead by example in:

- ensuring that all public sector employers, quangos and suppliers of goods and services to government bodies adhere to equal pay policies and practices by ensuring that all direct employees and contractors are subject to regular equal pay audits;
- encouraging employers to adopt the EOC Code of Practice on Equal Pay, and take account of the record of employers on equal pay when considering grant applications; and
- improving the opportunities for women in education, training and lifelong learning, endorsing the use of the EOC’s Mainstreaming Equality Toolkit and supporting Trade Union-led training on equal pay issues.

“Conference, therefore, commits to run a ‘Name and Shame’ Campaign, highlighting employers who refuse to adopt the EOC Code of Practice and continue to treat women as second class citizens in the workplace.”

Resolution No. 4 – Parental Leave

“That this Conference welcomes the implementation of legislation, establishing a legal right to parental leave.

“However, Conference believes there is scope for substantial improvement in this legislation and calls for changes to ensure that:

- all parental leave is paid leave;
- the legal entitlement extends to until the child is 8 years of age;
- the leave can be taken flexibly in days, half-days or reduced hours as well as in week-long blocks;
- the notice period required should be no longer than the duration of the leave period requested;
- there is an absolute right to return to the same job after leave and all contractual rights are protected during leave;
- clear and rapid sanctions are taken against employers who postpone leave;
- the rights to leave for adoptive and foster parents are extended to take account of meetings with social workers, etc;
- the legal right to parental leave is fully accessible by same sex partners with children; and
- employer records on parental leave are fully accessible.”

Resolution No. 5 - Work-Life Balance

“That this Conference totally supports all moves towards an improved work-life balance. In common with other Trade Unions, we support the development of family friendly working, both as a result of local employer initiatives and legislation. The introduction of parental and paternity leave along with, for example, the imminent introduction to increased adoption leave has contributed to an improved work-life balance for many employees. However, it is becoming increasingly common, in certain circumstances, for some staff to feel disadvantaged by the knock-on effects of such policies. The entitlement of employees to increased (albeit unpaid) leave can, if not well managed, result in increased pressure on the staff remaining in the workplace. This, in turn, leads to frustration and resentment. It is likely this may be a bigger issue for female dominated workplaces, as many of them are already struggling to cope with the effects of maternity leave.

“Conference calls on the STIC Women’s Committee and STUC General Council to continue to promote family friendly working, and also to campaign for adequate back-fill of posts when staff are away from the workplace as a result of these working practices. Staff who remain in the workplace must not be expected to cover for absent colleagues, as this will only result in increased stress, resentment and ultimately increased absence levels.”

Resolution No. 6 – Family Friendly Policies

“That this Conference calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to conduct a survey of STUC affiliates, in order to establish the success of the Government’s family friendly initiatives and to encourage affiliates to promote a campaign through their respective journals and publications.

“It is the intention of such a survey and campaign to promote and highlight legislation that exists, and to inform and educate Trade Union members and activists of the rights and benefits they have gained under a Labour Government.”

Composite B (covering resolution nos. 7 and 8) – Childcare

“That this Conference welcomes the Government’s continued commitment to, and investment in, childcare. However, Conference is dismayed at the slow development of good quality childcare.

“Conference recognises that without proper childcare facilities women will be unable to make use of opportunities for better paid, more rewarding jobs.

8.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and the General Council to press the Government to ensure that the increased funding and different childcare initiatives are developed as a comprehensive package that provides:

- child protection policies and procedures in all childcare facilities;
- flexible childcare facilities to meet the needs of those working non-traditional work patterns, as well as standard day-time working;
- co-ordinated childcare covering pre-school hours, the school day and post-school hours;
- childcare for all parents, regardless of income or employment status;
- equal opportunities and family friendly working arrangements to be implemented across this sector;
- decent pay and conditions and a safe and healthy working environment; and
- proper access to training, professional development and dissemination of best practice to all childcare workers.”

Resolution No. 9 – Sexual Harassment

“That this Conference reiterates its concern that sexual harassment remains a significant concern for thousands of women in Scotland/UK.

“Conference is aware that sexual harassment has a long and detrimental effect on the lives of those it taints and can lead to long-term physical and mental health problems at its most extreme. This can also lead to long-term absence and a loss of self-esteem.

“Conference notes that statistics from the EOC show that over half of women workers (and nearly 10% of men) have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work. This is mainly verbal or physical abuse, but does include stalking and indecent assault.

“Conference welcomes the work done by the STUC Women’s Committee in highlighting this issue. However, the fact that it remains so prominent is unacceptable. Sexual harassment should not be put down to ‘just a bit of fun’.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’ s Committee and affiliates to:

- promote the introduction of a separate sexual harassment policy in workplaces;

9.

- highlight the detrimental effect sexual harassment has on the performance of employees in an increasingly performance-driven society; and
- ensure sexual harassment guidelines be adopted into the 'Dignity at Work' document.

“Conference further calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to organise a seminar on sexual harassment, policies and procedures involving Trade Unions, employers and the Equal Opportunities Commission.”

Resolution No. 10 – Employment Tribunal Time Limits – Sex Discrimination Cases

“That this Conference considers that the time limit of three months for Employment Tribunal applications is too short, especially for discrimination and harassment cases. Six months would be a fairer timescale.

“Conference also considers that the trigger for the commencement of the time limit for harassment cases could include an unsatisfactory management investigation of the case as an alternative to the last incident of harassment.

“Conference, therefore, calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee and General Council to campaign to bring about this change.”

Resolution no. 11 – Employment Rights – Women Seafarers

“That this Conference is concerned that seafarers employed on a temporary basis, through crewing agencies, receive no protection under UK employment legislation. On ships that are registered in the UK and sail within the EU, seafarers employed on a temporary basis work side by side with permanent employees who are protected by UK employment law. This is blatantly unfair and no accident. Agencies set themselves up outside of the UK’s jurisdiction to avoid their responsibilities to workers.

“The lack of protection impacts especially on women. We have a situation where in the 21st Century, women fail to obtain work because they are pregnant. This is unacceptable. Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and General Council to raise this matter with the Government.”

Amended Resolution No. 12 – Scottish Textile, Clothing, Footwear and Leather Manufacturing

“That this Conference welcomes many of the new initiatives introduced to support these manufacturing sectors. However, they are still facing continuous significant job losses in Scotland, which impacts mainly on women, and there is still a need for more work to be done in order to curtail this trend.

“Conference, therefore, calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to step up its efforts in promoting Scottish textiles, and indeed all traditional manufacturing sectors in Scotland, in an effort to protect the workers whose skills are vital to the Scottish economy.

“Conference also calls on the Scottish Executive to be more pro-active on reviving the industry by working with both companies and Unions to draft up an action plan to reverse the industries’ fortunes.

“Furthermore, Conference welcomes the re-establishment of the Scottish Manufacturing Steering Group and the creation of Scottish Development International and calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to ensure that the Scottish Executive takes all steps necessary to improve Scotland’s disappointing export sales figures to revive the manufacturing sector.”

Resolution No. 13 – Women, Poverty and Education

“That this Conference is concerned at recent Government statistics, which continue to show that women are more likely to experience poverty than men. Conference recognises that this situation is due to a number of complex factors, but primarily to women’s family and caring responsibilities. Conference also recognises the role which education can play in reducing poverty.

“Conference applauds efforts to improve access to education, including through lifelong learning opportunities by the Scottish Executive, but is concerned that the impact is yet to be felt.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to discuss with the appropriate agencies how women access lifelong learning opportunities and their impact on women’s lives. Conference also calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to discuss with the appropriate department of the Scottish Executive the need for additional research in this area.”

Amended Resolution No. 14 – Social Exclusion

“That this Conference notes that older people throughout Scotland should have a decent quality of life in retirement. They should be financially secure and should be able to access advice and services, so that they can enjoy active, independent and healthy lives.

“Poverty is one of the key barriers to social inclusion for many older people. Housing, transport health and social care problems are exacerbated by low incomes and increased frailty. Elderly women, in particular, are vulnerable to lower incomes.

“We call upon Conference to ask the Scottish Executive to implement the services to make this possible.

“A decent income in old age is one factor to address the social exclusion of older people. Conference is concerned that the claim of unmarried partners – be they heterosexual or same sex – to receive their partner’s pension is at pension trustees’ discretion. Access to a partner’s pension, where mutual dependency has been demonstrated, should be automatic and not a matter for debate amongst trustees.

“Conference also calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to support the campaign for a change in the law, which would outlaw this draconian practice and ensure dignity and respect for all in old age and which better reflects societal norms of the 21st century”.

Resolution No. 15 – Public Sector Pay

“That this Conference deplores the stance taken by the Government on public sector pay where workers are demonised for demanding fair rates of pay for the work they carry out. Conference notes that the vast majority of workers in the public sector are low paid women.

“In particular, Conference notes with concern the attitude of the Labour Government towards paying fire-fighters and emergency fire control staff.

“Conference further notes the gender pay gap and gender segregation of the workforce that exists within the Fire Service and calls on the Fire Service to introduce pay audits and develop an equal pay action plan to close the gap between women and men’s pay within the Service.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and the General Council of the STUC to use all possible influence to bring Fire Service national employers to the negotiating table with the representatives of the Fire Brigades Union, to bring about a conclusion to this dispute.”

12.

Resolution No. 16 – Public Private Partnership (PFI)

“That this Conference reaffirms its opposition to the privatisation of public services. Conference believes the privatisation of public services has a gender bias. A disproportionate number of jobs affected by privatisation and contracting out tend to be jobs filled by women. In addition, because of their caring responsibilities, women tend to be heavier users of public services.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to urge the STUC General Council to step up its campaign against the privatisation of public services. Conference calls on the gender bias to be highlighted as part of this campaigning work.”

Amended Resolution No. 17 – Gender Equality and Best Value

“That this Conference welcomes the repeal of CCT, but is concerned that many Best Value regimes threaten a wider range of public services with the prospect of privatisation.

“The Best Value process, when operated properly and effectively, should impact positively on women on two levels - firstly, on women as the biggest users of local government services, such as homecare, childcare, transport services and secondly, on women as local government employees, the majority of whom are in the frontline services and concentrated in the lowest grades.

“Low pay for women is a key factor in local government. Many of these women are concentrated in areas, such as the cleaning, catering and caring services - services which could potentially be out-sourced under Best Value. Conference is concerned that there is a lack of funding being made available to local authorities at the same time as Best Value is being made a statutory duty. This may encourage more out-sourcing to the private sector, which we believe will have a negative impact long-term on the pay and conditions of employees, most of whom are women delivering these services and on the quality of the services themselves. If Best Value is to reflect equality of opportunity and quality of service, then eradicating low pay, improving working conditions and provision of services need to be valued more highly than they are at present, and that all practice, either in employment or in service delivery, which impact disproportionately on women, must be eliminated.

“The key principles underpinning Best Value Regimes need to:

- promote successful direct services;
- place equality and quality of service on an equal footing with efficiency and cost savings;
- adhere to health and safety legislation and codes of practice; and
- maintain and improve standards of employment and equal opportunity.

13.

“Conference calls for legislation to ensure that the maintenance and improvement of employment standards, equality standards and job security are included in all tendering processes and resolves to oppose BVRs that detrimentally affect workers. Conference also calls for a statutory requirement for local authorities to ensure that the above principles are fulfilled if making Service Agreements with the voluntary and not for profit sector and that there is regular monitoring to ensure on-going compliance.

“For the STUC and sister Trade Unions, Best Value should mean best practice, both in employment and equal opportunities. Best Value should benefit employees and service users by ensuring the provision of quality jobs and quality services, as we believe quality services are fully dependent on the people delivering those services having quality jobs.

“Best Value, therefore, should mainstream equality into both employment practice and service delivery for core Council services that are publicly delivered and for those goods and services that are procured from or delivered by the private sector.

“This means ensuring that local government has effective and equal opportunities policies, that they recognise a Union and adhere to the principles of fairness at work, that they conduct equal pay audits, equality-proofed job evaluation exercises and implement full equality monitoring on areas such as promotion, training and the implementation of family friendly employment practices, e.g. work-life balance initiatives.

“Equally, it should mean ensuring that any private or voluntary sector contractors delivering local government services should be able to demonstrate that they have active equal opportunity and fair employment policies. They should also be required to undertake equal pay audits, and carry out other forms of monitoring to ensure that such policies are being fully implemented.

“This Conference, therefore, calls on the Scottish Executive to:

1. include a statutory duty for all local authorities to promote equal opportunities in the Local Government Bill;
2. impose a requirement for all local authorities to detail in their annual reports how they are promoting and delivering equal opportunities as part of their statutory duty under Best Value;
3. produce detailed guidance to local authorities on the priority areas of equal opportunities they should be pursuing, including:

14.

- that all local authorities undertake Equal Pay Audits, in partnership with the recognised Trade Unions; and
 - that Councils include a ‘Fair Employment’ clause in all contracted-out services to ensure the protection of staff from low pay and inferior working conditions to directly employed staff;
4. establish a sub-group of specialised equal opportunities practitioners to produce detailed guidance for local government on how to systematically and effectively implement the equality aspects of Best Value.”

Amended Resolution No.18 - Re-cycling

“That this Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and STUC affiliates to ensure that their future Conferences offer paper re-cycling facilities. Conferences and Committees generate a vast amount of paperwork, both in the run up to events and their course.

“Conference believes it would be much more environmentally friendly to print agendas and accompanying papers on re-cycled paper and to provide re-cycling points at all STUC and Trade Union Conferences.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to urge the STUC General Council and other Trade Union offices to adopt a re-cycling policy that would include having re-cycling points at all STUC events, re-

cycling of waste paper in the STUC offices and a move to using re-cycling paper for communications whenever possible.”

Resolution No. 19 – New Tax Cuts

“That this Conference welcomes the Working Tax Credit and the Children’s Tax Credits to be introduced in April 2003 as a further step towards encouraging work by making work pay. These changes will have a particular effect on women.

“Conference calls on the STUC and individual Unions to campaign to raise awareness of the new credits and to ensure a high take-up amongst members.

“However, Conference also calls on the Government to improve the system to ensure that those moving into work can claim their entitlement as easily and simply as possible and that they are not disadvantaged. Conference calls upon the STUC to campaign for the following:

1. the extension of the Working Tax Credits to under-25s to avoid further discrimination against young workers;
- 15.
2. to ensure that those claiming the Working Tax Credit are also entitled to benefits available to those who are out of work, including:
 - NHS benefits, free prescriptions and dental treatment; and
 - free school meals and school uniform vouchers;
3. to reduce the effect on Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit to ensure that what is gained through tax credits is not lost through other benefits;
4. for Childcare Tax Credit to be payable to parents in work-related education or training;
5. for the credits to be payable by giro or order-book, as well as directly into bank accounts;
6. for an increase in the minimum wage to ensure that low-paying employers are not subsidised by the tax-payer.”

Resolution No. 20 – Domestic Abuse

“That this Conference deplores the fact that one in five women in Scotland will experience domestic abuse at least once in their lifetime - note: that 93% of all reported cases reveals that the abuse is perpetrated by men against

women. These women who experience abuse are of all ages and from the full range of social backgrounds and circumstances.

“Conference applauds the action taken by the Scottish Executive to tackle domestic abuse:

- (a) in particular, the £18 million funding package to provide refuge accommodation, so that every woman will have access to safe and secure accommodation, when needed, irrespective of where she lives; and
- (b) the Domestic Abuse Service Development Fund, providing resources to every local authority area to take forward innovative multi-agency work and improve provision in communities across Scotland.

“Conference recognises, however, that ending domestic abuse requires a real change in society’s attitudes, challenging the notion that it is in any way acceptable. For this to be achieved, we all have a responsibility to play a part. Trade Unions should be at the forefront of campaigning to protect and promote the rights of women. Furthermore, there are innovative examples of good practice in some workplaces in supporting women experiencing domestic abuse, usually negotiated by Trade Unions.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to work together with the Women’s Committees of the TUC, Wales TUC and ICTU to help identify models of best practice from affiliates and promote such models through our Trade Union networks to encourage the spread of similar workplace agreements across Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales that would provide appropriate support for women facing domestic abuse.”

Resolution No. 21 – Access for Disabled People in Civic Life

“That this Conference notes that Part 111 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) makes it unlawful for those who provide goods, facilities and services to discriminate against disabled people. From 1 October 2004, service providers will have additional duties in relation to physical features that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use their services.

“Conference also notes that many disabled people are active in all parts of civic life in Scotland, but are either prevented or in part restricted in their participation due to the inaccessibility of venues. Disabled people have the right to participate in all aspects of Scottish life without any barriers in their way - either physical, attitudinal or organisational.

“Perth, for example, has been recognised as a Conference venue for many, many years and frequently by the STUC Women’s Committee. It is used regularly, not just by the Trade Union Movement, but also by all political parties and other civic organisations, and consequently the city has reaped considerable economic benefits.

“Whilst Perth is seen as accessible geographically, it is, unfortunately, becoming almost inaccessible for disabled people, both in terms of accommodation and conference venues and locations.

“However, the issue of non-accessible venues and accommodation extends well beyond Perth and it is, therefore, important that any campaign undertaken to rectify this issue needs to be addressed throughout Scotland.

“Conference believes that Trade Unions, as champions of equality and as examples to others, need to adopt best practice by ensuring that all venues used for any Trade Union activity must meet the Access Guidelines, as determined by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC).

“Conference, therefore, instructs the STUC Women’s Committee to:

1. organise a campaign to highlight the absence of acceptable, accessible venues and accommodation in Perth. This campaign should highlight the economic benefits enjoyed by the city, which should be invested in creating a modern accessible location;

2. in partnership with the STUC and sister Unions to boycott inaccessible venues and accommodation in Perth, and elsewhere, as a meeting location, until they meet acceptable standards of access, as defined by disabled people;
3. remind all organisations of:
 - the solidarity of all Trade Unions and our commitment to full civil rights for disabled people;
 - the obligations on service providers of the DDA;
 - the negative impact of attitudes and policies which create second class treatment of fellow citizens and colleagues; and
 - the benefits of investing in the creation of venues which meet and exceed the legal standards of the DDA.
4. establish dialogue, as part of this campaign with:
 - the Scottish Executive;
 - tourist organisations;
 - all Scottish political parties;
 - the relevant Equality Commissions, and in particular the DRC; and
 - other relevant organisations;
5. publicise the Access Guidelines to all affiliates; and
6. ensure that a timetable to cover all the above is completed by no later than December 2003.

“Finally, Conference believes that only through such actions will Trade Unions and others fully include disabled people in all aspects of civic life, whilst also meeting the legal requirements of the DDA by 2004.”

Amended Resolution No. 22 – Children with Special Needs in Education

“That this Conference notes that under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, which comes into force on 1st September 2002, educational institutions will be obliged not to treat disabled people less favourably than others.

“Whilst we welcome the advances that have been made in breaking down the barriers for disabled children to have access to the same educational and social opportunities as everyone else, it is clear that there are still concerns, particularly for children with more complex needs.

“Conference asks the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign for children with special needs in education to be given the necessary funding, resources and staffing to fully access the appropriate support within the classroom setting and all other aspects of the curriculum in its fullest sense, and to work with the Disability Rights Commission, which was set up by an Act of Parliament to enforce the rights of disabled people, and to support them in their campaign to improve choice and opportunity for disabled children and their parents in education.”

Resolution No. 25 – Prospective Parliamentary Candidates

“That this Conference salutes the women activists in the suffrage movement from 100 years ago in successfully gaining the right to vote. Conference is deeply concerned at the low turnout figures for people exercising their hard won rights to vote. Conference notes the age, cultural and gender differences in voting patterns. Conference applauds the work of the STUC Women’s Committee and affiliates in encouraging more women to stand for election and the ongoing effort to establish gender balanced Councils, Scottish Parliament and Scottish MPs at Westminster.

“However, Conference further notes that the backgrounds of Scottish MPs, MEPs and MSPs do not reflect the diversity of the electorate with certain professions being over represented in the Parliaments. If elected members are to adequately represent the people who elect them, it is important that elected members reflect a wide variety of backgrounds. Having candidates that can relate to the voter is likely to increase the number of people voting – this is evidenced when a woman stands for election and there is an increased turnout of votes cast by women.

“Conference asks the STUC Women’s Committee to extend its work in encouraging and equipping women to be available for selection as Prospective Parliamentary Candidates, to focus not only on gender, but also ethnicity and background. Parliaments and other governing bodies would benefit from the wealth of experience that women, including working class women, mothers and unemployed women could offer.

“Conference asks the STUC to organise a campaign to influence all Scotland’s Political Parties to improve their selection process, in order to deliver P.P.C.s from much more diverse backgrounds.”

Resolution No. 26 – Lesbian Parenting

“That this Conference recognises the difficulties faced by lesbian partners in obtaining fertility treatment and parenting rights against a background of stigma attached to this issue in society and by the media.

“Conference believes that lesbian partners should have access to fertility treatment on the NHS, if they wish to conceive by artificial insemination.

“Conference further believes that the lesbian partner of a birth mother should have the right to adopt the child as a co-parent when the child is conceived in this way, or when the biological father is absent and does not object.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign, in consultation with lesbian organisations, for these rights in Scottish law for lesbian partners seeking to become parents.”

Composite (covering resolution nos. 27 and amendment and 28) – Rape

“That this Conference strongly deplores the low conviction rate in cases of rape and sexual assault. Conference views all forms of sexual assault as violence, regardless of the age or gender of the victims, and is concerned at the further trauma victims experience in pursuing complaints.

Conference welcomes The Sexual Offences (Procedures and Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2002 taking effect from 1st November, which will prevent the accused in rape and other sexual offences cases from cross-examining the complainer and will strengthen existing provisions restricting the extent to which the victim can be questioned on their sexual history and character.

“Conference warmly commends Victim Support organisations and the Scottish Police Service in their continued efforts to support victims of rape and sexual assault, but condemns the judicial system which at times fails to ensure justice and just treatment for victims.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign for a change in current legislation and procedures affecting the treatment of alleged victims in cases of sexual assault and rape. In particular, Conference wishes to see:

- a review of the methods of cross examination of witnesses, where details of past sexual history are taken into account, often leading to unreasonable and degrading treatment of victims in the witness box;
- continuity and clarity on the legal mechanisms, which leave judges to decide who can attend the court to offer support to witnesses;
- appropriate training and guidance for police, forensic medical examiners and prosecutors;
- a reassessment of the sensitivity such crimes require and in particular where vulnerable witnesses, including children, are being cross examined; and

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- the seriousness of the crime reflected in the sentencing of those convicted of rape and sexual assault.”

“Conference further calls upon the Scottish Executive to act urgently in order to:

- establish a legal definition of rape and sexual assault which reflects the reality of the experience of all victims, male, female, child or adult;
- conduct an inquiry into the reasons for the low conviction rate in cases of sexual assault and rape; and
- take steps to amend both legislation and judicial practices to ensure a fairer, more effective and less traumatic experience of the judicial process for victims of sexual assault and rape.”

**Composite D (covering resolution nos. 29, 30 and amendment) –
Dungavel Detention Centre**

“That this Conference is concerned at the detention of refugee families, including young children, at the Dungavel Detention Centre in Ayrshire. They are being held indefinitely under high security, in a place that is not appropriate for families. The children are not allowed to attend local schools, and suffer from inadequate contact and extremely limited access to play areas and to medical facilities.

“Conference is concerned that children are being denied the same rights to education as provided for in Scottish legislation.

“Conference agrees with the concerns expressed in a report on Dungavel published by the Scottish Parliament’s cross-party working group on refugees and asylum seekers. This highlighted that many of those imprisoned there did not meet the Home Office’s own criteria for detention. Many have been suddenly sent to Dungavel without explanation after living for long periods in the community without absconding.

“Conference, therefore, instructs the Women’s Committee to press the Home Office for the transfer of detained families at Dungavel into appropriate accommodation in the community.

“Conference calls on the Women’s Committee to press the Scottish Executive to exercise its responsibilities under devolved legislation to ensure that children of asylum seekers are educated in local schools.

“Conference is also concerned at the refusal of Premier Detention Services, the private company that operates Dungavel, to allow detainees to speak to journalists when the press were invited into the Centre. It instructs the Women’s Committee to raise this with the Scottish Executive with a view to lifting all reporting restrictions. Conference further calls on the Women’s Committee to establish whatever links are possible with women asylum seekers inside Dungavel and support the campaign to close Dungavel as a refugee detention centre.”

Resolution No. 31 – Trafficking

“That this Conference is concerned about the reported increase in the trafficking of women and children into the UK and other countries for the purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labour. Conference recognises the efforts to highlight this important issue but is concerned that, as yet, there is no comprehensive UK legislation against trafficking.

“Conference requests that the STUC Women’s Committee:

- a) highlight the issues about trafficking, particularly of women and children, among affiliates;
- b) contact campaign groups working against trafficking to ascertain how the Women’s Committee can assist;
- c) support campaigns to introduce legislation to end this form of abuse, but without prejudice to the rights of asylum seekers;
- d) campaign to ensure that legislation complies with the UN recommended principles on Human Rights and Human Trafficking which emphasise the rights of the victim. “

Resolution No. 32 – Europe

“That this Conference recognises the major contribution that European legislation and directives have made to progressing conditions affecting women at work in Scotland. As women Trade Unionists we are very aware of the need to maintain and develop this progressive approach in the European Parliament.

“As Europe works towards enlargement, Scottish women Trade Unionists have much to share with our sisters working in the Eastern European countries seeking to join the European Union.

“Conference asks the STUC to seek and establish ways in which Scottish women Trade Unionists can have opportunities to meet, share information and learn together with our East European sisters striving for improved terms and conditions at work.”

Resolution No. 33 – Iraq

“That this Conference notes with alarm the hysteria which has surrounded the Bush administration’s compulsion to wreak revenge following the tragic events of 11 September 2001 in which many workers were killed. Conference believes that these events have emphasised as never before the shortcomings of a narrow, nationalist approach and the necessity for internationalism.

“Further, Conference condemns the bombing of Iraq where many innocent women and their families will again be killed as cannon fodder in this quest for vengeance.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to pursue every avenue, and joins with any other interested parties, in influencing the British Government to keep British troops out of Iraq.”

Resolution No. 34 - Nigeria

"That this Conference is appalled that yet another Nigerian woman, Amina Lawal Kurani, is threatened with stoning for becoming pregnant after her divorce.

“Conference applauds the ICFTU campaign on behalf of a number of Nigerian women and the success of this campaign to date.

“Conference calls on the STUC to campaign together with other organisations such as Amnesty International for a recognition by the Nigerian Government that the Shariah Law being imposed in one part of the country contravenes the constitution of Nigeria, leads to cruel and inhumane punishments, discriminates against women and is not in line with Nigeria’ s position as a signatory to international conventions.”

Resolution No. 35 – Peace

“That this Conference reiterates its condemnation of the atrocities committed in the tragic events of 11 September last year and expresses the belief that terrorism cannot be part of a humane society. Conference is deeply alarmed that the leaders of the United States and the United Kingdom are considering provoking indiscriminate action against Iraq which we believe would further polarise the Islamic world, endanger peace and the world’s shared wellbeing.

“Conference believes that war and military action against Iraq would have devastating effects, not least for innocent women and their families in Iraq, and calls for the British Government to resolve to persuade the Iraqi government to let United Nations Inspectors into their country. Conference is firmly of the view that the way forward in this immediate crisis is through negotiations by the United Nations, not war.

“Conference also expresses its alarm that the USA appears to be seeking to impose undemocratic conditions on the Palestinian people in order that the Middle East peace process continues. The suffering of women and children in the occupied territories is indefensible, and we demand that immediate steps are taken in the Middle East to restart the peace process and work towards a lasting peace.

“Conference believes that Israel’s USA-supported refusal to recognise and implement Resolutions 242 and 338, in particular, lies at the heart of the deepening international resentment of the West and that it is critical for a resolution of the conflict in the Middle East, and for Israel’s full compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions.

“Conference asks the Women’s Committee to make urgent representation to the Prime Minister and Parliament seeking (a) support for a peaceful resolution to the current crisis through the United Nations, and (b) the immediate ending of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and a restart of the Middle East peace talks. Conference also asks the Women’s Committee to work with contacts in women’s organisations throughout the world to challenge conflict, world poverty and discrimination.”

Emergency Resolution No. 1 - Fire Service Dispute

“That this Conference is appalled at the content of the so-called ‘Independent Review of the Fire Service’ commissioned by the New Labour Government, written by the Fire Service Employers and signed by Professor George Bain.

“We condemn the hypocritical claims that changing Fire Service duty systems would attract more women and ethnic minorities into the Fire Service and point rather to the unwillingness of the Employers to attract all sections of the community into the Service.

“We condemn the sexist tone of the report in its suggestions that women are the main child carers in society, whilst men are not equal to this task.

“Conference fully supports the Fire Brigades Union in its attempts to achieve the appropriate pay levels for its members and calls on the STUC Women’s Committee, the STUC General Council and all affiliates to support the FBU by whatever means possible, and assist them to win this dispute.”

Emergency Resolution No. 2 – Workplace Violence

“That this Conference is alarmed at the marked increase in armed raids witnessed recently in the finance sector.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and the STUC General Council to ensure that:

- i) there is greater awareness of the incidents of violence and the effects this has on both workers and members of the public;
- ii) employers are aware of their responsibility to provide a safe working environment and take all possible steps to prevent or reduce violent attacks on staff in and around their workplaces; and
- iii) trade unions must make sure all employers comply with their legal duties around the risk of workplace violence.”

ELECTION RESULTS

Moira Campbell, Public & Commercial Services Union

Janet Cassidy, National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers

Shirley Johnston, Amicus MSF

Sandra Kennie, UNISON Scotland

Tricia McLaren, Glasgow Trades Union Council

Joyce Magennis, T&G Scotland

Veronica Rankin, Educational Institute of Scotland

Susan B Russell, GMB Scotland

Linda Shanahan, Fire Brigades Union

Christine Spalding, Amicus AEEU

Agnes Tolmie, UNIFI

