

MEMORANDUM TO CABINET BY THE HON. PRIME MINISTER
AND MINISTER OF COMMONWEALTH AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. The Convention on the Political Rights of Women is one of the Conventions to which Malta, as a Member of the United Nations, is eligible to become a party.

2. The Convention provides that, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, women shall be entitled:

- a) to vote in all elections;
- b) for election to all publicly elected bodies established by national law;
- c) to hold public office and exercise all public functions established by national law.

3. By various resolutions the Economic and Social Council requested Member States to intensify action for acceding to the Convention and to report every two years on the measures taken to implement its provisions and principles. Reports are to reach the United Nations Secretariat by 1st September, 1966. Accession has also been recommended by the General Assembly in a resolution on Conventions relating to Human Rights.

4. The Crown Advocate General feels that a policy decision is called for in regard to provision (c) in paragraph 2 above, particularly as it affects recruitment to and conditions of service in the public service, the Police and the Armed Forces. It is believed that the public service situation has come up for consideration by Ministers on more than one occasion. As for jury service, the Crown Advocate General is of the view that the position should not give rise to concern though if jury service for women were to be placed on a voluntary basis (which appears to be most indicated in Malta) that would imply discrimination and the Convention rules out discrimination.

5. The Convention admits of reservations by Contracting Parties.

6. Hon. Ministers are invited to say if the Convention should be acceded to. The text is with the Secretary to Cabinet.

7. If it is to be acceded to, the following reservation is suggested:-

"In acceding to this Convention, the Government of Malta hereby declares that it does not consider itself bound by Article III (para. 2 (c) above) in so far as that article applies to conditions of service in the Public Service and to jury service".

16th April, 1966.