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We would like to add our voices to those of others who have instigated and taken part in the inquiry. Thank you for requesting our response. While we know that women face a wide range of inequality in Scotland we would limit our response here to two issues that we feel are of great importance and on which we have some expertise – the inequality women face in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, (where they hold a small proportion of promoted posts) and the Pay Gap.

1. Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). We agree with the findings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh report “Tapping our Talents” that the Scottish Government should “take the lead in committing itself to a national strategy for Scotland – an Action Plan – aimed at retaining and promoting women in STEM and led by a Cabinet Secretary” (Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2012). That Plan needs to involve key stakeholders taking responsibility and working together to ensure success. All Scottish universities should be expected to bring all STEM departments up to Athena SWAN Silver Award level or equivalent. We would encourage employers to ensure that criteria for promotion such as indicators of esteem are gender neutral (Mukasa, 2009).
2. The Pay Gap. It was noted in the debate that the pay gap between men and women in full time employment across Scotland is 10.7%. The pay gap in universities in the UK has worsened in recent years (Times Higher, 2012a). In universities in Scotland, the average pay for a female professor is £71,311 while for a male it is £75,174. At the University of Glasgow the pay gap is larger - the average female professorial salary is £70,286 while for males it is £75,321. The average in Scotland for all full time academic staff is £43,197 for females and £49,515 for males (Times Higher, 2012b). In spite of the legislation and the work of groups such as Close the Gap, little progress is being made. So far government bodies and unions have let women down. Those who appear to have helped women make the greatest progress have been the lawyers who have brought successful cases (Williams, 2010). Secrecy over pay needs to be abolished so pay is more transparent, as it is in Norway. Statutory pay audits and a requirement for public bodies and agencies to demonstrate their plans and actions for closing the gender pay gap within an agreed timescale are necessary to ensure organizations do not fail to pay men and women equally.

Finally we agree that flexible, affordable, high quality childcare will help those families with children. Thank you for increasing the spending on work to tackle gender inequality by nearly 30%. We very much appreciate the work the Scottish Government is doing to improve equality for women.

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**References:**

Mukasa, S. Under-representation of Women and Minority Awardees in Geoscience Societies. *Elements*, 2009. **5**: p. 77-78.

Royal Society of Edinburgh (2012) Tapping our Talents: women in science, technology,, engineering and mathematics: a strategy for Scotland, Edinburgh.

Times Higher (2012a) We must see the gap to mind it, 2<sup>nd</sup> August p. 7.

Times Higher (2012b) Average salary of full time academic staff 2010-11. 10th May 2012, page 43.

Williams, Z. (2010) On equal pay, sisters with solicitors must do it for themselves, *The Guardian*, Wednesday April 28<sup>th</sup>.