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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN  
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Advisory Group Meeting on Women,  
Violence and the Law  
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
28-30 January 1991

REPORT ON THE ADVISORY GROUP MEETING  
ON WOMEN, VIOLENCE AND THE LAW



**UNITED NATIONS**

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ADVISORY GROUP MEETING  
ON WOMEN, VIOLENCE AND THE LAW

Organization of the meeting

1. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) co-hosted an Advisory Group Meeting on Women, Violence and the Law together with the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) and the Rape Crisis Society of Trinidad and Tobago. The meeting was convened at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 28-30 January 1991.

2. The purpose of the meeting was:

(a) To situate the extent of sexual violence in Caribbean society and to explore the manner in which same has been confronted by non-governmental organizations, social work agencies, the police departments and the judicial administration;

(b) To discuss the legal issues inherent in rape crisis work and other sexual offences with a view to developing proposals for legislative and judicial administration reform;

(c) To share the outreach experiences of rape crisis centres in the Caribbean region so as to develop strategies for maximizing the impact of advocacy work;

(d) To identify specific areas in which action should be undertaken, including recommendations as regards the types of institutions which might undertake such actions, for example, the development or strengthening of legal aid initiatives; training programmes for law enforcement officials such as police and legal officers on the gender issues involved in domestic violence and sexual offences.

Attendance

3. The meeting was attended by participants from Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico, Saint Christopher/Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States Virgin Islands.

4. Participants included experts from professional and technical areas relevant to the subject of the meeting such as the academia, crisis centres and other institutions which provide relevant services, the legal profession and the police force.

5. Resource persons from Canada, Mexico and the Netherlands and representatives of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and

the Women and Development Unit (WAND) of the Continuing Studies Programme of the University of the West Indies also attended the meeting.

6. The meeting was also attended by government representatives of national focal points on women in development from the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, Saint Christopher/Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

#### Opening session

7. The meeting was opened by the Honourable Emmanuel Hosein, Minister of Social Development and Family Services. In his opening greetings, the Minister observed the importance of the issues which the meeting proposed to address, particularly the issue of law reform. He noted that this meeting was timely, as Trinidad and Tobago was presenting the Domestic Violence Bill in Parliament on the second day of the meeting. The Minister recognized that sexual offences and domestic violence are very serious matters to which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has given special attention. He expressed satisfaction at the fact that so many Caribbean countries were represented at this meeting and that this opportunity has been given, not only to share experiences but especially to stimulate action towards law reform in countries which have not yet embarked on that road. In this regard, he expressed the hope that the process of law reform experienced by Trinidad and Tobago with the Sexual Offences Bill, which had become the Sexual Offences Act a few years ago, and the present process concerning the Domestic Violence Bill will be useful and constructive to developments in other Caribbean countries.

8. Representatives of the co-hosting agencies welcomed participants and resource personnel to the meeting and thanked the international, regional and local organizations and individuals for their contributions, without which the meeting would not have been possible.

9. Mrs. Roberta Clarke, Co-ordinator, CAFRA Women and the Law, informed the meeting on the background to convening this meeting, which is one component of a regional project being implemented by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) on Women and the Law in the Caribbean. She noted that notwithstanding the need for sociological research on the phenomenon of sexual offences against women, the daily experiences of women in the region and of government institutions and non-governmental organizations, which attempt to give support to victims and provide popular education and outreach services, call for the need to analyze collectively the problems inherent in the laws and judicial administration relating to sexual offences and domestic violence. She noted that this analysis was necessary to increase the institutional capacity of government and of crisis centres to provide effective protection and remedial action beneficial to victims.

Keynote speakers

10. In her presentation, Ms. Gaietry Pargass, Legal Advisor at the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, Trinidad and Tobago, situated the extent of violence against women in the Caribbean by analyzing some available statistics on rape and by examining some of the factors which lead to a distortion of the incidence of violence against women in this society. She looked at legislative changes introduced over the last decade and recommended action strategies towards eradication of violence against women in the region. Ms. Pargass emphasized that generally domestic violence has been under-reported and has not been regarded as a separate offence under the laws of the region. She noted that Puerto Rico is an exception. This country effected Law 54 for the Prevention of Domestic Violence in June 1989. In other countries of the region, assaults between spouses are still treated in the same way as assaults between strangers under the existing criminal law provisions regarding assault, grievous bodily harm, manslaughter and murder. Ms. Pargass's recommendations include: the need for women to speak out publicly about acts of violence and to report relevant incidents; to improve methods for collection and compilation of statistical records; to sensitize policy-makers; to lobby for effective legislative reform and to install special units at police stations trained to deal with victims of abuse.

11. Justice Monica Barnes, Judge in the Tax Appeal Court and Member of the Trinidad and Tobago Law Commission, sought to explicate several issues pertaining to the Domestic Violence Bill of Trinidad and Tobago. She pointed out that the Bill is an attempt to provide legal protection for the victims of domestic violence, but that women's reticence to speak out shielded the criminal. In her view, men are also reluctant to publicly identify the problem. She identified the attempt to strike a right balance between the need to preserve existing marital or other spousal or parental relationships, on the one hand, and the need to protect these persons from exposure to violence, on the other, as the Bill seeks to enact provisions which can both punish and protect. She explained that the Bill seeks to prevent the occurrence of the offence in the first place, rather than to punish the offender by introducing the concept of the personal protection order which can be obtained by either spouse.

12. Dr. Amina Mama, Lecturer in the Women and Development Studies Programme at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands, discussed the relationship between gender ideology and violence against women. She examined various forms of violence that women are subjected to within the historical context of colonial and post-colonial administrations and the role of ideology in perpetuating abuse of women. In her presentation, she used examples drawn from experiences in developing countries to show that, while both men and women had experienced violence in the periods of conquest and enslavement, the forms of violence afflicted to women added a specific dimension to the problem. She noted increased evidence of a correlation between general degradation of life conditions in developing countries and

increased divisions within societies which give rise to violence. In this regard, gender inequalities appear clearly evident through the forms which this violence takes in the case of women. With reference to the Caribbean, she suggested that historical analysis should go hand-in-hand with detailed local case studies for the purpose of devising strategies against women abuse.

#### Summary of discussions

13. The following summary of discussions is based on major points which emerged from plenary sessions, small group discussions and analytical commentary from the Chief Rapporteur.

14. The meeting identified the problem of unreported statistics and the absence of standardized reporting, where it occurs, and considered these as major obstacles in advocating changes in the judicial system.

15. It was recognized that some degree of reform in the laws relating to sexual offences has been enacted in at least three member States, namely in the Bahamas, in Puerto Rico and in Trinidad and Tobago.

16. Some participants noted that domestic violence has emerged as a new area for serious treatment by the law, but that the judicial system has been reluctant to intervene in this area. They suggested that one of the main reasons for such reluctance relates to the traditional perception of domestic violence as "husband and wife business" in which victims are generally irresolute. Some noted the fact that legal reform in this area requires acceptance of the concept of criminality in the sanctified domestic sphere. The meeting recognized a remarkably sensitive approach taken by Trinidad and Tobago in its efforts to draft a Domestic Violence Bill which was presented to Parliament on 29 January 1991. This Bill is innovative in that it seeks not so much to punish the offender but to prevent the occurrence of the preservation of family structures, which victims are understandably unwilling or unable to demolish.

17. The meeting was of the view that gender ideologies as manifested in laws and the treatment of sexual offences in the law, have taken different forms in the various member States and are influenced by historical and cultural factors. It was also felt, in this regard, that prevailing ideologies generally support male dominance and male control over female sexuality and are selectively reinforced by prevailing societal attitudes, which need to be changed through, for example, systematic public education.

#### Examination of police intervention practices and the rights of victims of violence

18. The meeting expressed concern about the low levels of reporting of rape cases to the police throughout the region. Note was taken, however, of increased reporting in countries where a

relatively raised sensitivity to issues of rape is found in the police service. In Jamaica, for example, the level of reporting has increased since a system of training and sensitization of female police officers has been put in place and a special Rape Unit has been established within the police service.

19. Police intervention practice in the handling of rape cases varied in each member State, as did the practices associated with the doctor/medical services which deal with the victim. In some member States, the victims receive "specialized" treatment from trained officers and sensitized doctors. In countries where no sensitization or training has taken place, police intervention tends to have a negative effect on the treatment of victims. Jamaica was commended for the recently-introduced training programme for police officers, intended to equip them with basic counselling skills to be used during initial investigations.

20. Many victims are unaware of their rights to demand a choice of medical intervention and an attending lawyer on reporting a sexual offence. It was emphasized that these rights should be made known to everyone.

21. It was agreed that in-camera hearings are desirable, but that the judge should use his/her discretion to allow personnel from rape crisis centres and/or a close friend of the victim into the courtroom.

22. Many participants reported that the lengthy and recurrent inquiries and trials act as a deterrent to women reporting sexual crimes. One solution suggested was the abolition of the preliminary inquiries and adoption of a one-trial approach. In this regard, the meeting suggested that the regional body, CAFRA should approach the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) and solicit inclusion of relevant provisions in the model legislation presently under consideration by that body.

The criminal justice approach to violence against women (emphasis on prosecution of rape offenders).

23. It was recognized that victims are usually reluctant to provide evidence of details related to the offence, especially in cases where the offender pleads not guilty of the offence. Several examples were given of experiences in various countries in the region, with regard to rules which operate to the disadvantage of the victim. The question of reading particular responses of victims as consent to the act is a significant one, as is also the traumatic procedure of the so-called identification parade where the victim must actually touch the offender according to the rule of law.

24. The meeting expressed concern about the lengthy administrative procedure involved in criminal justice approach which creates, among other things, the following problems:

(a) Victims may abandon prosecution of the matter, mainly due to the recurrent trauma;

(b) Victims may no longer be minors, which they were at the time the offence took place;

(c) Victims succumb under the pressure of community views, shame, guilt, fear and other subjective factors and, consequently abandon the case;

(d) Victims are unable to remember details, which discredit their case.

Participants from Belize, Dominica and Jamaica reported that the average duration for trial completion of rape cases in their countries is one to one and a half years. Saint Christopher/Nevis reported three to four months and Trinidad and Tobago five years.

25. Participants from Curacao, Netherlands Antilles reported that on rape trials a judge sits without a jury, which expedites the trial.

26. Some participants noted that the definitional problem of rape as given in legal statutes, on the one hand, and as perceived and understood in society, on the other hand, continues to create controversy. The problem includes constant needs to agree on what the act of rape is, whether it is an act which can only be perpetrated by men, what the act of marital rape is, what really determines that the act took place with consent of the person who declares to have been raped, and so on.

27. Many participants felt that the criminal justice approach to violence against women would benefit if lawyers and magistrates, treating cases of rape or other sexual offences, were activists on issues of women in development. They pointed out that serious obstacles appear when they do not have an understanding of gender ideology and how gender bias operates in people's minds. Two participants from Belize presented detailed examples, which were supported by examples from other countries.

28. In recognizing the reluctance of victims to press charges on perpetrators or molesters because of fear of the effects of social control in the small societies of the Caribbean, several participants called for alternative measures to help victims seek justice.



The experience of rape crisis centres in working with judicial administration.

29. From the country studies presented on Belize, Dominican Republic, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago, it appeared to the meeting that strategies adopted by rape crisis centres have been different in each one of the countries and varied according to specific situations.

30. Main determinants of the approach adopted by crisis centres, in working with the judicial administration, have been the specific nature of the society, the stage of development of the judicial system and advantages of personal contact with members of the judicial system.

31. The country studies emphasized the impact which the use of the media has had on the judiciary.

32. In her response, Ms Mohammed suggested that each society had to address the situations in its own way. She noted that the involvement of men was very important in the process. She also raised the issue of credibility of the law, ethics and corruptive systems.

33. The ECLAC representative concluded, from a few years hotline service experience, that victims are plagued by feelings of guilt and helplessness. These perceptions are informed by the established notion that women are by nature weak, and this is so deeply internalized by everyone that there is no room to even question the feeling of guilt and helplessness. The same established notion of powerlessness of women exists in the man's mind as well, and seems to justify his acts as a perpetrator.

34. She explained that the perception of powerlessness of women, an element of the dominant gender ideology, permeates legal rules, interventions to "protect and serve", the educational system, medical practice, political life, the economic organization of society, cultural expression, communication and information and, unfortunately, often lingers at the root of interventions at crisis centres and both preventative and corrective assistance. She pointed out that unless the assistance, corrective and guidance services which are being provided at the same time challenge predominant ideology of gender inequality, actions will have limited long-term effect.

35. She emphasized the need to question gender inequality in all spheres of life, in all aspects of involvement in the problem of violence against women, in the legal profession, in the police force and in the crisis centres.

The experience of rape crisis centres

36. One participant raised questions on services for male victims of rape and on the relationship between Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and rape. Advantages of collaboration between rape

crisis centres and AIDS crisis centres were highlighted and it was agreed that such collaborative action should be promoted.

37. In considering limited action due to inadequate reporting of cases, it was suggested that records of rape crisis centres and of hospitals, particularly the offices of medical social workers might contain more cases than police records.

#### The work experience of rape crisis centres

38. Representatives from rape crisis centres presented case studies on Belize, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago.

39. The meeting acknowledged that, in general, crisis centres carry out the following activities: liaison services with the police, with shelters, with medical and legal services; counselling, support and guidance to victims before, during and after trial; hot-line service; resource library, data collection, outreach and fund-raising.

40. In an effort to eliminate economic dependence as a factor which perpetuates relationships where violence occurs recurrently, some participants felt that crisis centres should also attempt to provide job training and referrals to employment agencies and training institutions for the acquisition of basic or specific skills required on the job market.

41. Many participants supported initiatives undertaken in most crisis centres to undertake public outreach programmes, concerning awareness of rape and sexual violence in communities, schools, universities, church and other organizations. Some participants suggested that such programmes should include major elements of gender awareness and issues concerning prevalent gender ideology and the need to change the existing value systems and gender bias in society.

42. One representative of a crisis centre in Saint Croix, United States Virgin Islands, informed the meeting that a project had been initiated in her country to acquire a house by means of low-income mortgage, and with donations from members. She added that shelter service could often be provided through room facilities provided by some hotels, free of cost, in certain periods of the year, as negotiated and agreed upon with respective managements.

43. Some representatives of crisis centres informed the meeting of their experience with trained and untrained personnel. In some cases, centres have operated effectively on the basis of voluntary services from competent, committed and trained staff. In other cases better results have been achieved through operating on the basis of paid, trained staff.

44. Representatives of crisis centres reported on varying degrees of co-operation received from police departments. Many representatives reported on the systematic resistance of police departments to co-operate in a serious way. The urgent need for

improvement of this situation, in view of the benefits of collaboration for the victim, was recognized by many representatives.

Legal change: experiences and obstacles

45. Two countries in the region, namely Trinidad and Tobago and Puerto Rico, had successfully passed law reforms. Both cases were presented at the meeting.

46. Several participants of the Bahamas, Puerto Rico and Trinidad and Tobago transmitted a wealth of experience to the meeting on the process of legal change.

47. Resource persons of Trinidad and Tobago, who have been involved in both the process of legal change on the Sexual Offences Bill (1986) and in the process related to the Domestic Violence Bill (1991), contributed to the discussions as well. Furthermore, deliberations of the meeting had the benefit of contributions from one Canadian resource person and others who were familiar with legal change in the area of sexual offences in Great Britain and other countries.

48. Two participants of Puerto Rico pointed out, that the passage of Law 54 "Ley para la Prevencion e Intervencion con la Violencia Domestica" (Prevention and Intervention with Domestic Violence Act) was a major achievement, as it specifies the main forms of violence experienced in the home - physical, sexual and psychological - as crimes. They also noted that recent statistics show that women are indeed appealing to Law 54. During the month of June 1990, 1,200 Protective Orders have been issued and in 66 per cent of the cases a conviction was obtained.

49. It was recognized that action towards legal change has been limited in most countries of the Caribbean region, because of poor understanding of the inadequacy of some existing laws pertaining to sexual offences and also because of lack of data.

50. There was general consensus on the limited impact of legal change, when such change is not accompanied by simultaneous change of prevailing societal attitudes.

51. Participants agreed that systematic public education programmes should be put in place to address gender ideology as it manifests itself in Caribbean society.

52. The question of limited resources for adequate staffing and for implementation of work in the judiciary was raised as a matter of concern in many member States.

53. Several participants suggested that in the absence of resources for the establishment of special units in government departments, or for undertaking costly research, co-operation among member States and indeed between member States in the Caribbean

subregion and member States in Central and Latin America should be encouraged and pursued, in support of national efforts to achieve legal reform.

54. Representatives from countries, where no legal reforms have been tabled as yet, observed that much could be learnt from the successful strategies used in the region regarding lobby and research for legal reform.

55. One participant introduced the question of AIDS and indicated that the possibility of a close connection between AIDS and rape, and the determination of some persons to protect themselves against the disease, has presented problems in court which affected treatment of rape cases to the disadvantage of the rape victim.

56. Some participants noted that obstacles to the contribution of crisis centres in promoting legal reform include the scarcity of resources at national level and the complexities related to accessing external resources.

57. Considering the magnitude and diversity of the problems which are brought to crisis centres, one participant observed a tendency of crisis centres to seek expansion of field and scope of services rendered. She pointed out that this tendency spreads the energy and capacity of the centres too thin and prevents them from concentration on promotion of legal reform.

58. Several participants were of the view that the field experience of crisis centres equips this institution to effectively promote legal reform. The field experience of crisis centres includes communication with victims and survivors of sexual offences, their relatives, friends and members of the community. Their activities also lead to the establishment and maintenance of linkages with the police, the judiciary, the medical sector, the media and the public in general.

#### The efficacy of legal reform as it relates to violence against women

59. Four resource persons commented on the efficacy of legal reform, drawing on results of research studies and on experiences with the process of law reform.

60. The meeting was enlightened on the technical procedures of law reform to which lawyers, drafters, law commissions and politicians make substantial contributions.

61. Several participants noted general limitations to legal reform. One discussant observed that certain law reforms are bound to be ineffective when the structure of the law of reference remains unchanged.

62. One participant noted the influence of situational circumstances such as national efforts to meet United Nations

Decade objectives, the importance of certain issues, or the quest for political mileage at a particular time.

63. One discussant pointed out that where battering and violent acts against women are perceived as normal, it is very difficult to adjust the law and achieve implementation of the adjusted law.

64. One discussant cautioned against the use of inappropriate formulations of law reforms pursued. Drawing from the results of a study in Guyana she noted the difference between the formulation "pressurized sex" as used by respondents and "forced" sex as referred to in the law. She felt that in such situations the application of the law becomes difficult.

65. Some participants commented on the critical role of the police and on the need for provisions which accompany the application of the law. They pointed out that the police, as the only agency in society that has the right to use and apply force, should intervene in, for example, incidences of domestic violence. However, in some cases, the act of arrest may have a salutary effect on the crime committed. Examples were given of cases of domestic violence, where by absence of protective measures, the victim was vulnerable to further abuse upon seeking protection of the law.

66. One discussant, Professor Sheehy, reported on the experience with law reform which was effected in Canada in 1983 and the preliminary assessments of the efficacy of the reform. Law reform had addressed restrictive rules to the victim.

67. She made the following statements relative to the situation since the law reform took place:

- (a) The level of reporting has increased;
- (b) The high rate of unfounded convictions continued to be the same;
- (c) Although husbands can be prosecuted for rape it is not being done in practice;
- (d) Women's past sexual history now remains out of court;
- (e) Police hostility has reduced significantly, and there are many bottlenecks in the application of the reformed law.

68. Professor Sheehy identified the following difficulties which have presented themselves in Canada since the law reform took place:

- (a) The definition of sexual assault presents problems. Interpretations have been manipulated by lawyers and judges, often because of structurally embedded notions in the law. Sexual assault is not necessarily violent as violence is not implicit in assault;

(b) There is a presumption in the law that women consent unless they have convinced the rapist to the contrary;

(c) When evidence is required, past sexual history counts.

69. Based on the Canadian experience, she cautioned for careful selection of words and concepts in drafting law reform and to be very clear about the meaning attached to each definition.

70. She suggested that law reform should be accompanied by reform at other levels and aspects of life, with reference to gender inequality.

71. One discussant from Trinidad and Tobago, Mrs. Stephanie Daly, commented on the challenge to change perceptions when drafting a law reform bill on issues concerning violence against women. She noted that the Domestic Violence Bill, for example, addresses social issues and that women spoke in divided views on the Bill during public consultations.

72. She reminded the meeting that legislation addressing social issues should be taken very seriously, in terms of political interests which may be pursued. She noted that these can affect or guarantee passing of legislation, which reflects no recognition of the issue in behalf of women.

73. Mrs. Daly informed the meeting that the Domestic Violence Bill tries to address issues, concerning police power, and also tries to give protection to all those who have not had the privilege before of being protected by the law. The latter includes common law partners, dependants, the aged and the handicapped. The Bill extends powers to other persons who could stand in for those who cannot do so themselves.

74. Mrs. Daly ended her contribution by advocating for more public involvement and participation of the media in the development of legislation, enactment of legislation and the application of legislation.

75. One discussant, Mrs. Seebaran-Suite, reviewed the history of law reform in Trinidad and Tobago with special reference to the Sexual Offences Bill, which was passed in 1986. She informed the meeting that in that Bill not all offences were brought under the term assault.

76. With regard to the Bill currently presented to Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago, she emphasized the importance of criminalizing domestic violence. She noted that while police power should be increased, comprehensive protection for those seeking law protection should exist at the same time. Mrs. Seebaran-Suite suggested the provision of an additional protective net over the abused woman through assistance from neighbours, friends, employers and others.

77. Mrs. Seebaran-Suite added that removal of the abused woman from the location of the crime for a period of time is of prime importance.

78. The discussant suggested that more attention should be given to matters such as verbal abuse, verbal assault, sexual harassment in the workplace and economic violence. She explained that economic violence is, for example, inflicted on a woman with children who cannot subsist economically without co-habiting with the offender. She referred to a "category of welfare" which has emerged from the large number of women in this situation. She insisted on enforcement of the order for maintenance.

79. In closing, Mrs. Seebaran-Suite left the meeting with the final message that new law reform proposals should be informed by the history of legislation on violence against women, and an understanding of how and why certain decisions have been taken.

80. A video presentation, collated by the organizers of the meeting, illustrated different aspects of the act of rape and individual and social conditions leading to the act. The testimonies of convicted offenders were revealing and contributed to the deliberations of the meeting.

81. As regards the format of the meeting and the interaction patterns, a representative of SISTREN Theatre Collective, Jamaica led an exercise on alternative methods and forms of communication and interaction, as a contribution to the efficacy of achieving the objectives of the meeting.

### Recommendations

#### Public education

1. It is important to address gender issues on an ongoing basis with and within all sectors of society. Special target groups could be schools and other institutions, policy-makers and the private sector.

2. Crisis centres, government and non-governmental organizations, advisory bodies and bar associations should co-ordinate activities of advocacy, training and dissemination of information and informative material.

#### Networking for law reform

3. Initiatives of law commissions should be actively supported by the women's movement through lobbies, campaigns, research, data collection, analyses and awareness creation at various levels in the society.

4. To this effect, government machineries for women in development and the different components of the women's movement should make active use of the media.

5. CAFRA should liaise with the CARICOM Secretariat with regard to the activities developed by the latter, on model legislation for the region. Such model legislation could be studied in the light of the law reform experiences of Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. Law reform models resulting from such studies could be used to assist member States, which have not yet initiated action for law reform.

6. Review and assessment of existing laws should be encouraged and promoted in all member States. CAFRA should consider technical possibilities to facilitate such action in member States.

7. In countries where law reforms have been effected, research on issues related to women and the law should pay special attention to the practical application and the social impact of such reforms.

8. Members of the legal profession are urged to analyze the law from a gender perspective and play an active role in the processes of law reform. They are also urged to insert a gender perspective into teaching programmes to law students and attorneys.

#### Political interests

9. Activists in the field of women and the law should enter the arena of politics, given the relationship between legislative reform and political willingness to introduce reforms. At the same time, those who are already part of the political system should be informed, supported and strengthened to address the issue of law reform for women.



Annex I

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Government representatives

BAHAMAS	Cora Bain-Colebrook Co-ordinator Women's Desk Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Affairs
BARBADOS	Marva Alleyne Director Women's Affairs Bureau Ministry of Community Development
JAMAICA	Veronica Morgan Project Officer Bureau of Women's Affairs Ministry of Community Development
SAINT CHRISTOPHER/NEVIS	Gwendolyn Nisbett Assistant Secretary Ministry of Women's Affairs
SAINT LUCIA	Marcia Lesmond Co-ordinator Women's Affairs Ministry of Youth, Community Development, Sports, Information and Broadcasting
SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	Jeannie McDonald Co-ordinator Women's Affairs Ministry of Education
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	Phyllis Augustus Head Women's Bureau Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
	Allison Hughes Acting Administrative Officer II Women's Bureau Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

2. Resource persons

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