

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Aruba
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Br.Virgin Islands
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- Netherlands Antilles
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinid and Tobago
- U.S. Virgin Islands

CARICOM/UNECLAC/UNIFEM
Post-Beijing Encounter: A Caribbean
Subregional Ministerial Conference
Georgetown, Guyana
6-8 August 1997

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**REPORT OF THE
CARICOM/UNECLAC/UNIFEM POST-BEIJING ENCOUNTER:
A CARIBBEAN SUBREGIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

*Preparatory to the Seventh Session of the Regional Conference on the
Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of
Latin America and the Caribbean*



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE

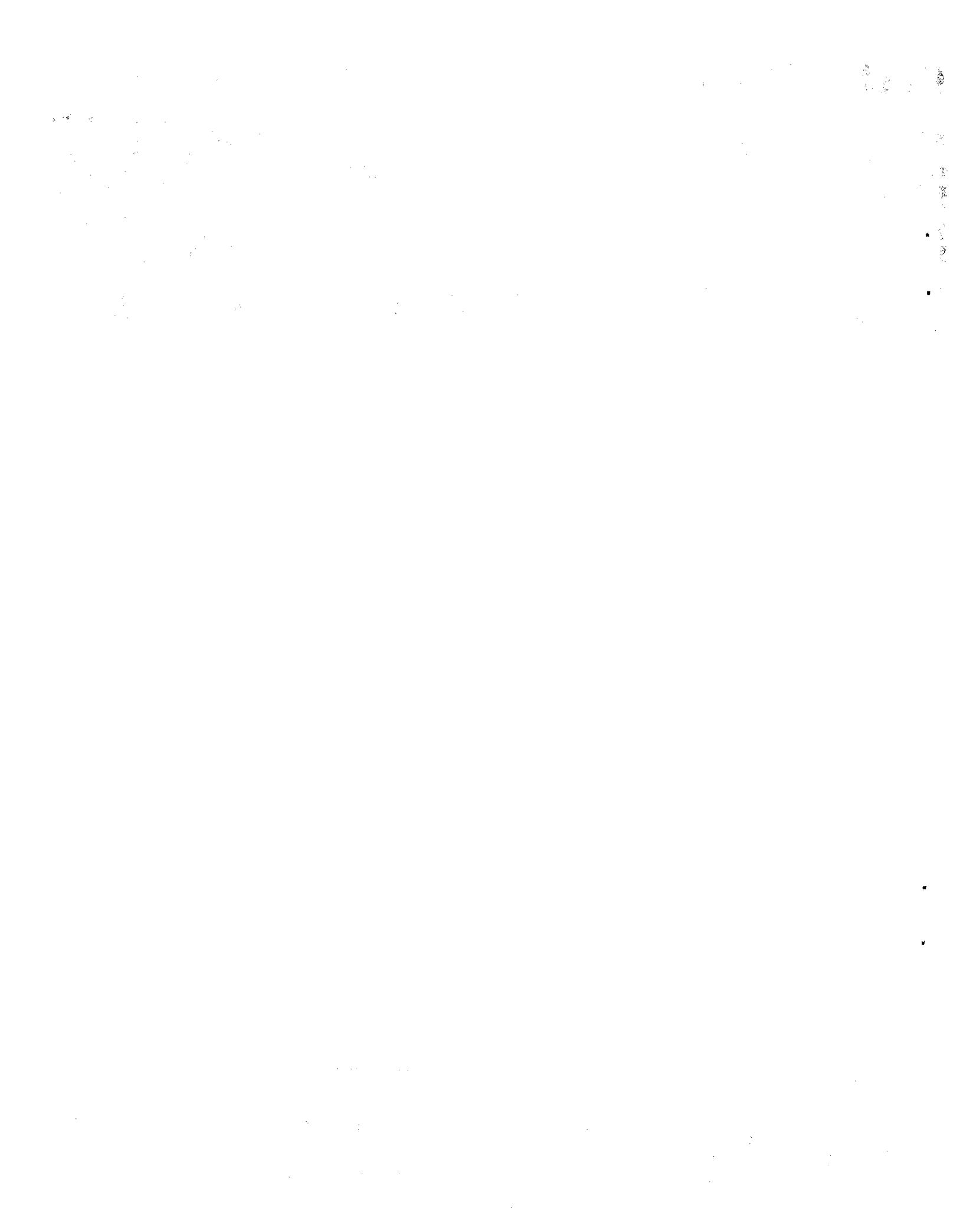


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**REPORT OF THE
CARICOM/UNECLAC/UNIFEM POST-BEIJING ENCOUNTER:
A CARIBBEAN SUBREGIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

The CARICOM/UNECLAC/UNIFEM Post-Beijing Encounter: A Caribbean Subregional Ministerial Conference was held at Pegasus Hotel, Georgetown, Guyana, 6-8 August 1997. The conference was convened to review governments' progress in the region after the Sixth Regional Conference and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. In addition, the conference sought to prepare the countries of the Caribbean subregion for the Seventh Session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Fifteen members and one associate member of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) attended the meeting. Nine of these countries were represented at the Ministerial Level. These were: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Representatives from other United Nations specialized bodies were: the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Organization of American States (OAS), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Representatives from the sponsoring organizations were The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). A list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

The forum unanimously endorsed the draft document "Women in decision-making and Gender Sustainable Development and Poverty" to be presented to the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin American and the Caribbean. It also adopted by consensus the draft "Georgetown Consensus" and passed a resolution with respect to the situation in Montserrat. These are Annexed to this report.

Opening of the meeting

At the opening ceremony, six addresses were delivered by the following speakers: The Hon. Indra Chandarpal, Minister within the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Ms. Carla Barnett, Deputy Secretary General, CARICOM, Ms. Joycelin Massiah, Regional Adviser, UNIFEM, Ms. Barbara Boland, Deputy Director, ECLAC, Mr. Carlos Felipe Martinez, Resident Representative, UNDP, Guyana, Dr. George Alleyne, Director PAHO/WHO and CARICOM-endorsed candidate for the Director of WHO, and a feature address by the Hon. Janet Jagan O.E., Prime Minister of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Mr. Timothy Crichlow, Director (AG), Multilateral and Global Affairs Dept., Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Guyana, chaired the opening proceedings. He welcomed delegates to the meeting and alluded to the enormous task confronted by the region in its attempts at integrating women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Hon. Ms Indra Chandarpal, Minister within the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Cooperative Republic of Guyana, delivered the opening remarks. She stressed the importance of ensuring that the momentum gained at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 and the Follow-up to the Sixth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into Economic and Social Development, be translated into concrete action via transformative tools with which the economic and social agendas of the region could realize gender equity.

Ms. Carla Barnett of the CARICOM Secretariat also addressed the meeting. In her remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General acknowledged the presence of the delegation of the Republic of Haiti whose modalities for accession as a full member of CARICOM were currently being established. She launched, in the form of a booklet, the CARICOM Post-Beijing Regional Plan of Action to the year 2000 and indicated that the production of the Plan of Action, which was initiated by the Secretariat would not have been possible without the support of the British Development Division in the Caribbean (BDDC). She emphasized the critical importance of fulfilling the two strategic objectives in order to achieve the goal of the Plan. These objectives were identified as the promotion of gender mainstreaming in policy, institutions and public debate; and the initiation of structural reform in addressing the issues of poverty among women, violence against women and women's under-representation in decision-making.

Ms. Joycelin Massiah, Regional Programme Adviser, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, thanked the Government of Guyana, CARICOM and ECLAC for inviting UNIFEM to participate in this conference. She stated that the concern of this conference with the issue of gender mainstreaming was critical and suggested that much of the inertia, resided not so much with a dearth of ideas, but with sluggishness in the systems in which these new ideas were being inserted. That inertia was closely linked to the slow rate of change in bureaucratic attitudes and practice and the resistance to accept the need for the incorporation of a gender perspective in their operations. She felt, therefore, that there was a massive job to be done to create the kind of sensitive and receptive environment in which a gendered approach to development could be effectively implemented.

She informed that UNIFEM was pleased to collaborate with the Commonwealth Secretariat in the conduct of a preparatory mission in two territories interested in the introduction of a Gender Management System in their public sector. She reported that UNIFEM proposed to undertake two issues - women and poverty, and women and decision-making. UNIFEM proposed to address these two themes through a major programme with the BDDC. She stated that a third issue of interest to UNIFEM was the issue of women's rights as human rights. In this context, the UNIFEM Latin American and Caribbean Section was seeking to mount a major campaign on Violence Against Women to start on 25 November 1997 and end on 10 December 1998.

One final area of interest to UNIFEM was that of collaboration. Ms. Massiah suggested that governments might wish to revisit the pre-Beijing model and apply it to achieving current regional goals, such as, assistance to Montserrat. She further requested that before the conference ended that it should produce a plan on how the various Ministries, Departments, Bureaus and NGOs could collaborate to provide the support so urgently needed by the women of Montserrat.

Sir George Alleyne, Regional Director of PAHO and CARICOM-endorsed candidate for the post of Director-General of WHO, addressed the gathering. Dr. Alleyne stressed that one of the most pernicious forms of inequality in this part of the world was that of gender inequality. He informed the meeting that the problems of women's health were derived from women's biology and women's social discrimination, pointing out that the health profession had been quite efficient in finding tools to deal with the former but woefully inadequate in dealing with the latter. He further informed the meeting that correcting gender inequality could not be left to one sector of the population alone and for this reason, in his organization, all major projects were to be examined through the eyes of gender. He urged the Meeting to identify the specific steps which could be addressed immediately, to accelerate the process of reducing gender inequality and concluded by reminding all present that female inequality was not a female issue but a human issue.

Ms. Barbara Boland, Deputy Director, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) expressed pleasure at being able to jointly convene this conference. She pointed out that there were three major issues for consideration: (a) that of implementing the task of gender mainstreaming and essential to the task was engaging in gender planning; (b) the question of addressing the issue of sustainable development and poverty eradication through gender lens; and (c) breaking the glass ceiling and advancing the fuller and greater participation of women in the decision-making processes in Caribbean society.

She informed that in relation to gender mainstreaming, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters had just completed an Expert Group Meeting on Gender Planning, the outputs of which would be presented during the course of the conference. She recommended that the outputs of that meeting be considered, since the gender planning approach might be instrumental in making the qualitative difference which had been advocated since Mexico in 1975 and which had not, to date, been achieved. She felt that on the question of sustainable development and poverty eradication it was hoped that the recently concluded Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Eradication of Poverty would inform the deliberations and through the recommendations emanating from the conference, the realities of women's lives in the region would be taken into account.

She concluded by stating that the Caribbean subregion was once more in the forefront of the regions of the world by hosting the present Ministerial Conference to adopt strategies for the successful implementation of the Platform for Action and to identify obstacles and wished the conference success in its deliberations.

Mr. Felipe Carlos Martinez, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Guyana, stated that it was an honour to participate in the August gathering of Caribbean decision makers and activists who were committed to working assiduously to complete the removal of the remaining hindrances to full gender equity.

He described the pivotal role of gender equity in the work of the United Nations system in Guyana and highlighted the United Nations untiring efforts and resources dedicated to ensuring the advancement of women. He stated that one such example, was the soon-to-be approved UNDP

funding for the establishment of a Leadership Institute to advance women's role in public life; National Resource and Documentation Centre for women and the support for the implementation of specific actions to follow up on Beijing.

He concluded by stating that from the momentum generated by the United Nations designation of 1976-1985 as the Decade for Women to Beijing it had been a long journey and a retrospective glance would provide true evaluation of the achievements. He noted that there was still a long way to go but felt that this conference was timely and significant as it allowed for a review of the progress made. The deliberations of the conference would frame the Caribbean subregion's agenda and inform their future strategies.

The Feature address was delivered by the Hon. Ms. Janet Jagan, Prime Minister of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. Prime Minister Jagan reminded the meeting that women, in the earliest stages of development of civilization, had held important positions and frequently dominant positions in primitive societies where matriarchal patterns were the norm and women had equality, or more. She intimated that today, on the other hand, a full turn was taking place but not by chance. She asserted that the region should pay homage to the early proponents of women's rights for the torches they had lit announcing that women's rights were put on the agenda and was there to stay. She emphasized the necessity for the eradication of poverty which was seen as the greatest challenge of women's groups, governments and society in general.

Election of the Bureau of Presiding Officers

The meeting elected the following persons to the Bureau of Presiding Officers

Chairman:	Guyana
First Vice-Chairman:	Cuba
Second Vice-Chairman:	Suriname
Third Vice-Chairman:	Dominica
Rapporteur:	Trinidad and Tobago

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the agenda

The meeting adopted the agenda and agreed to the hours of work, as proposed by the Chair. The agenda is attached as Annex II to this report.

Agenda item 2: Presentation of country reports

Representatives from the sixteen countries present delivered progress reports on activities being undertaken at the national level as follow-up action to the Sixth Regional Conference and the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW).

Many areas of common policy initiatives and best practices emerged from this session. These included, inter alia -

(a) The elimination of violence against women: Legislative reforms in the areas of sexual offences, domestic violence, child maintenance, and equal opportunity bills had been introduced; shelters/safe houses, telephone hotlines had been established; information, education and communication (IEC) training for various categories of personnel had been instituted;

(b) Increasing political participation of women in decision-making: nomination of women as Justices of the Peace; development of mentoring programmes; leadership training; seminars for women senators; gender training for women in the public and private sectors, trade unions and political parties had been undertaken;

(c) Gender mainstreaming: gender training workshops for local and national government officials; establishment of inter-ministerial committees on gender; training programmes in gender analysis and planning had been initiated; cross-ministerial collaboration had been encouraged;

(d) Women and poverty eradication: agrarian reform had been undertaken; skills training/vocational training programmes had been instituted in traditional and non-traditional areas; credit schemes had been established; legislative reform had been undertaken to address child maintenance and maternity leave, and the counting of unremunerated work;

(e) Women and health: information, education and communication on breast and cervical cancer had been initiated; screening for breast and cervical cancer had been instituted as part of regular check-ups; programmes for adolescent mothers established; and

(f) Education: Programmes had been initiated as follows: tuition-assistance programmes for children (ages 6-12) from poor female-headed households (FHH); development of technical/vocational training schemes for young girls and women;

Agenda item 3: Key issues

CARICOM Plan of Action

The meeting was informed that the CARICOM Post-Beijing Plan of Action focused regional attention and action on the priority issues which had been identified by the Caribbean before and at

Beijing, and provided a framework within which the recommended actions could take place. It sought to provide a clear picture of complementary action being pursued by different regional agencies in support of government efforts at implementing the Platform for Action.

Presentation on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The representative of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) explained the mandate, methods of work, membership of the CSW and informed the meeting of the work of the CSW since the Beijing Conference. She explained the importance of Caribbean representation in the CSW and informed of the positions that would be available for Caribbean nomination to the Commission. She highlighted the fact that although the Caribbean subregion had been requested to submit their national reports to the CSW, to date, the Commission had not received any and this would impact on Caribbean status in the CSW and in its reports. She informed of dates of the next session of the CSW and informed the meeting of the multi-year plan to examine in depth, each of the critical areas of concern of the Plan of Action.

Discussion

In the discussion which ensued, countries requested further clarification of the implementation of the CARICOM Subregional Plan of Action. In particular, information was requested on how the Plan was to be implemented at the subregional level and a suggestion was made that costing should have been attached to the various activities so that implementation could have been easier since costs could be shared. Cost therefore, was seen as an important factor in the implementation of a Plan of Action. The CARICOM Secretariat responded that the entire process had been a collaborative one and in that respect it would continue. The meeting was informed that various aspects were to be carried out by CARICOM and some were to be undertaken at the national level.

The CARICOM Secretariat informed that it would take the responsibility to submit to the CSW the national plans that it had in its possession. The issue of the shift from women in development to gender in development was discussed. Countries were informed that the WID approach addressed women's needs in isolation from other issues. The gender in development approach provided a more holistic picture between men and women. The Secretariat highlighted the fact that women still remained the target group but the differential impact was to be assessed.

Gender mainstreaming - gender planning

The paper "A proposal to integrate gender planning into national development plans" was prepared by Ms. Sonja T. Harris, Social/Developmental Planner and presented by Ms. Asha Kambon, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC. The paper stated that the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), in 1995, provided the opportunity not only to revisit the issue of an appropriate methodology and guidelines to integrate gender planning within the national planning process, but to explore the underlying structural power centres and relationships within which development planning took place.

The concept of gender analysis and planning had met with resistance mainly because of the challenges it presented not only to the function of the public systems, but because it questioned how resources and power distribution patterns operate, as well as touched on private relationships which challenged the domestic power and role-sharing arrangement between men and women. A fourth element of resistance alluded to was the non-introduction and/or non-standardization of gender analysis and planning tools, especially applicable to the national planning framework and the fact that there was no compliance or enforcement machinery to ensure the use of the methodology where it might have existed.

A number of thematic issues relating to the justification for gender planning, the roles of key actors in the process, the actual process and the resource distribution side of gender planning were discussed at an Expert Group Meeting convened by ECLAC/CDCC on 16-17 July 1997 in Port of Spain. It was agreed at the Expert Group Meeting that in order to integrate a gender analysis into planning systems, there should be an integrated and interactive approach to planning and national development, as opposed to the current sectoral or dominant economicistic one.

The paper suggested that the broad objective of an integrated approach to planning, based on social/gender analysis would be to ensure social as well as macroeconomic stability and growth. The specific goal would be to ensure in planning that growth and stability in social capital are targetted as the precursor or corollary of economic growth, and that equity measurements are designed to assess performance and progress towards balanced sustainable development. Ms. Kambon shared with participants the recommended gender planning process diagram.

In conclusion, six strategic actions were presented to the meeting for consideration:

1. That a strategic gender planner (SGP) should be contracted for a short-term period since it is envisioned that gender planning would be integrated into the national planning process;
2. That there be critical points of entry for gender planning within the political system;
3. That the central statistical offices in each country be encouraged to generate the relevant data to be used in the formulation of gender specific indicators;
4. That in order to broaden the base of ownership of the gender planning process, information regarding such, should be disseminated through public education processes;
5. That the gender planning function be based in the economic arena, but should be used to bridge the gap between the social and the economic functions within the national planning process;
6. That a pilot programme be designed, using a thematic entry to test the gender plan process. A suggested theme was poverty eradication as it requires a multisectoral approach for solution and thus relevant to the multisectoral nature of gender equity. It would also enhance the measurement of the success of gender planning.

Discussion

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

Clarification between the difference between Gender Management Systems (GMS) and Gender Planning was sought and presented. Gender planning was defined as a process which would itself permeate all levels of the macroeconomic planning process and would involve use of agreed upon gender sensitive socio-economic indicators. Gender management systems, was related to the approach/es which would facilitate acceptance of gender issues and the effective implementation of all plans. It was recognized that these processes would be achieved over time. It was further agreed that both processes were complementary functions as the GMS sought to put in place mechanisms for the management, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the engendered planning process. The need for a consultant to be commissioned to assist the various governments and departments in the planning process, was agreed upon.

The need for persons trained in the area of social planning was recognized. In this regard it was suggested that two persons from each country, should be selected for training overseas.

It was suggested that the issues related to women and the environment ought to be included in the whole scheme of gender planning and management systems proposed.

Concern was expressed regarding the overwhelming nature of the task of achieving gender planning at all levels. In this regard, the experience of Saint Kitts and Nevis was cited. It was suggested that the problem of poverty be given central focus since in spite of the various plans formulated and adopted, and the initiatives taken, the problem persisted and continued to grow. Also, the feminization of poverty was viewed as a stark reality facing the countries of the subregion. Efforts needed to be taken to create measures of incorporating gender issues into poverty eradication programmes urgently.

The point was also made that though the size of the gender planning task proposed was recognized, some measure of specific focus, such as through the poverty eradication efforts could be useful, while a holistic approach to implementation was being worked out.

It was submitted that gender mainstreaming should begin at the economic level since this was where the centre of power lay. In order to bring about a transformation in the economic systems and social programme therefore, the attention of the ministries of finance and economy would have to be captured. On another matter, it was disclosed that government representation to donor agencies and financial institutions such as the World Bank too, often still comprised purely financial personnel, therefore it was recommended that there should be representation from the social sectors as well.

The need for the training of personnel to access and manage social data for input to programmes geared towards the advancement of women, was identified.

Sustainable development, poverty and gender: women and poverty

The paper was researched and presented by Ms. Denise de Souza under the supervision of the gender consultant Andaiye. The presenter stated that the paper was in draft form because it contained gaps resulting from inadequate reporting and/or statistics. In part, it was felt that the inadequacy of the statistical base derived from the inadequacy of existing methodologies and measurement of poverty which also were not adequately gender focused.

The paper made reference to the action taken on the Beijing and CARICOM strategic objectives. It presented the four strategic objectives on poverty of the Beijing Platform for Action: "the achievement of macroeconomic policies and development strategies which address the needs and efforts of women in poverty; women's equal rights and access to economic resources; women's access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions; and the development of methodologies/research to investigate the feminization of poverty". It also listed the general objectives of the CARICOM Plan of Action.

The presenter recommended two courses of action, but stated that these recommendations suggested themselves as essential pre-conditions for national and regional advancement on poverty eradication. The first recommendation included: (a) a methodological approach to poverty investigation which called for, as a matter of urgency, making the analysis and the strategy inclusive, that is, take steps to collect data on poverty and women; (b) data collection on poverty in Montserrat and the Eastern Caribbean banana-producing countries, Haiti and Suriname; and (c) use that data to inform and reshape regional policies and priorities for poverty eradication.

The second recommendation called for one coherent strategy on poverty eradication, that is, that the agreement made by member States in several international summits and several regional, national and sectoral action plans, be brought together into a coherent regional strategy for poverty eradication which took into account the differences among member States while aiming at strengthening the region as a unit; that such a coherent strategy included accurate and up-to-date information and analysis on Montserrat, the Eastern Caribbean banana-producing countries, Haiti and Suriname; and most importantly, had a gender analysis at its core.

Discussion

With regard to the recommendation made for steps to be taken to collect data on women and poverty and to adopt a coherent strategy for poverty eradication, the Guyana representative reported that its Government had already begun work in these areas with a focus on the status of women.

With reference to the Jamaica experience in poverty eradication cited in the paper, it was reported that the Government of Jamaica had since revisited its development policy and in fact some development projects had introduced a gender focus.

The categorization of Antigua and Barbuda as a 'wealthy country' was questioned and it was suggested that current approaches to measuring poverty needed to be reexamined given the

implications for policy and programmes. New methods for solving the poverty problem were also needed.

Much of the Caribbean was experiencing fiscal imbalances, and it was suggested that the implication of this situation for gender planning be assessed. The Eastern Caribbean was at a critical point in this context. Such an assessment would therefore need to inform proposals to governments (on gender planning) particularly to ministries of finance and planning.

It was noted that there were various plans of action from international and other regional conferences. The point was made that this multiplicity of plans would prove to be costly. Greater coordination towards formulation of a single plan was recommended for the more efficient implementation of poverty eradication programmes.

The meeting identified a need for more poverty related studies in terms of providing baseline data to inform policy-making. Such studies would have to be translated downstream to all social actors/partners. Greater regional level collaboration in such initiatives would be necessary before international level collaboration could be effective.

The issue of continuing economic welfare of elderly women was raised against the background of data which revealed that generally in the Caribbean women lived longer than men, but were less able to retain 'official' employment (as distinct from voluntary work in the home, family or public life). This situation bore implications for the measurement of poverty, since many such women became impoverished.

Standardization of socio-economic indicators was necessary and the meeting was informed that the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) had begun some work in this regard.

The CARICOM Secretariat was reported to be in concurrence with the various plans of action. The Secretariat reported that it had adopted the ECLAC Directional Plan of Action for Poverty Eradication in the Caribbean, (LC/CAR/G.490) which had been found to contain a comprehensive mix of all elements - youth, labour, women, private sector, NGOs and governments. The plan reflected non-economic issues and was being used to inform activities towards poverty eradication in the region. The meeting requested that the CARICOM Secretariat continue collaboration with UNDP which is providing significant support to the work of the Secretariat, as well as the ILO, ECLAC and UNIFEM towards building a comparative database. There were plans to incorporate Haiti and Suriname in these initiatives and the CARICOM Secretariat would be guided by the priority areas identified for focus.

It was noted that a number of countries had poverty eradication plans, e.g. Barbados and Grenada, while Belize and The Bahamas had requested support from intergovernmental agencies in developing their plans. Concerted interventions would be necessary to ensure that governments address the process in terms of inserting gender concerns in solving problems.

The CARICOM Secretariat recognized the need for greater levels of training and proposed that more work be done with ministries, exploring the types of training required and achievable, for instance through agencies such as UNFPA. National level promotion was necessary to achieve targets, simultaneously with those being undertaken by the Secretariat at the regional level.

The concern was expressed regarding the apparent preoccupation with planning, measurement and monitoring, with still insufficient attention being paid to eradication or reduction of persistent poverty in the region.

In Trinidad and Tobago, it was reported that the focus would be placed on improving productivity and efficiency as a means of reducing the incidence of poverty. This approach was based on the Singapore model (a country which has reduced its unemployment level from 25 per cent to full employment over a short term). A revolutionary approach to the problem was necessary and the Singapore experience could be instructive.

It was felt that most of the plans of action were directional in terms of poverty eradication but did not have gender analysis as their focus. A project sponsored by the British Overseas Development Agency included a Task Force charged with coordinating plans and exploring new approaches to addressing the problem of poverty. This was one of the parallel strategies to addressing concerns such as those raised about the persistence of poverty in the region. It was recommended that national policies adopted would need to cater to what was the best approach for each country, given the individual situations and experiences.

Reference was made to a Resolution emanating from the 48th session of UNIFEM, which recommended the 20-20 Strategy by which countries would allocate at least 20 per cent of their national budgets towards poverty eradication programmes.

It was also recommended that there be closer collaboration with agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to ensure greater recognition at those levels of gender and poverty related issues. Within the current Inter-American and United Nations system there was a mechanism which ensured coordination and reduced duplication in initiatives. The Caribbean agencies were encouraged to examine the utility of those mechanisms.

Women and the environment

Ms. Jocelyn Dow, Consultant, presented the paper "Women and the Environment" which made an assessment of the progress that women in the Caribbean had made in the post-Beijing period on environmental issues. It traced the history of the environmental movement in the Caribbean and posited some main conclusions and recommendations for the region.

It was felt that the lack of a clearly integrated and common agenda for the environment and women's lobby had restricted gains and hindered a qualitative leap in the area of resource management and sustainable development. The presenter stated that the existing structure within CARICOM, the intergovernmental mechanism, did not itself permit an overarching programme that

pro-actively addressed the need for coordination at a regional level both within and across the government and non-governmental spheres. Environment and gender were still treated as an add-on to regional initiatives except when driven by donor economic instruments of the bilateral and multilateral community.

Ms. Dow pointed out that on examination of the organizational structure of CARICOM, there was no gender mainstreaming and that the Women's Desk was manned by only one person. She added that currently the sustainable development post within the Secretariat was unstaffed and the department was only to be composed of two persons.

The presenter highlighted that in many respects, issues of resource management in the Caribbean were rooted in complex historical, social and political factors, which were responsible for past and current patterns of economic dependency and vulnerability, inequity in the access to resources and their benefits and cultural alienation. As a result, communities had too often been deprived of the opportunity to shape their future, and their role in the management of resources, in accordance with their needs and aspirations, had been ignored or suppressed.

She recommended that the future of the region's natural resources should depend on the cooperation and involvement of all sectors of society, including governments, private sector groupings, non-governmental organizations and communities. The collaborative approach, "co-management", and cases of its successful implementation were growing throughout the world.

She concluded that the environmental well-being of the Caribbean was firmly centred and entirely dependent on its ability to develop a philosophy that united it in its cultural, political, geographical, economic and environmental diversity. She emphasized that the Caribbean should commit itself to a process that is inclusive, people centred, gender-aware and informed by its history.

The consultant concluded that women should provide the mechanism for the consolidation of their gains; insert their power and organizational resources into the equation at all points; be central to all plans, all processes of decision-making; and participate in every sphere of national and regional life.

Women in decision-making: power and decision-making

Ms. Linnette Vassell, Social Development Consultant, presented the paper "Women and Political Power". The paper was divided into three sections. The first dealt with the context and framework within which policy relating to women, politics and decision-making had been advanced. Some of the implications for future policy development, particularly in light of assessments of National Machineries were raised. The second section looked at initiatives that had been taken in the post-Beijing period and in the third section, a summary and recommendations were proposed based on the various aspects of recent experiences.

The paper recommended the following:

1. That there was need to look more widely at the “opportunity structure” for women’s participation in politics - at the electoral, as well as at the non-electoral level and to explore the connection between both, in line with the strategic goal. Approaches needed to be taken to involve wide sections of women to participate in the process, to develop criteria for nominations and rosters of possible persons to be recommended;
2. That initiatives to raise awareness around quotas as an instrument of policy, needed to be taken and pinned on the principle that neither sex should occupy less than a stated proportion of seats/positions in areas of public life;
3. That women’s participation should be influenced by systems of values. Their contribution to society needed to be quantified and accorded greater recognition. Acknowledgment and affirmation of women by women was an important part of the change-building process at the personal, social and institutional levels;
4. That influencing policy rested on coordinating and integrating actions at various levels, from outside, inside, from above and more so from below. Community based actions were therefore critical. Attention to strengthening NGOs, community based organizations (CBOs) and especially facilitating women to organize themselves, could not be separated from concerns to increase the capacity of the National Women’s Machinery. In light of the fact that the NGO sector was a part of the national machinery framework, initiatives to enhance partnership were vital aspects of strategy;
5. That building strategic alliances to promote the expansion of structures of opportunity for women’s leadership in the Caribbean can be pursued around various critical programme needs, such as:
 - (a) a Caribbean-wide research project on women and governance, including various academic institutions in the region e.g.: the University of the West Indies (UWI), (Centre for Gender Development Studies (CGDS), Department of Government) University of Haiti, University of Suriname, Universities in Cuba;
 - (b) the conduct of research on the Valuing of Women’s Unpaid Work, within the university structures available in the region (e.g. UWI structure with CGDS, Dept. of Economics) and relevant intergovernmental bodies such as CARICOM or ECLAC/CDCC;
 - (c) the improvement of mass media coverage of women in politics.
6. That ministries under which responsibility for women’s affairs rest should become models of structures which enlarge opportunities for women’s political leadership;
7. That need for explicit attention should be paid to the Local Government arena.

In closing, the Consultant called for the design and paced implementation of a holistic study on women and politics in the Caribbean.

Discussion

The following issues/recommendations were raised during discussion on this topic:

It was necessary to use women's membership in political organizations/parties as mechanisms for promoting the choice of female candidacies. To date, women's membership in political parties was not reflected at the leadership level of the parties. There should be a concerted effort for women to gain political positions at the highest levels.

The point was made that in the Caribbean there was what has been described as a "tribalised" attitude to politics. It would be necessary therefore, to adopt a fresh perception of politics, the role of political participation and of the entire system if the political process was to be transformed in a positive way. The apparent injustices of power relations in Caribbean society were recognized. The view was expressed that this situation reflected the patriarchal paradigm that was based on an ethos of competition rather than support and cooperation. The perpetuation of this paradigm needs to be discouraged if the desire to change political relations was to be realized.

The fact that women were required to perform multiple roles both in the domestic and public spheres was recognized. The point was made that this was only one of several factors affecting the extent to which women were available for participation in public life at the higher levels, but it was still a key factor.

The CARICOM Secretariat was also involved in mobilizing resources in support of women's participation in politics in collaboration with various Women's Bureaux. It was recommended that the UWI could play an important role in this area through its education programmes. Greater collaboration with community level entities was also suggested.

With regard to the recommendation for an Empowerment Model of Community Development, the importance of adopting a multi-institution approach to launching programmes was noted.

The view was expressed that new perceptions and approaches to the self-actualization of women were necessary. This required the adoption of new structures/forms of societal/personal relations which sought to erase current biases and barriers to advancement that were based on colour, race and class. Affirmation of women by women was seen as an integral part of such new approaches.

Women and education

Ms. Barbara Bailey, of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Regional Coordinating Unit, UWI, Mona, presented the paper "Women's Education: The Caribbean Situation".

Ms. Bailey suggested that in order to assess the situation and status of women's education at all levels of the education systems throughout the region, and, in order to identify gaps between practice and policy, the paper sought to provide an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the education experience and to establish the position of women vis-à-vis men in the education process and system. The paper also analyzed the existing policy statements to determine the extent to which sex differences and gender issues which emerged, had been recognized and addressed. Finally, based on the outcome of the policy analysis, the paper made recommendations for future directions in policy and action.

The presenter stated that the data presented in the paper pointed to the fact that although, quantitatively, girls had an advantage over boys in education systems in the Caribbean, because of the pattern of participation in the educational process, qualitatively, girls were at a disadvantage when compared to their male counterparts.

The policy analysis indicated that there were several blatant gaps between what obtains in relation to the education of girls/women and enunciated educational policy. Ms. Bailey stressed that the attention to this disparity was crucial if the position of women in Caribbean society was to be improved. If education was to become an empowering force for Caribbean women, there was need, on the part of all those involved in the educational process at all levels, to go beyond the superficial and the obvious, to address deeper underlying issues. It was also found that educational opportunity and economic independence had not translated into personal, social or political power for Caribbean women.

Creating a new social order in the Caribbean and an environment in which the ideal of gender equity can be realized was seen as a multifaceted problem. Education, although a basic human right, was not always the most powerful determinant of success in Caribbean society. Whereas the practical need of Caribbean women for greater access to educational opportunity had been addressed over the last three to four decades, their strategic need for greater empowerment had not been met.

She stated that what needed to be addressed, in the educational arena was a breaking down of the 'iron curtain' which determined patterns of curriculum participation for both sexes. A level playing field needed to be created which allowed both males and females open access to the range of curriculum options and therefore the freedom to choose career paths and professions based on inclination and aptitude. The right to exercise this choice was as important or even more important than access to a place in school. Of even greater urgency, Ms. Bailey suggested, was the need to institute a system of reward based on educational effort rather than on conformity to male ascription in all Caribbean societies. To this end, several policy positions needed to be addressed in respect of Caribbean educational system and programmes.

The recommendations of the paper related to the following concerns: full and equal curriculum participation by both sexes; non-traditional career options; removal of gender bias in curriculum materials; male underachievement; gender socialization; teacher training for the delivery of gender sensitive education; and the establishment of a Caribbean database on education.

Discussion

In the ensuing discussion, participants raised questions of preference in mixed classes. The representative of Haiti informed that the way mixed classes operated, influenced the way girls perform. The meeting was also informed that the data suggested that in mixed classrooms in the United States of America a different education was given to different sexes even in mixed classes. There was therefore, a need to train teachers in gender sensitivity.

It was also felt that there had been inroads into non-traditional fields for women, for example, the number of girls entering the field of engineering had increased, but the question was posed whether these increases had been substantial enough. The meeting also cautioned that although there was an increasing number of girls in these fields that the options for them was limited. They also agreed that as soon as there was an influx of women into a male dominated field, it was seen as being 'feminized'.

The meeting supported the establishment of a database on education. It was suggested that the University of the West Indies should take the leadership role with technical assistance coming from CARICOM and/or other intergovernmental agencies.

NGO Panel

The Caribbean Women's NGO movement gave a dynamic presentation which used poetry, an experiential exercise and a panel to assess the status of NGO work in the post-Beijing period. The NGOs remarked that they had come a long way in their collaborative processes since pre-Beijing activities and felt that they have contributed significantly to the process of the integration of women into economic and social development in the Caribbean.

The NGOs expressed the desire to continue working in the spirit of collaboration with governments of the subregion with which they had worked over the period. Areas of action on which they reported, included the following:

1. The establishment of a women's political platform - a process currently underway in a number of Caribbean territories, led by NGOs, to facilitate the increased participation of women in the political process. It included, training, mentoring, development of a political caucus and a woman's agenda, and strengthening of local government skills. Examples of best practices were had from NGOs in Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica;

2. Development of a women's budget - a process to engage women in the economic decision-making process in their respective countries. Useful examples were cited from Trinidad and Tobago;

3. Violence against women - information was presented to the meeting on the Media Watch campaign and its ongoing activities of media literacy and advocacy; and

4. Efforts at poverty eradication - many positive examples were cited of programmes of education and skills training for women to improve their income earning capacities particularly from Dominica and Grenada.

Inter-agency Panel

An inter-agency panel comprising representatives from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM) made brief presentations on the work of the agencies in the Caribbean emphasizing the focus on Women and Gender Equity.

Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM)

The representative pointed out that the above-captioned agency was committed to the provision of assistance to women working on diverse issues, which included: (a) skills training and obtaining access to markets for their products; (b) through a Fund Protocol making funds available up to US\$15000, to support projects which meet the fund criteria; (c) development of a Plan of Action with an emphasis on education, poverty eradication and violence against women; (d) promotion and participation in International Conventions such as the Belem do Para; and (e) convening workshops which deal with the training of police and judicial officers. The representative concluded that, the organization was committed to assisting women and represented a voice of the Caribbean and the Americas.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

The representative outlined the operations of UNICEF in the Caribbean and indicated that emphasis was placed in the area of women's health and gender programmes. The approach taken in these programmes was from a 'human rights' perspective. UNICEF had no special women's programmes per se, although its programme addressed women's concerns and gender issues. The main focus of the programme was in the following areas: social policy and investments, planning and data analysis; education; and women in politics.

UNICEF also monitored the way funds were disbursed/allocated in order to encourage a good balance between the social and economic areas. Mention was made of UNICEF's education reform programme which was closely monitored for the successful mainstreaming of children with disabilities. The Early Childhood adoption programme and parenting programmes were also outlined.

The representative alluded to the shifting of the health programme towards a community-based programme in 1998 and the continued emphasis on child's rights promotion.

In response to a query on whether the focus in 1998 would be related to children's rights, education or women's issues and community development, the UNICEF representative pointed out that the integration of the programmes were being addressed. In addition, health education and

sanitation would be incorporated. She also indicated that participation at the community level was one of the expected outcomes of the programme which commences in January 1998.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

The UNIFEM representative indicated that there were three initiatives being undertaken by this organization:

1. Support for initiatives undertaken at the national level. In this regard a task force had been set up which would focus on: poverty eradication; violence against women; leadership and decision-making; and a fourth component which related to the media where gender sensitization and gender training could be facilitated along with the design of a public education programme;
2. The task force had been mandated to develop a three-year programme. Key in that programme was communication, with special reference to report writing which seemed to be one of the major problem areas;
3. Campaign on violence against women.

In this regard a meeting would be scheduled for September 1997 with NGOs and other organizations, with a view to launching a campaign of violence against women, hopefully in November 1997. More information on the Crisis Meeting in September and the campaign to be launched in November would be communicated to delegates.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

The CIDA representative provided a background to the development of the Women in Development Policy. She outlined the various activities being undertaken in member States as they pertained to women and gender issues. She indicated that a Canada-Caribbean Regional Gender Equity Fund had been established with a budget of Can\$2m over a two-year period. The main focus of the Fund was:

- (a) To increase the opportunities for Caribbean women to participate fully and equitably in the sustainable development of their societies;
- (b) To support the development of equitable relations between men and women;
- (c) To promote increased decision-making for women and a greater recognition of women's rights and freedom.

The primary beneficiaries of the Fund as advised by the CIDA representative, were to be governmental and non-governmental organizations which promoted gender equity.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

The UNFPA representative indicated that this organization had developed programmes which emphasized gender equity promotion and activities related to the prevention of violence against women. Three main areas of focus were: (i) Population and development strategies; (ii) Reproductive health and human rights which included the recognition of the rights of children and the provision of technical assistance for the prevention of HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy prevention and breast cancer; and (iii) Population and reproductive health. Emphasis was also placed on gender and population development and education in support of population programmes.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The ILO representative indicated that this organization's work in relation to women and gender issues focussed on the promotion of economic empowerment of women and the integration of a gender perspective into the ILO activities. With regard to economic empowerment of women she highlighted several aspects which included, inter alia: organizing capabilities; data analysis and research; legal issues; improving conditions of work.

The work done, in relation to representation of domestic workers, in Trinidad and Tobago, Belize and other member States was also highlighted. This included: the identification of critical issues in relation to domestic workers; dissemination of information and discussion of findings on issues related to domestic workers; and the establishment of ways and means of strengthening the status of women.

It was also pointed out that within the Caribbean Plan of Action, areas of emphasis were the promotion of growth and quality employment for women. Reference was made to the conduct of training workshops on gender issues and gender awareness.

Discussion

The representative from Dominica indicated that the concept of gender planning might not be fully understood in member States. She suggested that the agencies collaborated and consider holding workshop sessions geared at enlightening the public on gender planning in order to stimulate general interest and foster understanding of the whole concept of gender planning.

The Saint Lucia representative indicated that it was of utmost importance that the point of inaccessibility of women to the laws of the respective member States be examined. She held that women were aware of the laws but because of the cost constraints, were often denied access to the laws.

**Agenda item 4: Preparations for the Seventh Regional Conference
on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development
of Latin America and the Caribbean: Background to the Board of Presiding Officers
and Consensus on Caribbean representation on the new Board**

Caribbean representation on the Board of Presiding Officers

A panel comprising representatives of Barbados and Cuba, current Board of Presiding Officers from the Caribbean subregion, addressed the agenda item. The Netherlands Antilles, the third Caribbean member of the Board, was not represented on the panel as it was unable to be present at the meeting. The Cuban representative traced the history of the Board of Presiding Officers, stating that it emerged from the first conference on Latin American and Caribbean Women held in 1977. This Conference created an Intergovernmental Committee to function in between conferences. This committee was endorsed by ECLAC and served as a link between member States and the ECLAC secretariat and facilitated follow-up on implementation of the Regional Programme of Action which had been adopted by the first conference. The Presiding Board comprised a Chair and seven Vice Chairs and a Rapporteur. The country selected to host the conference had the further responsibility to be represented on the intergovernmental committee to follow-up agreements of the conference and to serve as a liaison between member States.

The speaker informed that 24 meetings of this Committee had since been held, with one or two sessions per annum. The current chair of the Board was Argentina, with Barbados, Chile, Cuba, Uruguay, and the Netherlands Antilles acting as Vice Chairs and Mexico holding the position of Rapporteur. Board members reflected the geographical representation of the region. The Board members worked in close collaboration.

As a group, the Board maintained a working relationship with different agencies of the United Nations. At the meeting to be held in Chile in November 1997 a new Board of Presiding Officers is to be elected. The meeting was informed that the Caribbean is entitled to be represented and may wish to consider maintaining representation of the diverse language groups and provision for the participation of a representative of the non-independent countries in the region. The speaker suggested that the Board had an important role to perform and it was important therefore, for the Caribbean to have representation to ensure that the region's interests were incorporated in analyses and decisions. The speaker reminded participants that it was important to note that the cost of representation would be covered by the country in question.

The speaker concluded that significant contributions had been made by the Caribbean subregion in the functioning of the ECLAC system and the Board.

Following the presentation, the meeting, with the facilitation of the Barbados representative, adopted by consensus the Caribbean Position Paper on the two thematic issues of: Women in Decision-Making; and Gender, Sustainable Development and Poverty which is attached to this document as Annex III.

The meeting adopted by consensus “the Draft Georgetown Consensus” which is attached to this document as Annex IV.

Agenda item 5: Any other business

A Draft Resolution on Montserrat was tabled for consideration and adopted, which is attached as Annex V.

Participants thanked the Government of Guyana, in particular the Hon. Indra Chandarpal for spearheading the conference and expressed their gratitude for the tremendous hospitality offered to them.

Special commendation was also made for the work done by Asha Kambon, Social Affairs Officer of ECLAC.

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Annex II**AGENDA**

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Review of governments' progress in the region after the Sixth Regional Conference and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, 1995.
3. Examination of the current needs of member States in their pursuit of the implementation of the FWCW Platform for Action, particularly in relation to the critical issues identified by the subregion; the CARICOM post-Beijing Plan of Action; key issues discussed at the recent CSW Meeting and the upcoming seventh session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean.
4. Review of preparations for the seventh session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean. Arrival at consensus on the Caribbean position on two themes: (a) women in decision-making and (b) sustainable development and poverty, for discussion at the Seventh Session of the Regional Conference.
5. Other business.
6. Closing.

Annex III

**CARIBBEAN POSITION PAPER
ON THE TWO THEMATIC ISSUES OF:
WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING; AND
GENDER, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY**

A. Introduction

The Ministers with responsibility for the Integration of Women into the Social and Economic Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, participating in the post-Beijing Encounter: A Caribbean Subregional Ministerial Conference, Preparatory to the Seventh Session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Georgetown, Guyana 6-8 August 1997, reaffirmed their commitment to the Regional Platform for Action, the Beijing Platform for Action and the subsequent regional plans, including the CARICOM Regional Plan of Action, which have emerged as part of the follow-up to Beijing.

The Ministers acknowledged the collaborative spirit between governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) both at the subregional and national level, between governments and intergovernmental organizations and between governments and United Nations agencies in the subregion and among United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations as well, in preparation for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, 1995. Ministers acknowledged the continued spirit of collaboration and cooperation within which this review and the ongoing implementation of the Platform for Action is taking place.

Ministers, based on the experiences in their own countries and taking note of the roundtable discussions led by experts in the field from the subregion, in preparation for the Seventh Session of the Regional Conference of WID Ministers, have made the following recommendations towards a Caribbean position on the two thematic issues under consideration.

B. Women in decision-making

Women have demonstrated considerable leadership in community and informal organizations, as well as in public office. However, socialization and negative stereotyping of women and men, including stereotyping through the media, reinforces the tendency for political decision-making to remain the domain of men. Likewise, the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture, sports, the media, education, religion and the law, have prevented women from having a significant impact on many key institutions. (FWCW-PFA, Para 183)

Many factors affect the implementation of the mandate to increase women's participation in the decision-making processes. Most significant among these are the structural biases against

women's political participation and the need for new politics of empowerment, in concept as well as in practice.

Recommendations

- (a) Take steps that are within the grasp of women. Where applicable, increase the number of women in positions, such as, Justices of the Peace (in the English speaking Caribbean); give visibility to women and authenticate their leadership; appoint women on school boards and commissions and other public bodies.
- (b) Build up exposure of women: honour and reward women, this is very important to address internalized sexism, reduce competitiveness and free-up energies of women.
- (c) Take initiatives to support affirmative actions/quotas, focusing on internal political party and trade union structures as important first steps, and to raise awareness on the issues.
- (d) Promote and build affirmative actions/quotas on the principle that neither sex should occupy less than a particular level of positions nor enjoy less than a particular level of participation in the social structures of society. For example, the female-dominated nursing and teaching professions should be encouraged to achieve a gender balance, as well as the male-dominated construction and engineering professions.
- (e) Use gender-sensitive education and training to promote values that confront cultural restraints and restrictive conceptions of politics and to facilitate women's greater access to decision-making.
- (f) Encourage the increase of women in decision-making positions in the society.
- (g) Seek the support of research institutions in the region, e.g. academic institutions and non-governmental research organizations to conduct research which supports women's human rights, increased participation of women in politics and decision-making and the contribution of women's unwaged work to society.
- (h) Increase women's participation in local and national government processes.
- (i) Encourage the sharing of responsibility within the family structure.
- (j) Create services which support women with family responsibility, particularly women who head households, so as to allow greater involvement in the public sphere.
- (k) Initiate research and action towards strengthening the judicial authority within national machineries to ensure that national plans and international agreements and conventions are

implemented. The Equal Opportunities Commission currently under consideration in Trinidad and Tobago could be investigated as a model.

(l) Establish and promote policies that specifically target indigenous and maroon women and peoples in the region, in order to affirm and encourage their increased participation in decision-making.

C. Gender, sustainable development and poverty

"Neither NGOs, nor local governments, nor business groups, nor organized labour, nor community based organizations (CBOs), nor credit unions, can, at anytime, even with the most intensive capacity-building, be the agency through which the contradictions of planned change and induced development are primarily or ultimately addressed. These are tasks for the public sector. Therefore the public sector must improve its performance. A critical requirement is a strong State which draws its strength from building strong, not inflexible institutions and promoting a framework in which they can operate. The responsibility of the State, and its unique capability incorporating all the pluri-sector partners, is to offer in real collaboration within a new governance structure, the sustained and integrated assault needed to eradicate poverty through action at all levels of the society; as well as regionally, hemispherically and internationally". (Directional Plan of Action for Eradication of Poverty in the Caribbean)

While economic growth is fundamental to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, it is not a sufficient requirement.

Accelerated economic growth, although necessary for social development, does not by itself improve the quality of life of the population. In some cases, conditions may arise which can aggravate social inequality and marginalization. Hence it is indispensable to search for new alternatives that ensure that all members of society benefit from economic growth based on a holistic approach to all aspects of development: growth, equality between women and men, social justice, conservation and protection of the environment, sustainability, solidarity participation, peace and respect for human rights. Thus growth with equity is desirable.

Transformations in the world economy are profoundly changing the parameters of social development in all countries. One significant trend has been the increased poverty of women, the extent of which varies from region to region. The gender disparities in economic power-sharing are also an important contributing factor to the poverty of women. Migration and consequent changes in family structures have placed additional burdens on women, especially on those who provide for several dependants. The application of gender analysis to a wide range of policies and programmes is therefore critical to poverty reduction strategies. In order to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, women and men must participate fully and equally in the formulation of macroeconomic and social policies and strategies for the eradication of poverty.

While poverty affects households as a whole, because of gender division of labour and responsibilities for household welfare, women bear a disproportionate burden, attempting to manage household consumption and production under conditions of increasing scarcity. Poverty is particularly acute for women living in rural households.

Statistical data from the Caribbean points to a household structure that is significantly female-headed. Female headed households (FHH) as a percentage of the total households in various countries in the subregion account from anywhere, from a low of 20 per cent in Suriname, to a high of 58.5 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda, which represents the only country in the Caribbean where the proportion of FHH is greater than that of male-headed households (MHH). Of the 23 ECLAC/CDCC member countries examined, seven recorded proportions of 40 per cent or more of female-headed households, and three recorded proportions of less than 25 per cent. (POV/96/2, 18 October 1996). It has been noted that the strongest direct link between gender and poverty is found in female-headed households. It has been further suggested that the strong relationship between female headship and poverty results from higher dependency ratios, inadequate remittances from absent men and gender differentials in access to resources and productive employment. In addition, research indicates that most female-headed households are at a higher risk of poverty than those that are male-headed.

Women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision-making process. Poverty can also force women into situations in which they are vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Women earn less income and have a disproportionately low share of national income. Labour market statistics do not reflect the actual extent of women's economic contribution, which remains undervalued everywhere. Much of women's work, such as in subsistence production, the informal sector, domestic and household labour and related production remains invisible and is therefore not targeted for policy assistance.

Social sector services have been severely affected by economic cutbacks, privatization of health services for sexual and reproductive health, thereby encroaching upon the human rights framework founded on individuals' and couples' right to health and freedom from poverty.

Economic, social and family responsibilities of women in the Caribbean are starkly contrasted by participation in national development often on inequitable terms. Experience has also shown that they have been more severely affected by economic adjustment programmes, especially structural adjustment programmes, with the highest incidence of poverty among rural indigenous and maroon women. Increased number of women are being affected by violence both in the public and private sphere. These factors, despite women's social and economic gains, have hampered the development of their full potential and their contribution as development partners.

"In many respects, issues of resource management in the Caribbean are rooted in complex historical, social and political factors, which are responsible for past and current patterns of economic dependency and vulnerability, inequity in the access to resources and their benefits, and cultural alienation. As a result, communities have too often been deprived of the opportunity to shape their future, and their role in the management of resources, in accordance with their needs and aspirations, has been ignored or suppressed.

In addition, there are gender-based constraints to management of natural resources. These have been identified as:

- (a) Tradition and cultural norms that are gender-biased;
- (b) Gender-biased legal systems for tenure and inheritance especially in indigenous communities;
- (c) Unequal labour burdens borne by women given their reproductive role;
- (d) Women's poverty and the under-evaluation of women's role;
- (e) Lack of adequate support from State institutions to address women's needs;
- (f) Reduced access to education for the poor, especially women;
- (g) Environmental degradation that compromises health of the poor, especially women.

As we meet, Montserrat is challenged, as are all of us, by the power of its volcano. Perhaps what we need to understand from the disaster of Montserrat is that the natural forces in our region with their potential power of destruction -volcanoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and global sea level rising, passage of nuclear waste- are not of our doing. But the deforestation, the coral reef decay, the pollution of our seas, the loss of habitat, the loss of species, the development of marginal lands, the overexploitation of our fragile resources, the unacceptable despair of our youth, the expanding drug environment, the war on drugs, the growing migration of our people and the mounting poverty are of our doing.

The environmental well-being of the Caribbean is firmly centred and entirely dependent on our ability to develop a philosophy that unites us in our cultural, political, geographical, economic and environmental diversity. We must commit ourselves to a process that is inclusive, participatory, people-centred, gender, class, race-aware and informed by our history and our geo-political realities". (Women and the Environment. Dow, J.)

Recommendations

- (a) Increase the efforts towards the elimination of poverty, taking into account the processes of sustainable development which promote economic growth and social justice, and include a gender perspective in each programme and policy;
- (b) Engage in the measuring and valuing of women's unwaged labour so as to put this measurement and valuation to practical and strategic use;

- (c) Engage in the gender planning process using the thematic entry point of poverty eradication;
- (d) Design national policies towards the development and promotion of child care, family and other support services and facilities, such as for the elderly, which could facilitate the increased participation in the labour market of those men and women whose participation is now constrained by the absence of such facilities;
- (e) Develop and strengthen programmes aimed at ensuring women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, in keeping with decisions taken at the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing;
- (f) Promote community-based participatory approaches for the co-management of natural resources;
- (g) Encourage self-reliance and management in relation to natural resources;
- (h) Establish and promote policies that specifically target indigenous and maroon women and peoples in the region, in order to increase their access to, and control over existing resources;
- (i) Encourage data collection on poverty and on women and poverty, and encourage the use of that data to reshape regional policies and priorities for poverty eradication;
- (j) Encourage the allocation of new and additional resources for the eradication of poverty;
- (k) Facilitate the coordination of policies and programmes for the eradication of poverty at the national, regional and international levels;
- (l) Urge regional and international agencies/donors to provide financial and technical assistance to governments of the region in order to continue their efforts at poverty eradication, in particular the development of national anti-poverty strategies with a gender focus;
- (m) Ensure continued and increased access to education of young girls regardless of their poor economic status or difficult social circumstances;
- (n) Encourage the breakdown of traditional gender stereotypes and the development of non-discriminatory education and training in light of the integral part which education plays in sustainable human development and the eradication of poverty. These efforts should include the development of gender sensitive curricula, teaching materials, classroom practices and mandatory gender training for all teachers; and
- (o) Promote increased awareness of the needs of disabled members of society and provide increased appropriate access to service disabled women and men.

Annex IV**GEORGETOWN CONSENSUS**

We, the Ministers with responsibility for Women's Affairs of the Caribbean, participating in the post-Beijing Encounter in Georgetown, Guyana, reaffirm our commitment to the Regional Platform for Action (PFA), the Beijing Platform For Action and the subsequent regional plans, including the CARICOM Regional Plan of Action, which have emerged as part of the follow-up to Beijing;

Noting the progress which has been made since Beijing, and recognizing the need for accelerating the pace of implementation, while affirming the spirit of collaboration with non-governmental organizations and cooperation between inter-governmental agencies, make the following recommendations to advance the process towards the attainment of gender equality, social justice and development:

1. Accelerate action in promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres through the implementation of:
 - (a) Gender analysis and planning
 - (b) Gender management systems
 - (c) Gender impact assessments
2. Consider the design of a pilot programme using a thematic entry to test the gender planning process. A suggested theme is Poverty Eradication, as it requires a multi-sectoral approach for solution and thus relevant to the multi-sectoral nature of gender equity. It would also enhance the measurement of success of gender planning;
3. Develop national implementation strategies or plans of action to address the implementation of the PFA, as agreed at Beijing (para 297) bearing in mind that access to resources from international agencies will be influenced by the existence of such plans, and that shifts in resource allocation at the national level may be necessary;
4. Encourage the allocation of resources for effective programmes for the alleviation of poverty among women;
5. Stress the need for a participatory, coherent and coordinated approach among all partners in development, in the implementation of national poverty eradication plans or programmes that fully take into account the gender perspective;

6. Introduce a clear gender perspective in environmental planning which ensures the inclusion of women in the decision-making process and in the assessment of the impact of natural disasters, in keeping with the important contribution of women to economic and social development and environmental protection, which are mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development;

7. Urge regional and international organizations such as the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide financial and technical resources to conduct research and undertake other initiatives on women and poverty in the Caribbean subregion, paying attention to inter alia, women's unwaged and low waged work;

8. Give serious consideration to positive action, including such mechanisms as establishing a minimum percentage of representation for both sexes to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in political representation, boards, commissions, and other public appointments, and in the granting of national honours and awards, bearing in mind that some Caribbean governments within the subregion and the Commonwealth have already agreed to this;

9. Promote the conduct of research on women and governance through various agencies, institutions, including universities, to identify, inter alia, measures that would counter the underrepresentation of women in the electoral process and other areas of decision making;

10. Encourage, as well as monitor the outcomes of education and training and systems of mentoring to facilitate women's greater access to decision-making;

11. Undertake further research and analysis on gender socialization practices and its impact on education choices and career options in keeping with the CARICOM Plan of Action;

12. Develop gender sensitive teaching materials, classroom practices and curricula and regular gender training for teachers to break down gender stereotypes and develop non-discriminatory education and training aimed at the physical and intellectual development of girls and boys. Teacher training is an essential component in the transmittal of gender-sensitive programmes for eliminating the differential behavioural expectations of girls and boys that reinforce the division of labour by gender. Techniques for improving teachers' capabilities to deliver gender-sensitive instruction need to be researched and widely disseminated in order to support the development of multicultural, gender-sensitive curricula in all areas of instruction;

13. Support the establishment of a Caribbean education research centre/council/desk which would be responsible for disseminating research findings within the region so that duplication and wastage would be avoided and scarce resources maximized;

14. Emphasize the prevention of violence against women and children and the prosecution of offenders, and urge the enactment of legislation where it does not already exist;

15. Encourage the provision of counselling services both for the victim and the perpetrator of violence against women;

16. Develop appropriate training, advocacy and awareness programmes for judicial, legal, medical, social, educational, media and police personnel to sensitize them to the nature of gender-based acts and threats of violence so that fair treatment of female victims can be assured, in order to ensure the effectiveness of legislation on violence against women and children;

17. Develop and strengthen programmes aimed at ensuring women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, in keeping with decisions taken at Cairo and Beijing; and

18. Initiate research and action towards strengthening the judicial authority within national machineries to ensure that national plans and international agreements and conventions are implemented. The Equal Opportunities Commission currently under consideration in Trinidad and Tobago may be investigated as a model.

Annex V**RESOLUTION**

We, the delegates in attendance at the CARICOM/UNECLAC/UNIFEM Post-Beijing Encounter: A Caribbean Subregional Ministerial Conference in preparation for the Seventh Session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, 6-8 August 1997, held in Georgetown, Guyana comprising Ministers with responsibility for Women's Affairs, Heads of Women's Bureaux, National and Regional Non-Governmental Organizations, Regional and International Intergovernmental Agencies, do **RESOLVE** that:

CONSIDERING the challenges which face the people of Montserrat arising from the disastrous eruption of the volcano and in the light of the widespread destruction of property, the loss of lives and livelihoods,

AWARE of the proposals being formulated by the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) for the establishment of a CARICOM village in the remaining safe zone which will accommodate those residents who are desirous of remaining on the island,

PROPOSE that the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Taskforce which has been mandated to address this crisis, ensures that the needs and concerns of women and their families are fully taken into consideration. To facilitate such a process we **further propose** that such a Taskforce include representatives of Ministers with responsibility for Women's Affairs and Caribbean Women's NGOs. This will ensure that all peoples of the Caribbean have a real opportunity to reach out and assist, as far as possible, in restoring safe and sustainable livelihoods for the people of Montserrat.

We **DECLARE** our solidarity with the people of Montserrat, and in particular the women and their dependants, in this their time of crisis and stand ready to offer our support in any practical way necessary.

