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**CARIBBEAN SYNTHESIS REVIEW AND APPRAISAL REPORT
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF
THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

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Executive Summary

The report is a summary based on information received by ECLAC from the eight English-speaking Caribbean countries of Barbados, Belize, the Cayman Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Jamaica, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago in response to the questionnaire to governments on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000). The report is therefore set in the context of the regional review and appraisals of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2010. This Executive Summary highlights the achievements and the challenges for the Caribbean subregion in the progress towards implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action.

A. Overall achievements

The English-speaking Caribbean has very successfully enacted substantial legislation aimed at removing the most blatant forms of discrimination against women and bringing many existing laws in line with the spirit of the CEDAW Convention. The range of legislative reform includes women's rights regarding property and inheritance; maternity leave; rights of children born out of wedlock; domestic violence and sexual offences. A few countries have taken the lead in relation to the enactment of sexual harassment legislation, the counting of women's unremunerated work, minimum wages' legislation, paternity leave, and rape as an offence within marriage.

The Caribbean context is one in which women shoulder responsibilities for both productive and reproductive work and where approximately half of households are headed by women. Women's participation in the labour market is comparatively high, compared with other regions, but women are mainly segmented in middle and low-income forms of employment.

Caribbean governments have addressed the persistence of poverty by a variety of measures including the:

- (a) Development and implementation of policies to address poverty;
- (b) Establishment of institutional mechanisms, such as agencies, to provide research data for policy/programme guidance and services;
- (c) Implementation of programmes and projects that contribute to the acquisition of skills, and increasing employment opportunities;
- (d) Strengthening of safety nets, such as increases in pensions and subsidies; and
- (e) The implementation of condition cash transfer programmes.

Poverty persists especially among vulnerable groups, such as single mothers who are heads of households, elderly women, the disabled, and women who are victims of domestic violence.

Caribbean governments continue to provide equal access to education for both females and males without any formal barriers to access or to educational attainment. Measures have been put in place to address interrupted education in the case of pregnant teenage girls in order to ensure their continued education. There is now a concern about the comparative educational underachievement of males at secondary and tertiary levels compared with females.

Training programmes have been developed to facilitate the acquisition of skills by women that can expand their employment/income earning prospects in a very slowly changing gender-segregated labour market.

Among the challenges is that while females continue to outperform males educationally at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, they continue to dominate in the arts/ humanities and are to be found in the traditional and more low-paying forms of employment. Men continue to dominate the highest levels of the labour market despite their comparatively lower educational achievements. Further, the reluctance of some women to take up non-traditional skills training opportunities when these opportunities are made available remains an obstacle to their advancement in the labour market.

Women's health continues to be a major focus of the work of the national women's machineries. Reproductive health and the particular vulnerabilities of women, including to HIV and AIDS, are an increasing concern. Significant improvements have been made in the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV and reductions in maternal and perinatal deaths are two of the most successful achievements in health in the region.

Adolescents' health, their rights to information and services has been gaining increasing attention. Services for elderly women, along with overall improvements in access to health services, have taken place. The health needs of men have been given more focus as their health status directly impacts on women.

Among the health challenges in the region, Jamaica has identified the reluctance of homosexual men to use health services especially for HIV and AIDS because of the fear of stigma and discrimination. Suriname has indicated that there are shortages in health personnel which has had implications for the provision of adequate services, and there is a need for the renovation and expansion of health facilities.

All Caribbean countries have passed domestic violence legislation that seeks to protect and provide services for victims of domestic violence, and have implemented educational programmes to combat and reduce the incidence of domestic violence. In some cases, there has been an increase in the severity of penalties, and programmes have been introduced for the perpetrators of violence. Attention has recently been paid to the issue of trafficking of persons, but the full extent of this problem is not yet clearly understood in the region.

Among the identified challenges is the persistence of gender-based violence in the region that primarily affects women and children; and the nature and full extent of human trafficking in the region has not been fully determined.

Jamaica is the only Caribbean country that has personnel engaged in peace-keeping operations in the Sudan (Darfur), Liberia, East Timor, Ivory Coast and Lebanon. The numbers of women in peace-keeping operations has risen steadily and it has been reported that Jamaican women are Contingent Commanders in Liberia and Darfur.

The structure of Caribbean economies has been changing in recent decades. A significant shift has taken place away from agricultural production, as the main foreign exchange earner, to tourism and services. These economies are characterized by debt, restructuring, increased privatization, and shrinking government expenditure in social programmes.

Trinidad and Tobago is the only country with a more diversified and buoyant economy based on petroleum and natural gas production along with some manufacturing. As a result, unemployment rates in Trinidad and Tobago have been declining as employment opportunities have increased. In other Caribbean countries, efforts are being made to:

- (a) Promote self-employment and the development of small enterprises as a strategy to combat unemployment; and
- (b) Include a focus on issues such as the linkages between the realities of women's lives and the wider issues of Caribbean economies, investment, trade agreements and the region's

location in the vagaries of the global economic system, by the national women's machinery especially in Jamaica.

The full engagement of women in undertaking and articulating how their interests can best be served by governments in relation to: (a) its fiscal accountability to women through gender budget initiatives, such as those implemented by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and (b) the effective inclusion of women/gender perspectives in the trade negotiation process, as Jamaica has indicated.

In the area of political participation, Trinidad and Tobago is the only country that has made significant progress in women's participation in political decision-making positions at all levels of the political system. All other countries lag behind with only a slight increase in the numbers of women in positions of power and decision-making despite the efforts that have been made to address this issue.

The persistent underrepresentation of women at decision-making levels despite Caribbean governments' commitment to a 30% quota for women is a continuing problem.

All of the reporting Caribbean countries either have in place a National Gender Equality Policy, a draft National Gender Equality Policy or are currently engaged in the process of developing one. They are also committed to the gender mainstreaming strategy for achieving gender equality as part of a Gender Management System.

Almost all of the national machineries have reported slight improvements in terms of either numbers of personnel employed in these agencies; support for capacity-building through participation in training opportunities; and increased budgetary allocations. However, there is a need for even more (professional/technical) human and financial resources. Several of the national machineries have benefited from collaborative partnerships on specific initiatives with national, regional and international agencies, including those within the United Nations' system.

B. Challenges

- The increased responsibilities placed on the national machineries in their roles as lead agencies in gender mainstreaming are now being recognized by governments.
- The limitations of the some of the Gender Focal Points in carrying out their roles within the gender mainstreaming process.
- The lack of adequate sex-disaggregated data, of indicators, statistics and monitoring mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming.
- The need for more technical/professional personnel, more and ongoing capacity-building, and institutional strengthening of national machineries.
- Lack of adequate financial resources.

In the area of human rights significant advances have been made in legal reform especially in the areas of family law, including women's rights to property/inheritance; children's rights; matters of protection from domestic violence/sexual offences; maternity leave; and equal opportunity/non-discrimination on the basis of sex. The rights of women to inherit property from partners when they are in unions other than marriage are now recognized (Dominica is currently working on this issue in situations of intestacy.) Trinidad and Tobago's areas of legal reform include the counting of unremunerated work, and minimum wage legislation, which other countries have not yet enacted.

The Cayman Islands and the Commonwealth of Dominica are the only two countries to introduce legislation on paid paternity leave for male civil servants through the Public Service Management Law (2005). Belize has enacted the Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act (2008).

Jamaica and Barbados have ratified the International Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the three protocols including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children.

Among the inflexible violation of rights is the denial of the rights of Carib women in the Commonwealth of Dominica to marry outside of the Carib race, whereas men are not restricted in this way; and the issue of the denial of women in common-law unions to apply for letters of administration or inherit the property of a partner in situations of intestacy.

Only two Caribbean countries, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, have reported on the use of the media for public education, information sharing, and for the support of campaigns, but they have not focused on issues surrounding the ways in which women are treated or reflected in the media.

Three countries, namely Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago reported on initiatives in the area of women and the environment. Belize, with UNDP support, has started work on a project "Strengthening of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Capacity" (2009 to 2011). The Women's Department will ensure that gender issues are considered in the project and it is anticipated that a gender perspective will become evident in disaster management plans in the future.

Jamaica approved a National Water Policy in 2006 in which there is recognition of the importance of having a gender sensitive approach to finding solutions to the challenge of managing its water resources.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the working relationship between the Gender Affairs Division and the Network of Rural Women Producers has provided a forum for addressing agricultural and environmental issues affecting women.

INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary based on information received by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) from the eight English-speaking Caribbean countries of Barbados, Belize, the Cayman Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Jamaica, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. The report is set in the context of the Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly in Latin America and Caribbean countries.

Of these eight Caribbean countries, all are independent States apart from the Cayman Islands, which remains an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom. This means that the Government of that island is not in a position to enter into any international agreements, treaties or conventions of its own choice and, as a result, has not ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as all of the other independent countries have done.

All of the eight Caribbean countries either have in place a National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity, or draft National Gender Policy or are in the process of developing one. These gender equality policies are intended to guide the development and implementation of national policies and programmes across all sectors. Belize in 2009 reviewed its 2002 National Gender Policy.

In relation to the strategies used for achieving gender equality, all of the reporting countries have expressed a commitment to gender mainstreaming within a Gender Management System (GMS) as the approach, but are at varying stages in the process. There is also a clearly demonstrated strategy of working collaboratively with other agencies, both within the governmental systems of ministries and agencies, as well as with the non-governmental sector, the private sector, where relevant, and with regional and international agencies, especially with United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ECLAC, and International Labour Organisation (ILO). The Organisation of American States-Inter-American Commission of Women (OAS-CIM), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the European Commission (EC) have also supported gender-based work in the region.

A comprehensive amount of work in legislative reform has taken place throughout the region, especially in Belize and Jamaica. Jamaica continues to carry out a great deal of research in areas of relevance to gender equality. The research themes include gender and governance; human trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour; women in local government; employment and migration; sexual harassment and women's rights in power and decision-making. New themes will include Women and Abortion; and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy (CSME): What is in it for Women? Suriname has developed an extensive social protection network that includes health, education and financial support for the acquisition of housing.

Significant efforts have also been placed on addressing issues that affect men/boys which have an impact on women's well-being. These issues include men's health and reproductive health; violence and crime; HIV prevention; family life; and educational performance and attainment, an area in which Jamaica has carried out the most work. Trinidad and Tobago has even included in its Non-traditional Training Programme for Men, a course in food preparation and fine-dining.

A. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section I of this report provides information on the achievements and challenges the eight countries (Barbados, Belize, the Cayman Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Jamaica, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago) have faced in relation to the progress made in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. Section II includes the reports on the outstanding challenges and the emerging issues in these Caribbean countries.

I. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

A. WOMEN AND POVERTY

Caribbean women often shoulder major responsibilities for both productive and reproductive work. Approximately a third to over a half of all households in the region are headed by women who, in many instances, have sole responsibility for the social and economic provision of children.

Urban and rural disparities exist, particularly in the larger Caribbean countries of Belize, Jamaica and Suriname, in terms of availability and access to services and opportunities for self advancement. These disparities are far less pronounced or are almost non-existent in Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. Caribbean governments have sought to address persistent poverty by means of a number of strategies that include:

- (a) Development and implementation of policies;
- (b) Establishment of institutional mechanisms;
- (c) Implementation of programmes and projects that contribute to the acquisition of skills, increased employment opportunities, income-earning; and
- (d) Strengthening of safety nets.

Barbados launched in 1998 The Poverty Alleviation Bureau and in 2007 created the Bureau of Social Policy, Research and Planning. The Office of Advisor on Poverty to the Government of Barbados was also established as a means of eradicating extreme poverty as part of the government's obligations towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Safety nets, such as both contributory and non-contributory pensions, have been increased and are intended to relieve, to some extent, the impact of the rising cost of living. Free transportation for school children on State-owned vehicles was instituted in 2009 to provide relief for families, especially those headed by single mothers.

Belize embarked on research to gather more data on the nature and extent of poverty in that country and in 2009 conducted a Country Poverty Assessment Survey that is expected to provide quantitative information from their Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS). It is expected that this additional information will assist in not only providing information on poverty but will capture the perceptions of Belizean communities and vulnerable groups on the quality and accessibility of the assistance provided by the government and non-governmental organizations.

The Cayman Islands, an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, has carried out its first National Assessment of Living Conditions in 2006/2007. The findings substantiate the pattern in the Caribbean region that living conditions for women are among the lowest quintile and are worse than conditions for men. Approximately 50% of all poor households are female-headed in the Caymans. The measures that will be taken by the Cabinet Office to address the level of poverty have not yet been determined.

The Commonwealth of Dominica is one of the Windward Islands' banana-growing countries of the Eastern Caribbean which had benefited from preferential trade arrangements with the European Union under the Lomé Convention for four decades. As a result of the protracted dispute and finally the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling in 1999 against preferential trade, the Windward Islands banana industry went into severe decline. It was a significant employer of men as farmers/workers and for women as farmers/workers, to a lesser extent, and has had serious repercussions throughout the country and particularly for the rural sector.

Dominica's report reveals that women comprise a higher proportion of the country's poor and are the most vulnerable to the loss of social protection and to the increased costs of essential services. Women have to constantly balance their responsibilities for productive and reproductive work. In 2007, unemployment rates for women stood at 9.5% compared with 11.5% for men. This higher rate of male unemployment has to be understood in the context of the heavy involvement and reliance of men on the banana industry and the ongoing challenges they face in finding new employment. Women have had to undertake a greater level of responsibility for family survival.

Jamaica has developed a National Poverty Eradication Policy which targets vulnerable groups such as women, and rural women, in particular. It also has developed a network of agencies that provide support. These include:

- (a) The Rural Agricultural Development Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture
- (b) The Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers which works along with the Bureau of Women's Affairs to stimulate and support economic activities in agriculture, in agro-industries and income generation.

As part of the National Poverty Eradication Policy, the government provides economic benefits which are channelled through the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education. It is a major safety net for poor women and their families. It is described as a conditional cash transfer programme that provides benefits to the elderly, pregnant and lactating mothers, children and adults with disabilities. Payments are usually made to an adult female of the family. The programme is monitored by the three Ministries, Labour and Social Services, Health and Environment, and Education.

Programmes, such as 'Life Up Jamaica', focus on rural women and provide employment and income earning through the repairing and upgrading of community centres and other government buildings. Jamaica's Rural Electrification Programme also provides opportunities for work and income earning for women.

In Suriname, the government provides financial resources to the Central Bank which works in conjunction with the commercial banking sector to provide finance facilities for housing at the low interest rate of 7%. Government also provides:

- (a) A shelter programme for low and middle income households
- (b) Low interest loans of 4% through the Ministry of Finance for government officials who are at the lower income scale
- (c) Training for income-earning/self-employment is provided through the Ministry of Social Affairs in collaboration with the national women's organization
- (d) Support for parents in the education of children through the provision of school supplies and clothing.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, like Dominica, was a major producer of Windward Islands bananas and is severely affected by the downturn in that trade with the United Kingdom. The government has responded to the challenge by supporting initiatives and programmes for poverty elimination that includes the Micro and Small Enterprise Loan Programme which makes available EC\$15,000 to recipients without the need for loan security. Women comprise 56% of the recipients in that programme.

Trinidad and Tobago is the only English-speaking Caribbean country in which a more buoyant economy has, in recent years, continued to generate increasing employment opportunities and

in which unemployment figures have been on the decline. However, there is still an ongoing need to provide opportunities for the development of employable skills that target women who are single heads of households. The Gender Affairs Division in the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, through an initiative, 'The Women in Harmony Programme' has been in operation for the past eight years. It has trained 6000 women between ages 26 to 46 in the care of the elderly and in agriculture/landscaping skills. These programmes also include life-skills components. An on-site child care component has recently been added.

Challenges:

The challenge that remains is the persistence of disadvantage among specific groups, such as single mothers who are heads of households, women who have disabilities, elderly women and women who are victims of domestic violence, as the Barbados report indicates.

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR WOMEN

In the area of education, all the reporting countries, like the rest of the English-speaking Caribbean, provide equal access to education for both females and males. There are no formal barriers to hinder educational attainment. However, in the case of pregnant teenage girls, measures to ensure their continued education have had to be put in place. There is now a concern about the underperformance of males at secondary and tertiary levels compared to females. Gender-based segregation of the labour market is still a common phenomenon which reflects women's reluctance to enter non-traditional areas of skills training where employment and income prospects tend to be higher. This challenge is more likely to be taken up by younger than older women.

In Barbados, education is compulsory between ages 5 to 16 years. There is equal access to education at all levels for both males and females. Statistics reveal that more females are taking advantage of the educational opportunities than males. At the island's Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), 70% of undergraduates are women compared with 30% of men.

Belize's report focused more on skills training for women than on education. The Women's Department of the Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation offers skills training for women throughout the country. This programme provides non-traditional skills training in areas that include auto-mechanics and tile-laying. In some Belizean communities, both rural and urban, women are hesitant to learn skills that they regard as being in the men's domain. Therefore, there is a need to increase advocacy programmes that challenge these gender stereotypes and support women in making this transition.

In 1997, the Cayman Islands Government opened the Women's Resource Centre (WRC) to provide a point of contact for women to source information, benefit from educational programmes, seek free legal advice and gain referrals to various agencies. Since 2008, the WRC was merged with other family/community development programmes as part of a restructuring process to become the Empowerment and Community Development Agency. The government's motto is "Empowerment through Information and Education".

The Commonwealth of Dominica's government has, like other countries, invested in its human resources through the provision of free education and no formal barriers exist to hinder access for females. Education is compulsory from ages 5 to 16 years. Enrolment patterns show higher enrolment of boys at the primary level, but at secondary and tertiary levels enrolment of females is higher.

Jamaica has, through its Expanding Educational Horizons Project, 2005-2009, included a gender component. This initiative was developed within the context of girls' outperforming boys in

government schools at the primary level. The project is intended to raise the literacy levels of all students, boys in particular, from Grades 1 to 4 within 71 primary schools nationwide. The gender component is aimed at sensitizing project staff, school principals, teachers and parents on how gender influences classroom practices and learning. It introduces gender sensitive approaches to teaching practices which can be utilized by teachers in the classroom.

The introduction of single-sex classrooms in co-educational Jamaican schools as an experiment has yielded successful results in raising literacy levels, especially among boys who were lagging behind. As a result, some boys have performed better than girls in the primary level education examinations.

Suriname, under its Constitution, provides males and females with equal access to education. As is the pattern in the region, enrolment rates for education show disparities between males and females, with higher numbers of girls enrolled in junior and secondary schools as well as at tertiary levels in educational institutes.

Teenage mothers, whose education has been interrupted, are encouraged, enabled and supported to continue their education by the Ministry of Education. Older persons, who did not have opportunities to complete their education, also have the opportunity to do so. There is a current concern regarding the high dropout rate for boys in education.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2005 for the first time made access to secondary education universal. The education budget now allows for:

- (a) Financial support to lower income families
- (b) Student loans for tertiary education, and
- (c) An increase in scholarships.

Currently 75% of Vincentian university students are women. Government finances have been provided for the return to school of teenage mothers. This is facilitated through the payment of school fees, the purchase of books, the provision for transportation and day-care services for their babies.

Trinidad and Tobago's report, like Belize, focused more on training for women than on education. Its government provides through its ministries a number of training, financing and employment programmes. These include:

- The Multi-sector Skills Training Programme, Service Volunteered for All, Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme, On the Job Training, Women in Harmony Elderly Care and Agriculture/Landscaping and women and non-traditional skills training programmes.

Challenges:

- *While females continue to outperform males at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, they dominate in the arts and humanities which tend to lead to low-paying employment that does not improve their overall economic status while men continue to dominate at the highest levels despite their relative lower educational achievements.*
- *Some women are reluctant to take up non-traditional skills training opportunities when they are made available.*

C. WOMEN AND HEALTH

Women's health has been, and continues to be, a major focus of the work of the national women's machineries. Reproductive health, including HIV and AIDS and the particular vulnerabilities of women, is a growing concern. Significant improvements in PMTCT is reported as one of the most successful programmes in reproductive health in Belize and the pattern has been similar in the region.

The reproductive health of young people and their rights to information and services, girls in particular, is a major thrust in Belize and Jamaica. Some attention has also been paid to the needs of the disabled population.

Barbados has not recorded any new legislative or policy reforms in the area of women's health. The Bureau of Gender Affairs has adopted a community outreach approach to its work in gender and HIV and AIDS, specifically how gender dynamics affect the spread of HIV. Other activities include:

- (a) In 2007, the Bureau of Gender Affairs, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies' HIV and AIDS Response Programme implemented a community outreach programme, which has been extended to additional communities reaching approximately 300 persons over a period of two months
- (b) Fifteen HIV community committees have been established which focus on prevention and control of the HIV and AIDS pandemic
- (c) The Bureau co-facilitated a workshop with the Barbados National Organisation of the Disabled on HIV and AIDS and the vulnerability of the disabled to HIV, and
- (d) The Bureau is currently implementing, in conjunction with UNIFEM, a programme, 'Mainstreaming Gender Analysis in HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean – Strengthening Sector Capacity'

Belize has introduced significant legislative/policy reform and action plans in women's health. These changes include the following:

- (a) A Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy, 2005 that has 11 elements, including:
 - The rights of adolescents to have access to information, and services and the right of pregnant girls to return to school and receive counselling and mental health services
- (b) Maternal and Perinatal Reduction Plan and Safe Motherhood Initiative, 2005
- (c) A National Policy on Health and Family Life Education, 2004 for a life skills based programme in schools country-wide
- (d) A National Policy on HIV/AIDS, 2005

Programmes include PMTCT. This programme has been one of the most successful HIV-related programmes carried out in Belize.

The Cayman Islands, through the Women's Health Centre, which was established in 2003 in a section of the local hospital, focuses on the specific needs of female patients in the area of reproductive health services. In partnership with the Lion's Club, Breast Cancer Awareness Week has been established since 1997. Mammograms, diagnostic ultrasound tests, educational programmes, assistance with obtaining prostheses and for health services required overseas, are made available.

In the Commonwealth of Dominica, the National Policy on Gender endorses the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health which is aimed at:

- (a) Greater utilization of existing health programmes
- (b) Strengthening services for women
- (c) Support for women in abusive sexual situations
- (d) Programmes for menopausal women
- (e) Improved management of psycho-social illnesses and experiences; and the provision of gender sensitive care to female adolescents' health concerns

Specific goals are identified in the National Policy to address the needs: adequate and accessible health services in their seven health districts, the development and strengthening of preventive programmes to reduce anaemia, increased screening for gynaecological problems, the introduction of comprehensive parenting programmes and the development and implementation of male reproductive health programmes.

In Jamaica, several initiatives have been implemented. These are:

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS: The programme focuses on the disabled youth by providing public education on HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STI) prevention and contraception services. Over 240 persons have been sensitized, 95% of these persons are women.

UNFPA Female Condom 2 Programming and Promotion Pilot Initiative: The initiative is aimed at promoting the use of female condoms as a part of enhanced reproductive health, a component of the Caribbean's Reproductive Health Commodity Security Programme. After an initial six-month pilot period, several partnerships have been achieved with institutions such as hospitals, the UWI, faith-based organizations, community health departments and clinics. Young people below 21 years are 90% of the patrons, 20% of whom are males. Positive feedback has been received and there are requests for more sensitization sessions.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Project - funded by the government, UNFPA and the European Commission: This is a comprehensive information and education project to facilitate universal access to integrated gender sensitive, rights-based sexual and reproductive health services. Its successful outputs include materials development for behaviour change and a video game. Interventions also target men, adolescents and the disabled.

Jamaica's HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Project, 2007-2008: The target of this initiative is youth between ages 15 to 24 years to assist them in understanding their sexuality, increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, STIs, and make healthier choices. So far, 1635 sessions have been conducted.

Suriname's Constitution established the right of its citizens to health services. Suriname also has a Health Sector Plan for 2004-2008. Successful actions include:

- (a) Support for primary health care with emphasis on community participation
- (b) Improved infrastructure, water and sanitation services
- (c) Training of midwives and refresher programmes for birth attendants, and
- (d) Health education and promotion

Suriname's health plan and services include maternal health for all women, the reduction of maternal mortality; universal access to immunization for children; programmes for STI/HIV/AIDS prevention and for the empowerment of young women and men, indigenous and Maroon communities; the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and the provision of youth-friendly services; free health care for all senior citizens; universal access to family planning services; programmes for parents and community leaders in understanding population and gender equality issues; and a national reproductive cancer prevention programme that includes the circumcision of boys/men in order to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer among women.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' actions in the health sector include:

(a) Engendering the health sector; improved antenatal, post natal, child and adolescent health; and midwifery training. The successes reported are:

- Increased knowledge and awareness in health
- Improved access to family planning services, and
- Increased participation of men in family life and in improving their health

Trinidad and Tobago has developed a revised health policy for the provision of:

(a) Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRH) which is focused on the expansion of services beyond fertility management to include the provision of services to previously underserved populations such as males, youth and older persons

(b) A National Workplace Policy on HIV to reduce discrimination against persons living with HIV and AIDS

(c) A Policy PMTCT

In addition, through Health Sector Reform Programme, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has implemented other programmes which have:

(a) Decentralized the delivery of health care services through the system of Regional Health Authorities. In partnership with the non-governmental organization, Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago, there is delivery of sexual and reproductive health services

(b) Upgraded the baby-friendly status of two general hospitals to international standards

(c) Provided support to young mothers, pregnant teenagers and teens at risk through the Choices Programme which is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and the Child Welfare League. The focus of the work is on remedial and developmental services provided through community intervention centres

Challenges:

(a) In Jamaica, the reluctance of homosexual men, in particular, to use health services especially for HIV/AIDS because of the fear of discrimination. This creates difficulties in the targeting of intervention programmes for that population group. This has serious implications for women's health especially where bi-sexuality is also practiced.

(b) Suriname has indicated that there is need for renovations and expansions of health services and facilities and that there is also a shortage of health personnel which has implications for the provision of adequate services.

D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The implementation of programmes to combat violence against women has been a universal mandate of all national machineries in the region. Every country has passed domestic violence legislation, implemented educational/awareness programmes, and sought to expand and improve the services and provisions for women who are victims of violence. Belize has revised legislation to increase the severity of penalties, expanded the provisions of the legislation to cover new and related areas. Some countries have introduced programmes to rehabilitate the perpetrators of violence, but the scourge of violence persists in the region. The relatively new issue of trafficking in persons has also gained some attention.

In Barbados, the work on violence against women is at three levels:

- (a) Public education/outreach and sensitization on the issue
- (b) Research on prevalence of domestic violence and data collection on domestic violence through the development and use of a harmonized system
- (c) Sensitization of front-line personnel such as the police, social workers, and the establishment of victim support groups

In the area of human trafficking, Barbados has signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Annex to its protocol to punish, suppress trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Plans are to develop a protocol that includes interventions, remedies, and support along with a policy and procedures manual. Provisions have been made for the conduct of a study on the incidence of human trafficking during the year 2008-2009.

Belize has put in place a number of laws that cover several aspects of violence against women. These laws include:

- (a) The Domestic Act of 2007. The Act has increased scope and empowers the Courts to increase the protection of applicants, providing Protection Orders for a period of up to three years; requires the payment of child maintenance; increases penalties to offenders; enlarges the categories of persons who can apply for Protection Orders such as de facto spouses/persons in common-law unions and persons in visiting relationships; increases the powers of the police to intervene and increases the definition of domestic violence to include financial abuse
- (b) Amendment to the Criminal Code. The Act now includes the offence of marital rape; penalties for the carnal knowledge of children, with the mandatory sentence of life imprisonment for habitual sex offenders; the treatment and reporting of sex offenders
- (c) Trafficking in Persons Act. The Act has allowed for the establishment of a Task Force; The Sexual Harassment Act, 2008, and The Equal Pay Act are now on the statute books

The law now recognizes common-law unions for the purposes of inheritance and property rights and places value on home care/child care in cases of divorce or separation. Programmes and projects are:

- (a) Batterers Intervention which commenced in 2009 with support from UNIFEM and with the guidance of the Regional Experts Group
- (b) Review of the Domestic Violence Protocol at the request of the police and in the context of the new Domestic Violence Legislation. Amendments have been suggested
- (c) Training of magistrates across the country on the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act and further requests continue for this training from magistrates and Family Court officials

The Cayman Islands, in response to the tragic death in October 2008 of one of its prominent citizens, Ms. Estella Scott-Roberts, who worked on domestic violence matters:

- (a) Established a National Commission to review legislation that addresses gender based violence including rape, marital rape, domestic violence, incest, child abuse, sexual harassment, stalking and prostitution. The outcome of the review process will be determined at a later date

Programmes in the Caymans include:

- (a) The operation of a crisis centre and 24 hour hot-line, support services and case management of clients
- (b) Education and sensitization on domestic violence, sexual violence and child abuse
- (c) Domestic violence Intervention Training Programmes for the police, social workers and other front-line professionals
- (d) The Clothesline Project
- (e) Sixteen Days of Activism against gender-based violence, and
- (f) The Silent Witness March

The Commonwealth of Dominica, in its National Policy on Gender, recommends measures to address domestic violence and gender-based violence. These measures include:

- (a) Economic empowerment of disadvantaged women through access to a Revolving Loan Fund
- (b) Integration of Health and Family Life Education into the school curriculum, including content on gender issues and domestic violence
- (c) Improved data collection system for reports of domestic violence, and
- (d) Provision of specialized assistance for victims and perpetrators

Jamaica, as part of the process of reviewing its Constitution and laws, is looking at new sexual offences legislation that will bring rape, including marital rape, incest and other sexual offences in line with international conventions and the trends in modern legislation. Current legislation includes:

- (a) Amendments to the Domestic Violence Act 2004, to include redress and protection to women affected by domestic violence in common-law unions and in visiting relationships

(b) Property Rights of Spouses Act 2004; Sexual Harassment; and the Maintenance Act 2005

The Women's Bureau is the Chair of the Public Education Sub-committee of the National Task Force against Trafficking in Persons. Programmatic activities are:

(a) Public education programmes with a cross section of organizations including schools, communities, churches, service clubs and groups such as students, police officers, guidance counsellors, social workers, and members of the justice system, aimed at eliminating attitudes and practices that foster, justify and tolerate violence

(b) Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence in Schools

(c) Safe Schools Programme

(d) Peace and Love in Schools Programme

(e) Safe Cities for Women and Girls, and

(f) Violence Against Women Reduction Programme

The strategy used in Suriname, is to include the issues of domestic violence and gender-based violence as components of its reproductive health focused programmes of the Medical Missions clinics.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has enacted domestic violence legislation along with a Policy on Legal Aid. The Family Court system is in operation and public education programmes and materials are produced such as books, posters and pamphlets. There are still gaps in the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data on domestic violence.

Trinidad and Tobago has domestic violence legislation and also has a National Domestic Violence Unit which provides a 24 hour hotline service for seven days per week. There are also ongoing training and public education activities aimed at reducing the incidence of gender-based violence. Educational materials are also produced and distributed.

A pilot initiative, the creation of a Central Registry for Domestic Violence, is being planned with support from the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Research, UWI. This project will help in informing the strategies for the establishment of a Registry within government in 2009. A procedures manual on domestic violence has been produced and adopted for police officers.

Services for women include a Domestic Violence Hotline, shelters, community-based drop-in centres, legal services through the Legal Aid Department, and through the Ombudsman, whose services are also made available to rural communities on specified days.

Challenges:

(a) The continuation of gender-based violence in the region that primarily affects women and children

(b) In Barbados, there is difficulty in getting stakeholders to use the newly introduced Data Collection Protocol which is intended to provide data on domestic violence

(c) The issue of human trafficking is a new concern, the nature and full extent of which has not been fully determined in the region. Proposed research should contribute to a clearer understanding of the problem

E. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Jamaica is the only Caribbean country that has reported on the participation of its citizens in peace-keeping operations in the Sudan (Darfur), Liberia, East Timor, Ivory Coast, and Lebanon. Jamaican women are offered equal opportunities to participate in peace-keeping operations and Jamaica has a significant proportion of women actively engaged in these duties. Since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, reports indicate that the number of women in peace-keeping activities has risen steadily. Women are present in six of the seven peace-keeping missions. A Jamaican woman is Contingent Commander both in Liberia and Darfur.

F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Caribbean economies are characterized by the significant shifts and changes that have taken place in recent decades, in particular the move away from agriculture as the main foreign exchange earner, to tourism and services. The following features now constitute Caribbean economic realities: debt, restructuring, shrinking government expenditure in social programmes, increased privatization, downsizing of government and its impact on economic and social life. The national machineries have gradually begun to take on board the linkages between the realities of women's lives and the wider issues of Caribbean economies and their location in the vagaries of the global economic system.

Employment/labour policies and legislation that have been beneficial for women, although not uniform across the region, include the following: minimum wages for domestic workers and shop assistants (Belize); minimum wages and equal opportunity legislation (Trinidad and Tobago); maternity leave, which can extend from between 12 to 14 weeks and is perhaps the most common provision; paternity leave for civil servants in the Cayman Islands and the Commonwealth of Dominica; occupational safety and health; equal pay for equal work; counting unremunerated work (Trinidad and Tobago); and a sexual harassment policy is being reviewed in Jamaica towards legislative enactment. Social security schemes have also been introduced in many countries.

Belize, in response to the financial crisis affecting the country, has made efforts to encourage and promote women's economic empowerment through the development of enterprises and employment in technical fields.

The Cayman Islands Investment Bureau has hosted since 2007 a seminar, "Inspiring Women Entrepreneurs", which provides opportunities for business women to network, share experiences, successes and challenges as part of 'Honouring Women Month'. The Bureau estimates that 65% of small businesses are owned by women.

The Commonwealth of Dominica's economy is characterized by debt restructuring, shrinking government expenditure, down-sizing and increased privatization.

As a result, in 2007, unemployment rates for women were 9.5% and 11.5% for men, taking into consideration the slump in the banana industry which was a significant employer, especially of men. More women in Dominica are described as becoming the breadwinners in their households.

Jamaica's report on women and the economy makes an assessment on two levels:

(a) The impact of globalization, trade and the growth in information and communication technologies. Discussion on women on globalization and trade is a new and emerging issue for women's organizations. The national women's machinery has begun to be involved in consultations, along with experts and representatives of non-governmental women's organizations, in the preparation of briefing documents linked to trade policies and negotiations such as the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement and the Canada Trade Agreement, and

(b) The call for national gender responsive budgets. Jamaica's Finance Ministry has been deficient in seriously considering preparing gender-responsive budgets as part of its monetary and fiscal procedures, despite the fact that regional and international bodies are increasingly adopting this process as part of gender equity requirements

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' economy has also been seriously affected, like Dominica, by the down turn in the banana industry as a result of the WTO ruling on preferential trade. The down turn has led to:

- (a) Increased unemployment, especially in rural communities, for both men and women over the past 10 years
- (b) Women moving to lower status and lower paying employment, and
- (c) The creation of employment in information and communications technology that has attracted young females to this form of employment

The Gender Affairs Division undertook an initiative, 'Analyzing the Gender Impact of Government Policy on Key Sectors- Education, Agriculture and Social Development' from a gender perspective in 2005. A team of experts working with the Ministry of Finance and Gender Affairs designed strategies that engaged Dominica's technocrats in gender analysis within the Ministry of Finance's operations. As a result, improved budgetary allocations to the Gender Affairs Division are being made.

Trinidad and Tobago's more diversified and buoyant economy has enabled employment for women to grow. The poverty rate in Trinidad and Tobago has decreased from 35% in 1990 to 16.7% by 2006. At the end of the fourth quarter of 2006, the labour force comprised 628,400 persons, 366,400 were men and 262,000 were women. This reflected a 74.9% labour participation rate for men and 53.6% rate for women. At the end of 2006, the number of employed males had risen by 7,600 or 2.2%, while for women the increase was 6,600 or 2.8%. Women's employment status has been improving overall. An average of 14,400 new jobs was created annually.

However, research on the effects of globalization and trade liberalization, which was conducted by students of UWI and by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action, a regional women's organization, suggests that the prevailing trade agreements and a reduction in exports may prove to be the source of financial challenges for some small and micro business persons, including those owned by women.

Challenges:

Challenges still surround understanding and addressing economic issues and financial matters and how changes in the global economic environment affect the lives of women. The introduction of gender-responsive budgets as part of governments' accountability is still relatively new and will perhaps require further training and development of skills. Input and participation in discussion on trade liberalization from the perspectives of women will be necessary

G. WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

In Barbados, there are no formal or legal barriers that limit women's participation in politics, but only three of the eight women who campaigned in the recent 2008 general elections were elected to the House of Assembly. Of the total 27 seats in the House, eight seats, approximately 30%, are held by women. Women's involvement in partisan politics remains mostly confined to campaigning and voting. However, despite this uneven situation, a few women occupy, or have occupied, high

positions in the country such as the past Governor of the Central Bank, the former Leader of the Senate and the current Deputy Principal of UWI.

The Cayman Islands reports that no known intentional actions have been taken or implemented by government to increase the numbers of women in power and decision-making positions within the governmental system. The Cayman notes that despite this lack of positive action, three of the five permanent secretaries/chief officers of government ministries are women.

In the Commonwealth of Dominica, despite the fact that this country was the first English-speaking country to have had a woman as Head of Government, women's participation at the political decision-making level remains very low. Four women are currently in government. Three women hold ministerial positions and one is a Senator. Few women hold top management positions and even fewer are to be found in foreign and international positions in the public service.

Jamaica's government is seen as supportive of the Jamaica Women's Political Caucus by providing the Caucus with a subvention. The strategies developed that are aimed at increasing women's political participation include:

- (a) Activities to encourage young women to consider politics as a career path, and
- (b) Training workshops for women to orient them on gender/women's issues, political and financial matters, public speaking and how political parties can facilitate or hinder women's full participation in the political process.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Division of Gender Affairs, in its efforts to increase the number of women willing to engage in politics and take up leadership positions, has undertaken the following actions:

- (a) Training for national level performance
- (b) Hosting of a symposium as well as radio and television programmes on this issue, and
- (c) Conducting research on women in politics

Currently, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has 25% women in its Cabinet.

Trinidad and Tobago reports that there has been an increase in the total number of women in political decision-making positions since the General Elections held in 2007. Women are now represented at all three levels of decision-making: in the lower House of Representatives, the Upper House or Senate and also in the Cabinet of government. The data shows:

- (a) In the House of Representatives, an increase from 7 women to 11 women, (from 19.4% to 26%)
- (b) In the Senate, an increase from 11 women to 13 women, (from 35.4% to 41.9%), and
- (c) In the Cabinet, there is an increase from five women to eight women, (from 20% to 32%)

Women also hold non-traditional portfolios such a Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Attorney General and Minister of Finance.

Challenges:

The challenges are the same throughout the region, the persistent underrepresentation of women in positions of power and decision-making which is a hindrance to the achievement of equitable social justice. In Jamaica, where a considerable amount of work has been undertaken, very little improvements have taken place for women in politics. The 30% quota agreed by government is yet to be attained and women lag behind in the support of female candidates. Trade Union leadership continues to be dominated by men despite 50% membership of women in Jamaica. Trinidad and Tobago is the only country to report progress in women's participation at all levels in the government.

H. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

In Barbados, the Bureau of Gender Affairs is currently located in the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports. Its role is one of an adviser to both government and non-governmental organizations on gender issues. The Bureau of Gender Affairs also has responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of gender awareness in government policies, plans and programmes and for liaison with NGOs, regional and international agencies and facilitate gender mainstreaming of national development policies and programmes.

The Bureau was recently strengthened with the establishment of two new Programme Officers' posts in 2004. Its budgetary allocation for 2008-2009 stood at Bds\$756,602.

Challenges:

- (a) The 'low level of clout' by the Bureau in influencing policies and in implementing the gender mainstreaming system*
- (b) The limited/lack of political will to transform administrative structures and modes of decision-making*
- (c) Lack of investment in building the capacity of staff with the necessary skills to engage the public sector in gender analysis of public sector policies and programmes*
- (d) Inadequate financial and human resources*

Belize's Women's Department along with the National Women's Commission, make up the national machinery for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Women's Department has an office located in each of Belize's six districts. Each office is staffed by a Women's Development Officer who is usually a social worker.

The work of the Women's Department has increased in order to place a greater focus on its gender equality mandate. It has a major responsibility for gender mainstreaming in all governmental policies and programmes. In order to assist in this process, a Gender Integration Committee has been established consisting of representatives from the government and non government sectors, it also includes the Gender Focal Points from all the government ministries. A communications strategy has been developed and a Gender Training Manual has been produced for public officials. The Women's Department has embarked on a programme of increasing public awareness on gender issues.

The Women's Department has an ex-officio status on the National Women's Commission. Both of these institutions are located in the Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation. The National Women's Commission, which plays an advisory role to government,

has been strengthened by government which appointed a full-time technical Executive Director. The Commission is in the process of becoming a statutory body.

In 2005, under an institutional strengthening project supported by CIDA, the capabilities and skills of the members of the National Commission were enhanced in lobbying and advocacy in order to ensure that the gender policy would be taken into account in all national plans and programmes.

The Women's Department budget in 2007 comprised US\$100,000 in external funding and an equivalent figure was allocated from the government's capital budget.

Challenges:

- (a) Some Focal Points are dormant and ineffective.*
- (b) A lack of sex disaggregated data in the Statistical Institute of Belize. The only disaggregated data that is available is in the area of gender-based violence which is managed by the Ministry of Health*
- (c) There are no comprehensive monitoring mechanisms in place*

In the Cayman Islands, the mandate for Gender Affairs is under the Ministry of Health and Human Services. In 2007, the Office of Gender Affairs was established and created from what was formerly the WRC which dated back to 1998. The WRC was merged with other family-based/community programmes to form the Empowerment and Community Development Agency. There is only one post, that of Senior Policy Advisor which was filled in 2008 from within the existing public sector, since there was a moratorium on the hiring of new civil servants. The role of the Office of Gender Affairs is to implement the process of gender mainstreaming, provide policy advice and carry out gender sensitization activities with government officials.

The establishment of gender focal points is one of the recommendations made in the National Policy for Gender Equity and Equality, but it has not been implemented. The Government of the Cayman Islands has supported the training of the Senior Policy Advisor through her participation in the UWI distance education Diploma in Gender and Development Studies. The Senior Policy Advisor has been appointed by Cabinet to sit on the Census Advisory Committee in order to bring a gender perspective to the data collection process for the 2010 National Census.

Budgetary allocations have shown a gradual increase over the three-year period (2005 to 2008) from approximately US\$ 292,000 to US\$ 368,000, but with the institutional merge referred to earlier and fewer staff, the budgetary figure has been adjusted downwards to US\$133,498.

Challenges:

- (a) No national mechanism has been established to facilitate the training and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming throughout government ministries*
- (b) No indicators have been developed for monitoring data and statistics*
- (c) There is difficulty in collecting data on gender-based violence and Millennium Development Goal #3, i.e. the gender equality and empowerment of women*

In the Commonwealth of Dominica, the establishment of the Women's Desk took place in 1979, and there has been a:

- (a) Policy Statement on Women and Development in 1980, and
- (b) National Policy on Gender in 2006

The role of the Women's Desk is to: (a) be the lead agency to guide the gender mainstreaming process, (b) monitor and implement the National Policy on Gender Equality in all government agencies, (c) assist in the development of gender indicators in collaboration with the relevant sectors, and (d) manage the flow of information and communication between ministries/agencies.

The institutional mechanisms include an inter-ministerial committee comprised of senior officers who also serve as the gender focal points in all the relevant ministries. They have all participated in training activities.

Challenges:

- (a) *The need for more capacity building and institutional strengthening of the national machinery in order to be more effective in its functions*
- (b) *Lack of adequate technical human and financial resources*

In 1987, the Government of Jamaica adopted a National Policy Statement on Women which identified 10 critical areas to be addressed. It now has a draft National Gender Policy based on international instruments such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The institutional structures include:

- (a) A Gender Advisory Committee (advisory to government and to national machinery)
- (b) The Bureau of Women's Affairs which sits on policy committees and gives input on, for example, Ministry of Labour's Occupational Health and Safety Act, Ministry of Education's Compulsory Education Policy, Ministry of Justice's Justice System Reform process, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade's Briefs, Ministry of Health's HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy, to ensure government's obligations and commitments remain central and that the principle of gender mainstreaming is incorporated into relevant strategies and plans
- (c) Gender focal points in four key government ministries and three government agencies, including the Planning Institute of Jamaica

The resources made available include the training of staff in the relevant technical areas. The Women's Bureau has also offered training/capacity-building to sectors such as:

- (a) Youth and rural women in a number of areas
- (b) Technical officers of government ministries and agencies on gender, gender mainstreaming, development theories, international agreements and to increase clarity and apply systematic approaches to gender mainstreaming, and
- (c) Subventions to women and men non-governmental organizations

Challenges:

(a) Gender focal points, although an important mechanism, are weakened by changes in personnel due to resignations, migration and mortality and by changing political administrations

(b) Sometimes gender focal points lack knowledge of the gender equality commitments that have been made by government

In Suriname, the National Bureau for Gender Policy, which is responsible for the coordination of the gender policy, lies within the Ministry of Home Affairs. Suriname, in 2006, developed the 2nd Integral Gender Action Plan, 2006-2010, which is based on the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, and the International Conference on Population and Development and the priority areas have been established.

Institutional mechanisms in the form of committees have been established with specific areas of focus such as the:

(a) Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children's Rights of 2006

(b) National Committee on Gender Legislation of 2007

(c) The Ministries of Justice and Police, Home Affairs, Education, Regional Development, Health, and Social Affairs and Housing, which, in 2008 made a commitment to work collaboratively to combat gender-based violence and signed a cooperation covenant.

Networks have also been created between gender focal points, the Ministry of Home Affairs and non-governmental organizations for the exchange of information and participation in meetings and activities.

Challenges:

(a) Raising awareness on gender at the highest levels of government and in the communities

(b) Adequate training in gender, gender analysis and gender mainstreaming

(c) Clear job descriptions for gender focal points so that GMS can work effectively

The Department of Gender Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is located within the Ministry of Social Development and, as a result, tends to be regarded as a welfare agency. It has a staff of four women and one man. Gender focal points are located in various ministries.

The role of the Department is to ensure that all citizens have equal access to opportunities that shape social, cultural, spiritual, educational, economic and political development. Activities include training exercises, consultations and simplifying Conventions, as required. The Department has benefited from participation in meetings with the Statistical Department regarding work on the Millennium Development Goals.

Gender indicators have been developed by ECLAC and are utilized in an effort to get sex disaggregated data and a database that includes information on education, agriculture and the economy. Mechanisms for monitoring progress have been established.

The challenges lie in many unanswered questions such as, why are boys lagging behind in education? Why do high rates of domestic violence continue to persist? What kind of impacts will gender trends in education have on the economy of the country? How will government enact gender-sensitive policies that best and equally serve the interest of women and men?

Trinidad and Tobago's Gender Affairs Division is located within the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs and is the central body responsible for incorporating gender into policies and programmes. Vision 2020 is the government's National Strategic Plan and the Gender Affairs Division works with the Ministry of Housing, Planning and the Environment on the goals and strategies for achieving gender equality.

The Division's role is one of:

- (a) Guiding the GMS and gender mainstreaming process
- (b) Facilitating partnerships
- (c) Collaborating with ministries in implementing commitments on gender-based methodologies, on conceptual issues and sector specific approaches
- (d) Maintaining a resource centre and a national clearing house
- (e) Liaising with women's and men's organizations, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, professional and academic institutions, and
- (f) Developing relationships with the media, promoting public education and gender awareness

Institutional mechanisms include the Gender Equity Institute which is responsible for the implementation of programmes and projects to advance gender equity and for training/institutional strengthening of non-governmental organizations and groups.

The work so far involved collaboration with the Ministry of Finance in national budgets, gender-aware investment strategies and issues of the distribution of public expenditure. The Gender Affairs Unit of the Department of Health and Social Services, Tobago House of Assembly ensures coordination and implementation of the Gender Policy.

No major challenges were identified, but their plans include the implementation of a programme of gender mainstreaming in government agencies; the strengthening of the gender focal points and the reconstituting of the Cabinet-appointed Inter-ministerial Committee on Gender and Development along with several plans for the future.

I. WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Barbados has made significant improvements in legal reform, especially in the area of family law and child maintenance. The Family Law Act, Chap. 214 was amended along with other laws. This legal framework now:

- (a) Provides for a child born to a husband or wife prior to marriage. He/she is regarded as a child of the marriage under the Act if the child is ordinarily a member of the marital household
- (b) Authorizes the Courts to order the transfer or settlement of property for the maintenance of a child
- (c) Makes clear that rules may be made for the enforcement of maintenance payments, whether or not the payments in question are in arrears

(d) Extends the categories of children who are deemed by the Act to be children of a union other than a marriage

Belize has produced a Human Rights Handbook for women. The Women's Department had realized that women were not enjoying benefits to which they were entitled because of their lack of awareness. The Handbook includes information on domestic violence, divorce, child custody, labour rights, sexual harassment and maintenance rights. The provision of the Handbook, which has also been translated into Spanish, is combined with community education sessions.

The Cayman Islands' Government at the Overseas Territories Consultative Committee, held in October 2008, agreed that there would be implementation of the necessary local legislation by November 2009, in order to extend CEDAW to the Cayman Islands. The local legislation which forms the base for CEDAW is The Prevention of Gender Discrimination Bill of 2009 which has been drafted. Cabinet has approved its circulation to the public for comments. It was expected the Bill would be approved in the Legislative Assembly in 2009.

The Commonwealth of Dominica's Constitution forbids discrimination and the infringement of the human rights of all persons without regard to sex, race, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed. As a result, it makes unlawful the practice and tradition of the indigenous Carib population where Carib women are prohibited from choosing marriage partners from outside of the Carib race, while Carib men are not restricted in this way. This situation is being addressed, but no progress has been realized so far.

In another area, the current Intestates Estate Act makes no provision for the common-law spouses of men, and prohibits them from applying for letters of administration on the estates of common-law spouses, nor are they entitled to a share of the estates when there is intestacy. This situation is seen as an infringement of women's rights in a context in which common-law unions are prevalent and where a growing number of persons opt for common-law unions instead of marriage.

Trinidad and Tobago's Constitution also protects individual rights, and it declares fundamental rights without regard to race, origin, colour, religion and sex. There is also a system of recourse if human rights are thought to be violated. This system includes appeal to the High Court which has jurisdiction in Constitutional matters and further recourse to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of the United Kingdom.

There is a broad framework of legislation for the protection of human rights. These laws include: The Domestic Violence Act, 1999; the Sexual Offences Act, 1986, along with its amendment Act, No. 18, 1999; the Public Assistance Regulations, 1997; the Maternity Protection Act, No.4, 1998; the Cohabitation Relationships Act, No. 30, 1998; the Attachment of Earnings (Maintenance) Act, No. 14, 1995; the Attachment of Earnings (Maintenance) Amendment Act, No.14, 1998; the Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, No. 28, 1996; the Counting of Unremunerated Work Act, No. 29, 1996; the Minimum Wage (No. 2) Order, 1998; the Equal Opportunity Act, No. 69, 2000; and the Occupational Safety and Health Act, No 1, 2004.

The Ombudsman provides administrative authority with jurisdiction to investigate allegations of infringements of human rights by government agencies. The Police Complaints Authority is a statutory authority established in 1995 to receive and investigate complaints on the conduct of any police officer. It was established by the Commissioner of Police and is staffed by police officers. Bona fide complaints are resolved by counselling, instituting disciplinary proceedings or by criminal Court action.

Challenges:

(a) The particular situation of Carib women in Dominica who are prohibited from choosing marriage partners from outside of the Carib race, when Carib men do not face this restriction.

(b) The issue of women in common-law unions and their rights in situations of intestacy regarding property and inheritance matters.

J. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

The Caribbean countries' reports have focused on the use of the media for public education, information sharing, and for the support of campaigns, but do not focus on issues surrounding the ways in which women are treated or reflected in the media. Jamaica's report has captured, to the largest extent, information on how it has used the media in its work. These media campaigns were aimed at:

(a) Informing the public about CEDAW and the actions taken by government to end discriminatory practices against women. It involved a series of newspaper articles "Women! You have Rights too" prepared by the Bureau of Women's Affairs. This was followed later in 2007 by a series of six weekly newspaper articles which covered themes such as social and economic benefits, rural women, equity before the law, equal rights in education, marriage and family law and civil matters

(b) Providing funds through a mediathon organized by the Jamaican Government in 2008 to support State-run shelters and for teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers, many of whom were victims of sexual violence, and

(c) PMTCT and adherence to antiretroviral regimes, abstinence and condom use among sexually active young people; and anti-stigma campaigns were developed, "Live Positive"; multimedia and social marketing to raise awareness on HIV and promote safer behaviours.

Trinidad and Tobago reports engagement in public sensitization and education on gender and development, the use of the Distinguished Lecture/Workshop Series to promote public education on gender issues, the use of its National Television Panel Series entitled "Gender on Your Agenda" to include a comprehensive range of themes including, Livelihood Strategies of Grassroots and Community Women, Young Women of the 2000s, Male on Male Violence and Crime, Men's Health, Men and their Family Relationships, Money Matters, Education and the Performance of Boys, and Celebrating the Achievements of Women.

K. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Only Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago reported any initiatives in this area. The Government of Belize, with the support of UNDP, has started work on a project "Strengthening of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Capacity" 2009-2011. The Women's Department will ensure that gender issues are considered in project activities and a gender perspective should become evident in disaster management plans in the future.

Jamaica in 2006 approved a National Water Policy in which there is recognition of the importance of a gender-sensitive approach to finding efficient and equitable solutions to the challenge of water resources management. Workshops were held in the implementation of gender in integrated water resources management to increase awareness among policymakers on how problems of access to potable water and sanitation affect the daily lives and prospects for women, men and children, especially those living in rural areas.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the work of the Network of Rural Women Producers provides a forum for communities in Trinidad and Tobago to be involved in agriculture and environmental projects and collectively to deal with issues affecting them.

No challenges were reported in this area.

L. THE GIRL CHILD

Belize, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, have focused on the situation of teenage mothers and have established the right of these girls to return to school. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has developed a policy on teen mothers and provided support for their continuing secondary education through the payment of school fees, purchase of books, provision of transportation and day-care services for their babies.

In the Cayman Islands, through a programme, "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day", the opportunity is created for youth to be inspired through workplace exposure and to the expansion of the available options in career choices.

In The Commonwealth of Dominica, during the period January to December 2008, the Welfare Department recorded 120 reported cases involving sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect and incest. Of the 120 reported cases, 104 involved girls. Ninety nine were cases of incest. The girl child is subjected to all types of abuse, sometimes ending in death. Most cases are unreported or families settle out of court. Efforts are being made to address the situation by networking with the relevant agencies.

Jamaica's Bureau of Women's Affairs is attempting to improve safety and security for women and girls in cities, through a project, "Safer Cities for Women and Girls". The project addresses critical areas such as crime and violence, youth empowerment, and improved policing. The approach that is used includes the mainstreaming of policies and programmes aimed at promoting peace and security, not only on the streets, but also on public transportation. Two workshops have been held so far to explore the concept and identify strategies to remedy the current problematic situation.

In its efforts to address and combat violence, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Suriname, has established a Child Help Line through which children can call and talk about their problems. The Ministry is also working on a Plan of Action for Children 2008-2012. It includes work on reproductive health, programmes aimed at adolescents and reproductive health information and increased access to contraception and the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. There is also a pilot project for teenage mothers that provides social guidance and support so they can continue their education and function more effectively.

Trinidad and Tobago has no specific programmes focused on the girl child but private sector companies such as British Petroleum and the Association of Female Executives of Trinidad and Tobago have supported the establishment of after-school initiatives for employees' children and the provision of child-care facilities. In the public sector, the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Community Development have provided school facilities/secure environments for employees' children.

The challenge is that the girl child continues to be subjected to all types of abuse and there is a need for more efforts to be made by the relevant agencies to address this matter, as Dominica has reported. Suriname also reports a similar concern, but there is a lack of adequate data on the abuse of children.

II. OUTSTANDING CHALLENGES, ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

The outstanding issues and challenges vary from country to country, but high among the concerns are: (a) the need to complete the process of developing national policies on gender equality, and (b) the strengthening of national machineries for their role in mainstreaming gender in all national policies and programmes. The specific details for each country are:

Barbados identified its priority areas as:

- (a) The completion of the National Policy on Gender
- (b) The successful development of the draft protocol on Human Trafficking
- (c) Ongoing work towards the introduction of the Domestic Violence Protocol
- (d) The establishment and maintenance of the Gender Management System, and
- (e) Ongoing outreach and public education on domestic violence

Belize has also identified further work on revising its National Gender Policy, the production of a user-friendly version of the National Gender Policy along with an Action Plan with clearly defined indicators and with all the necessary resources identified.

The Cayman Islands, which has one position -that of Senior Policy Advisor for Gender Affairs within the newly created Empowerment and Community Development Agency- has identified as the priorities:

- (a) Establishing an Office of Gender Affairs as the formal national machinery with the mandate to address the priorities as identified in the Beijing Plan for Action, and
- (b) Working towards the development of a National Policy on Gender Equity and Equality

The Commonwealth of Dominica has identified 10 remaining challenges:

- (a) Capacity-building and institutional strengthening of the national machinery in order to be more effective in its role and functions. This strengthening will include financial and technical resources
- (b) The review and amendment of the 2001 Protection against Domestic Violence Act to facilitate easy implementation
- (c) Promoting greater collaboration among the Women's Bureau, Legal Aid Clinic, Welfare Division, Police Department and the Dominica National Council of Women in addressing the issue of violence against women
- (d) Reviewing and enacting a policy and legislation to address trafficking of persons and discouraging the importation of women for prostitution
- (e) Accelerating efforts in family law reform to include the recognition of common-law unions
- (f) Promoting active dialogue and engagement among the judicial system, religious, cultural, civil society institutions and communities to discuss human rights
- (g) Encouraging and supporting the Statistical Office to undertake gender-sensitive research, data collection and analysis

(h) Advocating for the high female academic performance to be reflected in suitable positions in the labour market

(i) Educating and encouraging persons to position themselves to counteract the effect of trade liberalization and globalization

(j) Establishing a National Advisory Council that will assist in monitoring the recommendations of the Gender Policy and the CEDAW Protocol

Jamaica has identified four main areas for further work:

(a) Strengthening Stakeholders' Accountability – although the national women's machinery has a gender equality framework which guides its strategies and plans in critical areas, the current system needs improvements. Results at present are described as sporadic, ad hoc and uncertain. With the support of UNIFEM, recommendations have been made for the development of systems that would promote efficiency and accountability, and ensure greater oversight in programmes

(b) Gender-based violence remains a critical area. With support through a UNIFEM regional project, "Strengthening State Accountability and Country Action for Ending Gender-based Violence in the Caribbean" (2009 to 2010), this project is expected to have an impact at both regional and country levels. Jamaica's national machinery will participate along with multi-sectoral partners. Advisory teams will function at national and regional levels

(c) Strengthening of gender focal points by building their capabilities through gender training, the development of guidelines regarding their duties and responsibilities, drawing on the work that Belize has done in producing a Gender Focal Points' Handbook, and providing information on government's gender commitments

(d) Reinforcing project and programme partnerships with government and non-governmental organizations in order to facilitate its gender and development programme, including work on the issue of sexual harassment utilizing methodologies such as drama to explore this gender issue

Suriname plans to focus on its weak GMS that is attributed to:

(a) Gender Focal Points not having clear job descriptions, not understanding their roles and not being able to influence policy in their respective government ministries

(b) Lack of gender-based/sex disaggregated data, and

(c) Only moderate levels of collaboration with other relevant gender stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations/civil society.

Therefore, future plans will:

(a) Strengthen the GMS;

(b) Set up a gender database to be able to carry out gender analyses on sex specific data and gender-sensitive indicators;

(c) Conduct updated situational analyses on women as a means of monitoring gender equality and provide a source of reliable data for policymaking.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' priorities for the future are social empowerment through a focus on community and family, national mobilization, social protection, building capacity and social justice through legal reform. The further actions are:

- (a) Social developmental spaces for children and males at risk
- (b) Targeted strategic intervention, including economic empowerment, and
- (c) Ongoing struggle against the discrimination and abuse of women.

Trinidad and Tobago has identified six priorities which are to:

- (a) Finalize the National Policy on Gender and Development and the accompanying Five-Year Action Plans
- (b) Improve the human and financial resources available to the Gender Affairs Division
- (c) Implement a comprehensive plan and programme for gender mainstreaming in government agencies
- (d) Facilitate rigorous public education and sensitization programmes on gender and development issues and gender-based violence
- (e) Develop a legislative reform agenda that includes Sexual Harassment, Equal Pay for Work of Equal value and Paternity Leave, and
- (f) Increase outreach and collaboration with non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and other actors regarding gender equality and equity.

III. CONCLUSION

Since 2005 the Caribbean subregion has witnessed a number of positive developments. The Beijing +15 synthesis report for Latin America and the Caribbean revealed a mixed record of progress in the journey to increase women's leadership and participation in decision-making both in public life and in Parliament.

The disparities in educational attainment in the subregion, is divided along gender lines, where the under achievement and under participation of males in the education systems continue to be a major challenge for policymakers.

Most Caribbean governments have employment policies which recognize the right to work, to equal conditions of work and to advancement, and to the fostering of positive attitudes towards the employment of women.

The majority of ECLAC member States¹ have labour legislation governing conditions of employment. Labour laws are seen as an important strategy for implementation of international standards governing the right to work, including those of ILO.

National gender policies are being given an increasingly important role in the quest for gender parity in politics and decision-making processes in the Caribbean as they seek to establish national positions that arise from international agreements. They serve as a guide for the development of policies across sectors and projects and programmes based on gender equity.

The gender policies which have been developed by the Governments of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Belize, the Cayman Islands and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago identify critical areas for attention and assign responsibilities for implementation. The Government of Barbados is in the process of developing gender policies.

¹ Antigua and Barbuda; The Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; The Commonwealth of Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Jamaica; St. Kitts and Nevis; Suriname; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.