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Seventh session of the Regional Conference on the Integration  
of Women into the Economic and Social Development  
of Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, Chile, 19-21 November 1997

**ACTIVITIES AT THE CARIBBEAN SUBREGIONAL LEVEL RELATING TO  
THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN  
FROM 1 JUNE 1994 TO 30 AUGUST 1997**

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The period under review spans the Caribbean subregional preparatory activities for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing—that is, the Caribbean Subregional Meeting Preparatory to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Curaçao, in June 1994, the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in September 1994, the Beijing Conference itself and the subregional follow-up meeting held in August 1997.

#### **A. Substantive servicing of intergovernmental meetings**

The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) organized and provided substantive servicing to the following meetings:

1. The Caribbean Subregional Meeting Preparatory to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, from 28 to 29 June 1994, and provided technical assistance to the NGO Forum held parallel to the governmental meeting from 27 to 29 June. The objectives of the subregional preparatory meeting were to:

a) Approve the Caribbean subregional report to be presented at the session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mar del Plata, Argentina, September 1994);

b) Consider the special issue papers which had been prepared; and

c) Discuss activities which needed to be undertaken at the national level.

Twenty Caribbean countries attended the meeting, twelve being represented at the ministerial level. Of those which attended, Anguilla and Turks and Caicos had not yet attained observer status in the CDCC. The meeting also drew many observers from the following United Nations organizations: the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the World Food Programme (WFP). The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was represented by Mr. Rudy Collins, Assistant Secretary-General, and a team of four advisers and resource persons. Special guests came from the British Development Division in the Caribbean.

The Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Ms. Gertrude Mongella, addressed the gathering at the formal closing and advised ministers present to come to Beijing with commitments from their Governments and from intergovernmental agencies to improve the status of women in specific areas; only

in that way could they prevent the World Conference from degenerating into an exchange of complaints or a "talk shop".

A parallel NGO forum, attended by approximately 100 women from the region, took place from 27 to 29 June 1994. A report of this meeting was presented at the governmental meeting.

2. The first teleconference of Caribbean subregional Governments (November 1994) in preparation for the meeting in follow-up to Mar del Plata, that is, the twentieth meeting of the Presiding Officers, of the Regional Conference, to be held in Santiago, Chile. Participants in the teleconference reviewed critical areas of interest to the subregion addressed at other international conferences and to be addressed at the Fourth World Conference on Women, discussed the status of preparations at the national level and made recommendations to facilitate the Caribbean subregion's preparations for the World Conference.

3. The second teleconference of the Caribbean subregion in preparation for the thirty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women Meeting and the final meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women (March-April 1995).

4. The UNIFEM/CARICOM/ECLAC retreat on conference diplomacy and negotiations held in Barbados from 17 to 19 July 1995. Governments were provided with an opportunity to make final preparations for negotiations at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

5. The seventh meeting of the Monitoring Committee on 14 July 1995 in Tobago. Member Governments were updated on preparatory activities undertaken in the region as of June 1995 by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

6. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Follow-up Actions to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Port of Spain on 25 October 1995.

7. The eighth meeting of the ECLAC/CDCC Monitoring Committee held in Port of Spain on 21 and 22 March 1996.

8. The Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Poverty Eradication held from 28 October to 1 November 1996, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

9. The CARICOM/ECLAC/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 Social and Economic Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, Georgetown, Guyana, from 6 to 8 August 1997. The objectives of the meeting were: a) to arrive at a Caribbean position on the two themes which will be discussed at the seventh session of the Regional Conference for the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean; and b) to arrive at a consensus, called the Georgetown Consensus, which would direct the work of the Governments over the period until the year 2000.

The meeting was attended by 74 participants from 16 ECLAC/CDCC member countries, 10 of which were represented at the ministerial level (two ministers represented the Government of Suriname). Participants included directors of bureaux of women's affairs in the respective countries; the current Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Sharon Haylock, Chargé d'affaires; the mission of the Bahamas to

the United Nations; representatives of eight United Nations agencies; a representative of the University of the West Indies Gender Studies Department; 13 non-governmental organizations from across the region; five resource persons and CARICOM and ECLAC personnel. Delegations from some countries included chief economists in ministries of planning or personnel responsible for macro-level social planning, since an important issue for discussion at the meeting was the notion of gender mainstreaming, and gender planning was viewed as a central component.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat provided substantive servicing for the following meetings:

1. The sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, from 25 to 29 September 1994, and the follow-up meeting held in Santiago, Chile, in November 1994.
2. The twenty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago, Chile, on 3 and 4 July 1995. The secretariat also organized a Caribbean caucus on Sunday, 2 July 1995, prior to the meeting of the Presiding Officers.
3. Meetings of CARICOM mission staff in New York regarding CARICOM positions in preparation for informal consultations on the draft Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women (New York, 28 July 1995). The secretariat also provided substantive advice and servicing to ECLAC/CDCC member Governments during the informal consultations in New York (31 July-4 August 1995) on the draft Platform for Action.
4. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held from 4 to 15 September 1995, to the ECLAC/CDCC member Governments in attendance.

### **B. Organization and substantive servicing of expert meetings**

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat organized and provided substantive servicing for the following meeting of experts:

1. The expert group meeting on gender planning held on 16 and 17 July 1997, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. ECLAC/CDCC, in collaboration with the Gender Equity Fund, which is a gender specific programme of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), convened the meeting to ensure the successful implementation of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action, with specific reference to gender mainstreaming. The objective of the meeting was to discern how to integrate the gender planning process into the national planning process. Participants included representatives from the social and economic planning divisions of selected Governments in the subregion and from academic and non-governmental sectors in the region.

### C. Non-recurrent publications

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat produced the following publications:

1. Achieving social justice, equality, peace and development: a review of the status of women of the Caribbean subregion in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995 (LC/CAR/G.442), Port of Spain, 31 January 1995. Presentation to the Governments in attendance at the retreat to consider the draft Platform for Action and reaffirm the Caribbean negotiating positions for the Fourth World Conference on Women.
2. Working document No. 1 in preparation for the informal consultations on the draft Platform for Action conducted from 31 July to 4 August 1995.
3. Caribbean position on clustering of bracketed elements in the Platform for Action - a guide for negotiations at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. Presentation to donor agencies and Governments at the request of CARICOM, organized by the ambassadors of Belize and Suriname, during the Fourth World Conference on Women, Thursday, 7 September 1995.
5. Building consensus - from the Commonwealth Plan of Action to the United Nations Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Presentation to the Commonwealth ministers responsible for women's affairs on 3 September 1995, in Beijing, China, just prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women.
6. Activities at the Caribbean subregional level in relation to the Fourth World Conference on Women. Presentation to the United Nations bodies and intergovernmental agencies in attendance at the inter-agency meeting on follow-up activities to the Fourth World Conference on Women.
7. Report on outcomes of FWCW and possibilities for follow-up in the Caribbean.
8. Discussion notes on the question of strategic planning for the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace.
9. An investigative study on women and the micro-enterprise sector in the Bahamas (working paper). Based on a joint technical mission conducted by ECLAC/CDCC and the ILO regional office for the Caribbean.
10. Activities at the Caribbean subregional level in relation to the Fourth World Conference on Women (LC/CAR/G.457), Port of Spain, 29 December 1995.
11. Poverty eradication and female-headed households (FHH) in the Caribbean (Pov/96/2), 18 October 1996. A paper prepared and presented to the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication, held from 28 October to 1 November 1996, at the Trinidad Hilton Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.
12. Actions for poverty eradication in the Caribbean: arriving at a consensus (Pov/96/1), 18 October 1996. A paper prepared and tabled at the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication, held from 28 October to 1 November 1996, at the Trinidad Hilton Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

13. Proposal to integrate gender planning into national development plans. Paper prepared by consultant Sonja T. Harris for the Women in Development Unit of ECLAC/CDCC for presentation at the CARICOM/ECLAC/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, held in Georgetown, Guyana, from 6 to 8 August 1997.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat made the following presentations:

1. On the future work of ECLAC/CDCC, on a panel organized by the regional commissions on the theme, "Beyond Beijing", during the second week of the Fourth World Conference on Women.
2. On a review of the incidence and characteristics of violence against women in the Caribbean, as reported in the national reports prepared for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to Governments of the subregion in attendance at the meeting organized by the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (OAS/IACW) held in Port of Spain on 25 October 1995.
3. On gender planning to Governments in attendance at the UNIFEM/OAS/CIM/CARICOM meeting in follow-up to Beijing held in collaboration with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, on 26 and 27 October 1995 in Port of Spain.
4. On poor female-headed households and housing, at a housing seminar organized by the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as part of regional preparations for Habitat II, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 9 April 1996. Participants were Caribbean journalists, housing experts and members of the Caribbean community working in the area of settlements.
5. On the elimination of violence against women, as part of a panel on the elimination of violence against women, at a seminar on urban crime and violence hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in collaboration with the Government of Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro in March 1997.
6. On strategies to increase women's participation in decision-making, as part of a panel at a workshop on engendering local government hosted by the Government of Saint Lucia and the Commonwealth Secretariat in Saint Lucia in June 1997.

#### **D. Technical material**

1. The development and design of an electronic database of initiatives for poverty eradication and equity-building in Trinidad and Tobago patterned on the United Nations social development matrix (September 1996).

### **E. Operational activities**

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat provided advice and technical assistance as follows:

1. To the Governments of the subregion in the preparation of national reports on the status of women for the Fourth World Conference on Women held in September 1995.
2. To the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, New York, in drafting the Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women (New York, December 1994). This enabled the secretariat to better advise Governments in the subregion.
3. To the Haitian Ministry of Women's Affairs, in collaboration with UNICEF, Haiti Office (23-26 April 1996), regarding establishment of mechanisms for the implementation of the Platform for Action and a study on poor female-headed households.
4. To the Government of Suriname as part of a joint ECLAC/UNDP mission (6-8 May 1997) concerning elaboration of a poverty matrix. During that mission explored the needs of the Suriname Bureau of Women's Affairs in their follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.
5. To the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis regarding follow-up to the Platform for Action and the development of a national plan of action (10-12 July 1996).
6. To the Minister Extraordinaire with responsibility for Tobago Affairs of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, in relation to the orientation of regional officers on sustainable human development and the eradication of poverty with special concern for gender issues (August/September 1996).
7. To the Ministry of Women's Affairs of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago regarding the establishment of mechanisms for the implementation of the Platform for Action (third quarter 1996).
8. To the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis to provide training and orientation to senior executives of the Saint Kitts and Nevis public sector in the area of gender mainstreaming. The workshop was supported by the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis through assistance provided by the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Commonwealth Secretariat (December 1996).
9. To the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, with UNIFEM support, in their development of a national plan of action for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (January 1997).
10. To the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, supported by UNIFEM, on the development of the country's first report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (June 1997).

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat participated in the following meetings:

1. A series of meetings and teleconferences with UNDP regarding the establishment of a database on poverty alleviation and equity-building initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago (April, May, June 1996). Dissemination of 1,000 copies of a questionnaire to collect data for the development of a poverty eradication/equity-building matrix as part of a joint UNDP/ECLAC project with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

2. A meeting organized by CARICOM to review the CARICOM Plan of Action, held in Barbados, in June 1996.
3. A seminar organized by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to discuss the logistics of the CIDA gender equity fund in the Caribbean, held in Port of Spain, on 5 July 1996.
4. The twenty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Port of Spain, in November 1996.
5. The twenty-fourth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference, held in Mexico City, on 27 and 28 May 1997.