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Agricultural Transformation

and

Gender Considerations

in

Caribbean Economies

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Acronyms

AoA	- Agreement on Agriculture
CARDI	- Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development institute
CARICOM	- The Caribbean Community ¹
CARIFORUM	- CARICOM plus Haiti and the Dominican Republic
CDB	- Caribbean Development Bank
CET	- Common External Tariff
CSME	- Caribbean (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy
DES	- Dietary Energy Supply
ECLAC	- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	- European Union
FAO	- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSA	- Farming Systems Approach
GATT	- General Agreement on Tariff and Trade
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
IDB	- Inter-American Development Bank
IICA	- Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture
IPR	- Intellectual Property Right
OECS	- Organization of Eastern Caribbean States ²
S&DT	- Special and Differential Treatment
SPFS	- Special Programme for Food Security
UNIFEM	- United Nations Fund for Women
UR	- Uruguay Round
USA	- United States
WTO	- World Trade Organization

¹ comprising Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

² comprising Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands (both British colonies) are associated member States of the OECS.

Preface

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the gender and social disparities existing in the agricultural and rural sector in Caribbean economies. In this context, agricultural transformation as occasioned by the dismantling of preferential trading arrangements is analysed to identify the most relevant gender discriminatory measures in the current agricultural development policy and programmes. The analysis seeks to provide the basis for enhancing understanding among policy makers, planners and rural development practitioners of the gender and social dimension involved in the formulation of agricultural policy and more specifically in relation to the new policy and institutional arrangements for agriculture in the region. The paper also provides insights regarding what changes should take place to create an enabling environment for more gender-based approaches to policy-making and strategic planning in agricultural development and trade in the Caribbean.

The methodology centred on the review of secondary sources that provide references on the new challenges, opportunities and constraints faced by the agricultural sector, in particular small farmers, in the context of globalization and agriculture transformation. Much of the literature for this assignment was obtained from FAO Headquarters in Rome and the FAO Subregional Office in Barbados, as well as the OECS Secretariat in St. Lucia. In the process of the review exercise, due consideration was given to changes in agricultural production patterns, resources allocation and rural livelihoods. Efforts to examine the most relevant policy measures and mechanisms in-place in support to agricultural development in the region were constrained, in the main, by the absence of gender disaggregated data. Documentation as regards the situation of women and men in relation to agricultural labour, rural income and food security situation in regions were limited. The use of the internet served to bridge the communication gap between countries and institutions.

The preliminary draft of the paper was presented and discussed at the FAO/ECLAC/UNIFEM regional workshop on mainstreaming gender analysis in agriculture and trade policies, for Caribbean countries, in November 2003. The second draft of the paper was informed by comments from the workshop and additional information acquired through field visits to Barbados, St. Kitts and St. Vincent in March 2004. The three day visits to each of these three countries entailed a review/appreciation of the resource, constraints and institutional capacities for gender mainstreaming within the agricultural sector at the national level. This included visits to some of the major agricultural projects and interviews with farmers (where feasible) in respect of their perspective of the current situation of the agricultural sector and the viability of their farm enterprises. As well, meetings were held with relevant/available officials within the respective ministries of agriculture to discern the gender consideration as regards agricultural policy and planning at the country level.

The internet was invaluable to the task of sourcing supplementary information to satisfy the aim of the paper; in respect of the identification of concrete policy measures and actions to formulate and develop more gender/social-responsive agricultural development policies. The final revision, though thwart with resource and communication constraints, was ultimately completed in compliance with the structure and approach proposed in the terms of references for this FAO/ECLAC assignment.

The author is very grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the furtherance of gender mainstreaming in the agricultural sector in the Caribbean, through the preparation of this paper. A challenging but appreciative experience!

Rufina Paul (BSc. M.A.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The challenges posed by the movement towards globalization and trade liberalization have impacted most forcefully on the agricultural sector in the majority of Caribbean economies. The previous exclusion of agriculture from international trade negotiations and the heavily protected nature of the markets for agricultural products have, over the years, encouraged high levels of inefficiency and the flourishing of highly uncompetitive agricultural production systems. Thus, in order to guarantee the sustainability of Caribbean economies, the low-input, low productivity and high cost agricultural sector within the region must be transformed into a technologically appropriate and trade-efficient sector, with due recognition and consideration of the rights and responsibilities of individuals at all levels.

In this regard, trade liberalization imperatives have brought a new reality to Caribbean agriculture and countries in the region have all embarked on the implementation of economic diversification policy measures. As the economic case for trade liberalization focuses on the lowering of trade barriers and the emergence of free trade within a global market place; there is a strong call for the reallocation of the factors of production to achieve comparative advantage and international competitiveness within agriculture. Enhanced factor productivity is indispensable to the process removing comparative disadvantage within agricultural production and marketing systems in the Caribbean.

The trade-driven market failures within the Caribbean have been due in large measure to the countries' lack of preparedness to undertake the reforms necessary for improved agricultural production and marketing efficiencies. While the current process of trade liberalization poses a threat to the viability of the traditional agricultural sub sector in the Caribbean, it also presents opportunities for the development of new and emerging commodities and markets. Faced with internal social problems of equity and un/under-employment, coupled with externalities such as market access and stability, the agricultural sector in the Caribbean has undergone significant changes with respect to structure and content.

In the face of these daunting economic and social challenges, the Caribbean region recognizes the need for a policy environment that supports the development and implementation of strategies geared towards poverty reduction and "growth with equity". With the majority of Caribbean households dependent on rural and agricultural systems for livelihood, the impact of trade-driven market failures on the sustainability of agriculture is indeed a major challenge to the social and economic integrity of Caribbean countries. Caribbean economies have engaged in a limited way, programmes designed to increase investment within the agricultural sector. Such investments have favoured capital intensive export oriented agricultural production, with limited focus on food security and sovereignty in the region.

In the anxiety to capitalize and commercialise the agricultural sector, Caribbean Governments continually negate the contribution of the informal sector and the subsistence mode of (re)production to the sustainability of livelihoods within the rural and agricultural sector. The informal sector earnings are arguably the most significant portion of the full income of rural farm households in the Caribbean. Simply seeking to integrate markets will not benefit the region.

Fundamentally, there is the need for the mainstreaming the informal sector and the domestic reproductive systems.

The development of the market economy has inevitably encouraged the socialization of the work of men and the domestication of that of women. The socio-cultural and economic contradictions at the farm household level parallel the ambiguity in the definition of economic and non-economic worth and the undervaluing of the real contribution of, particularly rural women, to agricultural development and economic prosperity. The traditional system of national accounting, which depicts the status quo within the market or formal sector of these economies, has generally resulted in domestic capital formation and human resource development in Caribbean agriculture being beneficial to a few and detrimental to many. For genuine development to be realized, due attention must be paid to gender dimension of the agricultural transformation process in Caribbean economies. In this context, the correlation between female gender work, forgone earning, subsistence agriculture, the informal sector and poverty begs for in-depth analysis and redress.

The first step towards a gender-responsive developmental framework is the facilitation of an adequate information system to guide the development of policies and programmes within the sector. Such reconceptualization calls for the adoption of non-traditional information capture procedures such as time-budget research, along with the analysis of the relations of production and a genderised logical framework approach to project cycle analysis. The internalization of the concepts of equity and fairness is fundamental to the process of gender-based planning for agricultural development in the Caribbean.

The analysis of the social systems and the rights and responsibilities of individuals within the system is essential to the gender analysis approach. In this regard, the decision-making structure and policy development mechanisms need to be transformed with the active participation of those so affected. In this context, traditional “top-down” and inherently elitist styles of development administration have little relevance. For instance, as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) moves towards the establishment of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), market access as pioneered by principally women engaged in the huckster (higgler) trade must inform the process of policy formulation for free trade in the region. Limiting the theorizing about free trade to issues of tariffication and related formal market access imperatives are largely unrealistic and will inevitably result in market failures, declining agricultural income and the intensify the poverty within rural farm households.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Economic globalization and trade liberalization

The challenges posed by the movement towards globalization and trade liberalization have impacted most forcefully on the agricultural sector in the majority of Caribbean economies. The lessons of the past decade suggest that the thrust towards the globalization of the market has, in the main, resulted in the globalization of market failures.

Caribbean economies were integrated into the international trading system, as an appendage of a colonizing Europe. Prior to the 1980s, agriculture was excluded from international negotiations within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)¹. The preferential trading arrangement² which flourished during that era contributed to the growth and modernization of the commercial and export oriented segment of the agricultural sector in the region. Such protected marketing arrangements have stunted the growth and development of the domestic capacity required to respond adequately to the dictates of the competitive global market-place.

The three binding commitments of World Trade Organization (WTO)³ member governments are to substantially reduce support and protection in: (1) market access, (2) domestic support and (3) export subsidies. Since the mid-1990s, Caribbean economies have been pushed to introduce market harmonization measures in order to achieve compliance with the free trade principles of the WTO by the turn of the twenty-first century. Within the ambit of the WTO, the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)⁴ represents a fundamental change in the way agriculture is treated in the rules governing international trade. In pursuing WTO compliant policy measures, Caribbean agriculture must therefore transcend the structural dependence on single commodities, by pulling away from the paradoxical rapture of 'no rule situation' on access to the international market.

In seeking to ensure their comparative advantage and competitiveness, due account must be taken of how the social relations of gender influence the structure of demand and the supply responses in the market place. It is generally recognized that women are more vulnerable to the adjustment pressures and economic shocks occasioned by shifts in the market equilibrium. However, their behaviour and influence on the eventual direction of the changing "trade winds" have generally been ignored. Significant academic research has convincingly argued that neglecting gender in policy eventually leads to market failure. These failures are the consequence of benign neglect of the dialectic relationship between gender differentiated labour in production for use and for exchange in the market place.

As the economic case for trade liberalization focuses on the lowering of trade barriers and the emergence of free trade within a global market place; there is a strong call for the reallocation of the factors of production to achieve comparative advantage and international competitiveness within agriculture. However, the previous exclusion of agriculture from international trade negotiations and the heavily protected nature of the markets for agricultural products encouraged high levels of inefficiency and the flourishing of highly uncompetitive agricultural production systems.

The trade-driven market failures within the Caribbean have been due in large measure to the countries' unpreparedness to undertake the reforms necessary for improved agricultural production and marketing efficiencies in the short to medium term. Thus, if Caribbean economies are to assume a competitive posture, the agricultural sector must replace its predominantly low-input, low productivity and high cost systems of production with technologically appropriate and trade-efficient mechanisms.

In this regard, due emphasis will need to be placed on the development and use of effective policy instruments in the areas of investment and trade in agriculture. Additionally, social and institutional reform policies must seek to deepen the process of participatory democracy. With the majority of Caribbean households dependent on rural and agricultural systems for livelihood, the impact of trade-driven market failures on the sustainability of agriculture is indeed a major challenge to the political, social and economic stability of Caribbean countries.

Governments in the region are becoming increasingly aware that with limited natural and financial resources, the most valuable resource is the people. The livelihood systems and survival mechanisms that continue to support the reproductive economy and the advancement of Caribbean people still reside, to a large extent, in the cultural, political economic and social (informal) institutions that operate in rural communities in the region. In this context, rural people in the Caribbean and particularly the resilient and resourceful women must be seen as playing a pivotal role in the transformation of Caribbean societies.

Thus, in seeking to establish WTO compliant procedures and practices, the influence of the social relations of gender on the supply/demand responses in the market must be duly recognized and taken into account. There is therefore an urgent need to alter perceptions and behaviours and to recognize that the although women's indigenous knowledge, skills and wisdom have been excluded from mainstream macro-level policy making, they exert tremendous power and influence at the micro, community and household levels. As such, though marginalised and unrecognized, women's informal systems and survival strategies dictate and significantly impact on the process and outcomes of regional and national policies and plans in the Caribbean.

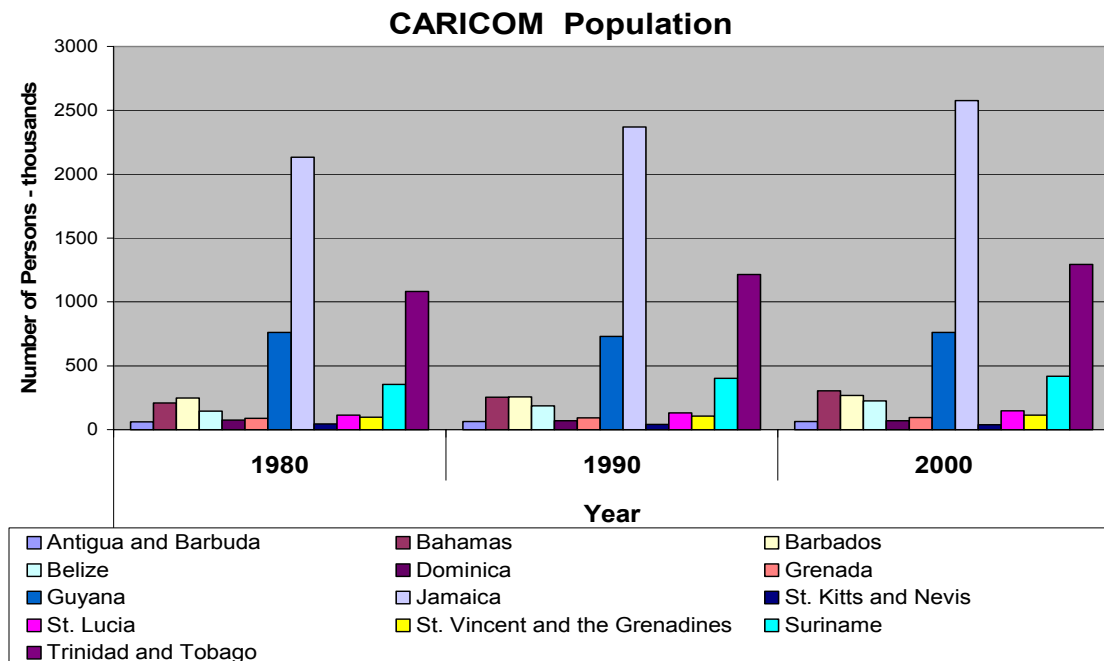
1.2 The challenges for Caribbean agriculture

Over the last three decades the growth of the population in each of the CARICOM members has contributed to increased pressure on the limited natural and financial resources available for the sustenance of their national economies, institutions of governance as well as household livelihood systems. As evident from Figure 1, Guyana and Suriname are the least populated of the Caribbean countries. However, the inaccessibility of the hinterland in these continental countries has caused the population to be restricted to limited settlement areas. The population density in the inhabited areas predisposes the mainland countries to socio-political and economic pressures similar to those faced by island Caribbean economies.

Caribbean countries, except for Belize, Guyana and Suriname on the Central and South American mainland, are all small island States. In the face of fragile ecosystems as well as vulnerable and open economies, Caribbean economies are challenged to engage in meaningful collaborative efforts, gaining strength and innovation in numbers. Such integration is indeed

indispensable to the process of increasing national and regional level capacities for sustainable agricultural development

Figure 1



Data Source: Regional Special Programme for Food Security (RSPFS) in Member Countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) CARIFORUM, FAO, 2002

The movement of Caribbean economies away from agriculture and towards tourism accelerated in the 1980s. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council⁵, travel and tourism will make an extraordinary contribution to the Caribbean over the next 10 years, with annual growth rate in demand and employment estimated at 4 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively. The transition to a tourism and services based economy is resulting in the net transfer of resources from agriculture and rural households to the emerging sectors, primarily tourism.

According to the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)⁶, in 2004, tourism was the main driving force, supported by construction and to a lesser extent financial services, manufacturing and agriculture. These developments occurred within the context of only slightly higher inflation levels, as the effects of rising oil prices appeared to have been limited. The CDB publication [No.1/05] further states that agricultural production, which has been declining in recent years, showed improvement in 2004. This was largely on the basis of an expansion in the production of the region's main commodities, namely sugar and bananas.

The agriculture and tourism sectors are however highly susceptible to price and demand fluctuations of the international market. Despite many difficult fundamentals, economic performance remained relatively buoyant. However, most Caribbean countries remain challenged to improve their global competitiveness ranking, which is well below expectation.

The low competitiveness ranking of Caribbean economies results from deficiencies in the macro-economic environment and, more importantly, from the low level of institutional and technological capacity for innovation, change and competition.

As shifts in the global economy demands competitiveness within the agricultural sector; the necessity for low-skilled and inefficient producers is tapering. However, over the years, the transformation of agriculture in the Caribbean has been characterized by the divestment of large estates into small farms, which are managed, in the main, by resource-poor farm families/households. Ostensibly, the small farm households, whose production is mainly for own use and limited trade, appear to have a high degree of resilience and capacity to survive on the margins of an increasing liberalized and competitive international market place.

In the context of globalization and the practice of development financing, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)⁷ has concluded that Caribbean countries have little time to adjust to the loss of the preferences that have sustained traditional export agriculture. As such, the diversification and integration of income sources within the rural and agriculture sphere of economic activity remains a major challenge for Caribbean economies. Further the IDB proposes that services provide the best opportunity for diversification, except in a special case such as Trinidad and Tobago that also has an attractive natural resource endowment.

The Caribbean is therefore challenged to create an innovative and competitive economic region. Such innovation can be derived from the population doing new things, as well as from doing old things better. This culture of innovation and competitiveness requires a population that can utilize available capital, knowledge and technology in a cost effective manner. Women's labour, their time, their resourcefulness and their wisdom have traditionally helped societies in the region to survive and prosper. Increasingly women are becoming engaged in the productive economy, while still holding principal responsibility for the reproductive economy.

The trend towards an increased female proportion of the active population becoming gainfully employed in the services industry, signals the crossing over of women into the expanding formal services sector of the economy. A cautionary note, however, is that this seeming positive trend can be eroded if there is insufficient opportunity for deepening women's skills and knowledge base. Thus, in order to mitigate the failures of the past and the further exploitation of female labour, traditional approaches to technological and economic change must give way to democratic and gender-sensitive approaches. By so doing, the full potential of women and men in the region will be actualized and the people will assume ownership of the process of development and change in the region.

1.3 Gender and Caribbean agriculture

The new international economic order is characterized by emerging mega-trading blocs and the facilitation of free trade, by the lowering of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. As the world moves towards the elimination of trade barriers and the creation of an integrated global market, the adage "trade not aid" has assumed new relevance for developing economies. In this context, the Caribbean countries are particularly challenged to counteract the adverse impacts of the change process on the socio-economic landscape of their fragile and open economies.

In the colonial and the immediate post-independence periods, up to the 1970s, agriculture was the main engine for the growth and development of Caribbean economies. In this regard, agriculture has been a principal contributor to gross domestic earnings and employment in the Caribbean. Up until the 1950s, Caribbean economies were overwhelmingly agricultural. The history of development within Caribbean economies points to the insurgence of development policies that favoured plantation-based, export agriculture. Research studies indicate that it was mainly the men and not the women that provided the labour on these plantations, for cash crop production.

The emphasis on expansion of the large scale production of export commodities such as bananas, sugar-cane, cocoa, rice and nutmeg served to exacerbate the gender-based disparities within the agricultural sector. Such systems of commodity production have proved discriminatory to women in agriculture. As well, policy initiatives in this regard have tended to emphasize the generation and transfer of technologies suited to better endowed regions, large commercial enterprises and the export agriculture sub sector. The link between technology transfer and gender, though not sufficiently evaluated, is recognized to have impacted negatively on women's capacity to participate and benefit equitably from mainstream agricultural development pursuits in the Caribbean.

Women's access and control of technology appears to be conditioned by socio-cultural norms regarding women's roles, mobility, male-female interactions as well as the nature and scope of the service delivery systems employed by the various agricultural development agencies in the region. The lack of sufficient female personnel, particularly within the ministries of agriculture in the region, is regarded as a constraint to improving the delivery of agricultural services to women. This is premised on the notion that many male extension agents inadvertently fulfil their obligations to female farmers with token efforts or gestures.

In this milieu, households primarily dependent on women for the generation of sustainable livelihoods have been particularly disadvantaged. The question then is: to what extent has the quality of life of the majority of female-headed households in the Caribbean been negatively impacted by this apparent neglect or oversight. The neglect and oversight of the subsistence agriculture became evident in the 1970s when the development experience of the preceding decades was reviewed. Research studies initiated during the International Decade for Women (1976 – 1985) brought out realities of the sexual division of labour and the disparities in respect of access and control over the resources and benefits of the economic growth and modernization era of the 1950s and 1960s.

The ultimate effect has been the neglect of the small scale subsistence realm of the agricultural sector, which is the 'economic' niche of rural women. In addition to the exacerbation of the gender-based disparities in agriculture, the strong priority to growth - which is fuelled by the need for the generation of foreign exchange - also resulted in tremendous resource gaps. Such realization engendered a redefinition of development in favour of growth with equity.

The integrated rural development policies of the 1970s and 1980s provided scope for a focus on the small scale/subsistence segment of the agricultural sector where women have traditionally concentrated. This demonstration of sensitivity to the female dimension of the development process facilitated some degree of policy reform in the sector. Emphasis was placed on the

design and implementation of agricultural programmes and projects oriented towards enhancing women's access and control over the resources and benefits of the development process. In this milieu, opportunities were also presented for crossing over into the commercial export-oriented segment of the agricultural sector.

In seeking to enhance women's productive capacity, these initiatives failed to take due account of women's overburden in relation to reproductive concerns related to the nurturing of the labour force and family/household livelihood systems. According to Evers⁸, women are an over-utilized not an underutilized resource and despite women's central role in agricultural production, the sector is characterized by sharp gender-based asymmetries and gender biases.

By incorporating the lessons of the previous decades, the Farming Systems Approach (FSA) of the 1980s, implemented by the Caribbean Research and Development Institute (CARDI), sought to integrate low-resource regions and households in the process of agricultural transformation. However, the FSA did little to bring to the fore the "invisible" contribution of rural women and an appreciation of the female-male social relations of (re)production at the intra- and inter-household levels. Further initiatives in this regard failed to acknowledge the degree to which the economic growth is heavily subsidized by the unpaid labour of rural women and reproductive / subsistence activity within the informal sector.

In the 21st century, there is the misguided notion that trade liberalization will effect growth and that resource-poor households, which are mainly in rural areas and controlled by women, will benefit and prosper. In the context of Caribbean economies, the agricultural sector is seriously challenged to adjust to the dictates of an increasing liberalized and competitive global trading environment. To be successful in this regard, the myths of the gender blind policies must be exploded and serious attention must be given to devising gender-aware strategies and remedies that will significantly improve the lives of women, men and children in the region.

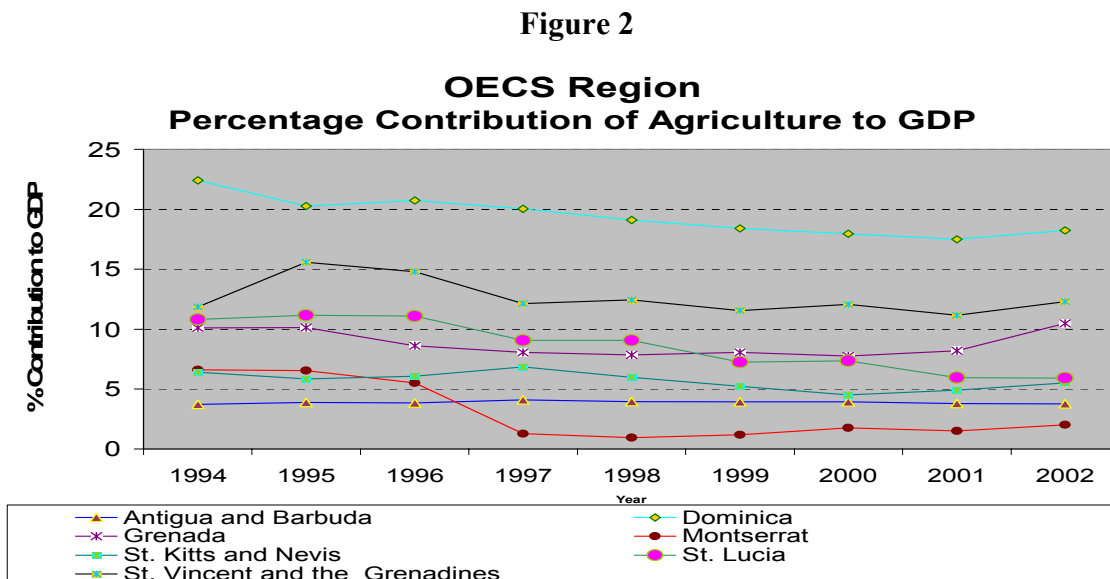
2. OVERVIEW OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

2.1 The performance of Caribbean agriculture

Overall, the agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP of the CARICOM region is 12 per cent, on average⁹. While the economic base of the Caribbean countries is agricultural, over the years, the contribution of the sector to GDP has been declining. Between 1995 and 2001, declines in the overall performance of traditional export commodities namely: banana, sugar, cocoa and nutmeg have contributed significantly to the continued decline in gross agricultural output of member states. This decline has been due largely to diseconomies of scale, the loss of preferential arrangements in an era of trade liberalization, the inefficiencies within the system of agricultural production and marketing and the attendant gender-based disparities which influence the attainment of competitiveness in agriculture.

The importance of agriculture to the economies of the member countries range from a low of less than 5 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago (an oil exporting country), to a high of over 30 per cent in Guyana. Within the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Dominica is the most heavily dependent on the agricultural sector for economic prosperity. Agriculture is also the main

provider of employment and income for the majority of people in rural areas and the bulk of agricultural management practices are carried out by women. For instance, in Guyana, agriculture provides employment for more than 25 per cent of the country's labour force and is a major source of livelihood for the majority of the rural people¹⁰.



Data Source: OECS Secretariat

Empirical evidence shows that Dominica continues to be one of the most heavily dependent on agriculture for the sustenance of economic progress. In the case of Montserrat, the onslaught of volcanic activity has severely affected the land area, as well as the labour force, available for agricultural activity. Prior to 1997, women outnumbered men, in respect of the agricultural labour force in Montserrat. As well, prior to the contraction of the banana and sugar industries. The proportion of women in the agricultural labour force outweighed that of men.

Domestic deficiencies; feeble agricultural policy framework; and poor institutional/sectoral networking proficiencies; have over the years, constrained the sector's capacity to effectively respond to the challenges of globalization. The survival of the small farms families/households in the Caribbean¹¹ hinges on their capacity to produce a variety of non-traditional agricultural commodities for home consumption and for sale. Non-traditional agriculture, though contributing marginally to the economic landscape, is indeed central to the livelihoods of small producers.

Over the last decade, the non-traditional commodities sub sector contributed a near 10 per cent, on average, to GDP. In Guyana, the percentage GDP contributions of the crops, fisheries and livestock sub sector were a mere 5, 3 and 2 per cent, respectively, during the period 1994 -2001. In 2002, the output of the agricultural sector in general improved, as most economies recovered from the effects of the drought in 2001¹². However in 2003, regional agricultural production is reported to have declined. According to the CDB, "production of other agricultural commodities was uneven, as output of land-based agriculture contracted, while the fisheries sub-sector turned

in a mixed performance”. In 2004, an expansion in the production of the principal export commodities, namely sugar and bananas, resulted in an increase in agricultural output in the region.

With respect to sugar, regional production is reported to have increased by approximately 1.9% in 2004 on the basis of increased output in Belize, Jamaica, and Guyana, while production contracted in Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. In 2003, sugar production among the English-speaking Caribbean’s main sugar producers was estimated at 0.7 tonnes, approximately 12 per cent below the level in 2002.¹³ Regional production of sugar increased by 5 per cent in 2002, notwithstanding lower levels of output in St. Kitts and Nevis¹⁴, Barbados and Jamaica.

In 2002, sugar output increases by 13.4 per cent and 11.6 per cent, in Guyana and Trinidad, respectively, more than compensated for the declines in the other three sugar-producing territories in CARICOM. The general improvement in production in 2004 following the decline in 2003 can be attributed to a successful replanting programme and improved factory and field efficiencies. Those countries with lower levels of output, namely Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago, suffered from a variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, a reduction in the acreage under cultivation, labour disputes and mechanical problems¹⁵.

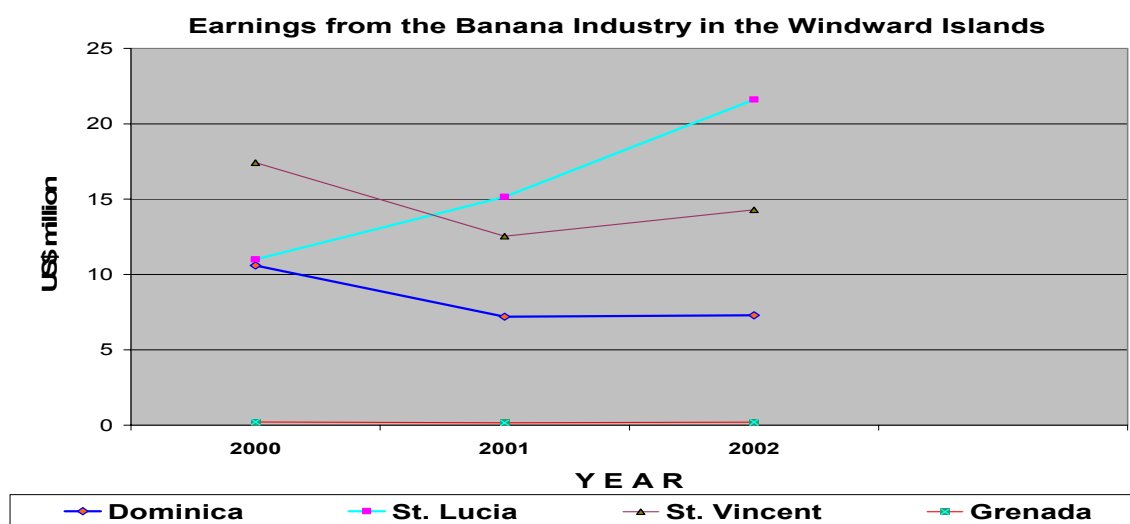
As regards bananas, the challenges to the sustainability of the banana industry continue. These included the dismantling of preferential trading arrangements, loss of market share, stagnating export prices and high production cost. Nonetheless, the output of banana marketing companies (BMC) in the region rose by 29.2 per cent in 2002. The most significant contributor to this increase was Belize where output surged by 69.6 per cent¹⁶ after devastation of banana fields by Hurricane Iris in September 2001. In Jamaica, the combined effect of excessive rainfall and the closure of a major banana company resulted in banana output reduction by 5.3 per cent in 2002 and 4.3 per cent in 2003.

In 2004, the increased performance of the agricultural sector within the OECS¹⁷ was due largely to the expansion in output of bananas in particular. Banana production in the OECS rose by approximately 18.9 per cent over the period January to November and by 11.8 per cent in Belize. In contrast, production contracted by 13.6 per cent in Jamaica for the first 10 months of 2004. Favourable weather conditions, better irrigation, the use of tissue culture plants and improved management of planting density all contributed to the rise in production, while in Jamaica, output was affected by the passage of Hurricane Ivan. Agricultural production was also boosted by an increase in livestock and marine production, with increased output levels recorded for mutton, beef, poultry, dairy, lobster and conch.

The fisheries sector in the OECS region operates at a level below its full potential.¹⁸ Through Japanese funding, much of the fisheries infrastructure in the OECS has been enhanced and the quantum of harvest consequently increased. However, the fisheries sub sector continues to be dominated by small scale, artisanal fishing, mainly for domestic consumption. In Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua-Barbuda, fisheries expansion has been significant and this has resulted in the exports of fish to North American markets.

Dominica and Grenada are the two countries in the region that have experienced significant economic downturn in recent times. In Dominica, agriculture's contribution to GDP decreased to 17.5 per cent in 2001. As evident from the following chart, the weakening of the country's economic performance was due in the main, to the dramatic decline in the performance of the banana industry in 2001. Notwithstanding a proportional decline in the performance of the banana industry in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the impact was not as devastating. Though purchasing power was affected, the banana income level did not fall below that required for non-discretionary expenditure.

Figure 3



Data Source: Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company (WIBDECO)

Prompted by the situation in Dominica, the CARICOM Heads of Government, in August 2002, agreed to the establishment of a Regional Stabilization Fund, a revolving source of fiscal and economic support designed to supplement stabilization and structural transformation assistance from traditional sources. This approach was intended to facilitate movement towards a programme of economic restructuring and transformation, focusing on improving the planning framework, upgrading physical and institutional infrastructure, increasing business investment and enhancing business competitiveness. According to the OECS, despite significant growth in the first three quarters of 2004, Dominica's economic growth forecast for 2004 had been cut from 2.6% to 2.4%, because of the earthquake and associated events, which occurred late in 2004¹⁹.

Prior to Hurricane Ivan in September 2004, the Grenadian economy was projected to grow by 4.7 per cent in 2004 and at an average rate of 5.0 per cent between 2005 and 2007. In 2002, Grenada's real output in the agricultural sector expanded by an estimated 10%, following a real contraction of 3.3% in 2001, because of severe drought. The improved performance reflected the higher output of nutmeg²⁰ and cocoa – the main traditional crops in 2002.²¹ An event such as Hurricane Ivan demonstrates the inherent vulnerability of Small Island Developing States.

2.2 CARICOM integration and gender

The 1989 decision by the 15-member CARICOM Heads to go beyond the Common Market process and work towards deepening integration and creating a single economic space has created opportunity for increased investments and employment. Jamaica's advantage of having the largest market in the English-speaking Caribbean is expected to bring the country many investment and employment opportunities when the CSME comes into full effect in mid-2005, following a deferment of the January 1, 2005 date for full implementation of the CSME regime.

Concerns continue to be expressed as regards the slow pace of consolidation of the regional integration movement. This has retarded the region's capacity to enhance factor mobility and create the pro-liberalization environment that is supportive of competitive trading. Notably, these initiatives all have implications for the dynamics of gender relations in respect of the re-arranging of the relations of power and access to resources between men and women. However, gender has not been a significant variable in the agenda setting and rule-making process. The substantive content of these initiatives are permeated by male-centred beliefs that are gender blind in orientation.

The effects of the free trade movement include a decline in government revenue due to decreased tariffs, increased supply of cheaper imports and an emphasis on export promotion, of especially agricultural products. In respect of the establishment of the Common External Tariff (CET) regime, many Caribbean countries had already converted non-tariff barriers to tariffs before the conclusion of the Uruguay Round (UR), as part of their domestic economic reforms. Inadvertently this had the effect of limiting their use of special safeguards which were an option in those countries where new tariffs were imposed during the UR. Within the context of the WTO, Caribbean countries are among those that suffered from lack of access and unstable world market and as such should benefit from the stricter rules on agricultural trade policy.

The initiatives undertaken by CARICOM countries in respect of both WTO and CSME imperatives are resulting in the scaling down of public expenditure and investments in health and other essential services, rural infrastructure, extension services and the removal of agricultural subsidies, especially in areas that do not promote the export crop expansion. These have inevitably impacted on the livelihoods of women and men in different ways. The social dimension of the various trading regimes therefore begs for an analysis of the different benefits, cost, challenges and constraints on women and men in the region. For example, there is need for a focus on the impact of import penetration on the domestic food market and the capacity of traditional food producers, mainly women, to accommodate the adjustment cost of these impending changes.

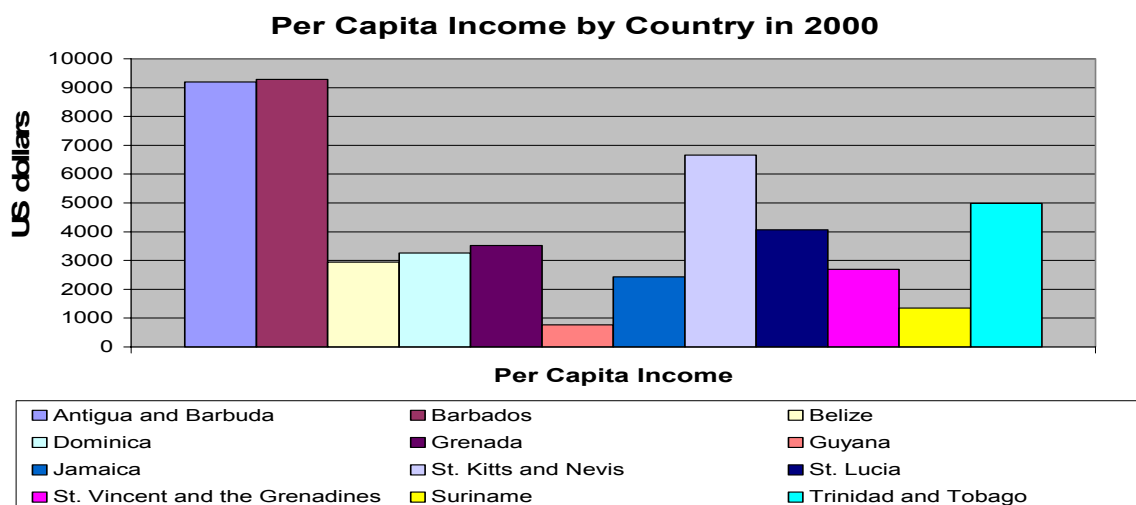
All these challenges are inevitably exacerbated by situations, in the region, where gender-based division of labour tends to be inflexible and where traditional survival mechanisms are being threatened by market penetration and agricultural trade reforms. With women concentrated in the sphere of domestic food production and the care economy, the adjustments so required will therefore place more burdens on them and the care economy. Such inevitability, lends support to the argument of developing countries for the addition of a development and/or food security box within the WTO framework.

The constraints on export subsidies are not likely to influence domestic policies, because few of the Caribbean countries have the resources or the need to subsidise exports. Attempts by developing states, including CARICOM, to challenge the level of exports subsidies on selected European Union (EU) and United States agricultural commodities have been unsuccessful. The reduction of export subsidies should over time cause increases in the (import) price of some imported agricultural products. This would in effect regulate cheap imports and effect a reduction in the incidents of dumped commodities depressing domestic market prices. In the long run, this may strengthen food security and production capacity enhancement measures, thus providing increased opportunities for sustaining rural livelihood systems.

There is the notion that trade and investment provides frontiers for integration, in a more relevant way, with the international economy. In the context of the CSME, the liberalization of external trade and investment regimes is expected to facilitate the increased flow of foreign direct investment and domestic capital. The resultant effect is expected to be productivity growth, product differentiation and process development. However there is no automatic link between trade liberalization, investment and growth. Growth is a function of income generation capacity, market access, as well as adjustment cost and resource availability.

The Framework for Establishing Modalities in Agriculture as contained in Annex 1 of the “July Package” provides some resolution of the impasse in trade negotiation around the issues of implementation and special and differential treatment (S&DT). The “July package”²² therefore takes due account of the difficulty of ensuring that trade liberalization inevitably results in economic prosperity for middle income, developing countries such as the member states of CARICOM. The per capita income of CARICOM countries in 2000 is illustrated in Figure 4. In negotiating a reasonable period for the phasing out of S&DT, CARICOM and other disadvantaged countries must seek to take account of the gender attributes that impact on access to capital, technology and other fundamentals for trade liberalization accompanied by socio-economic prosperity.

Figure 4



Data Source: Regional Special Programme for Food Security (RSPFS) in Member Countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) CARIFORUM, FAO, 2002.

For CARICOM member States, a central challenge is that of securing the requisite amount of capital for social reform and economic adjustment. A well functioning capital market is of benefit to all countries in the region. Efforts to remove legal constraints to the free movement of capital in the CARICOM region continue to be constrained by concerns relating to the possible effects of the maintenance of two different foreign exchange regimes in the region.²³ The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas²⁴ makes provisions for the establishment of a common currency; however no definitive action has been taken in this regard.

In seeking to strengthen the interdependence of CARICOM countries and deepen the integration of production process, such an agenda ignores the gender biases that lock women out of potential areas for expansion of investment opportunities and markets. Currently, only Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica have no restrictions on the movement of capital. Those countries that have restrictions are given some time to put in place measures that will allow the free movement of capital for CARICOM investors and temporary service providers who wish to remit their earnings. As regards the service sector, the trade in services regime²⁵ will effectively create opportunity for the free movement of labour within the CSME. However countries have been slow to implement measures designed to facilitate the free movement of certain categories of skilled persons.²⁶ Jamaica has, for some time now, established the Free Movement of CARICOM Skilled Persons Act. Not all member states have enacted related legislation, which should have been in place by July 2002.

Caribbean governments appreciate that in order to earn their keep in the international economy of the twenty-first century; they must wean themselves from the comfort of preferential trading arrangements and create space in the international market place. As part of efforts to accelerate the formation of the CSME, a CSME Implementation Unit was established in Barbados in 2002. This CSME Implementation Unit is charged with responsibility for developing the institution capacity to assist CARICOM members with the domestic programmes and activities in pursuit of the protocols governing the establishment of the CSME. These include the strengthening of regional arrangements to safeguard product quality. In this regard, a body on standards to be called the Caribbean Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality is to be established. As well, a Regional Competition Commission to govern competition among companies operating in CARICOM, and the Caribbean Court of Justice among the other regional entities to be established.

Further, as the region seeks to deepen internal integration through the creation of the CSME, trade diplomacy is recognized to have a role to play in fashioning appropriate and timely responses to international trade policy. The need for a common, coherent and coordinated external negotiating strategy for the Caribbean became manifest in the early 1990s. In recognition of the need to strengthen the institutional framework for trade negotiation, CARICOM Heads of Government took the decision, in July 1992, to create a Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM). The RNM operates from the standpoint that trade policy measures are universally beneficial and as such are gender blind in orientation and gender neutral in effect.

In the absence of an explicit gender-aware model for regional integration, there appears to be some commitment to linking gender mainstreaming objectives with the trade and export expansion agendas. Towards this end, the Caribbean Trade and Adjustment Project have a

component for the mainstreaming of the informal sector. It is anticipated that this initiative will provide the perquisites for a genderised information system to guide the process of agricultural transformation in the Caribbean. Such a platform will, in the medium to long term, facilitate the analysis of the differential impact and influence of gender roles and interactions on the implementation of policy and action within Caribbean economies.

Other undertakings within the framework of the Caribbean Trade and Adjustment project are provisions for revitalizing and improving the competitiveness of traditional agriculture. In this regard, priority is given to a Common Policy for Sugar, a Common Policy for Rice and the implementation of the EU Framework for Assistance to the Banana Industry. In the context of the revised Treaty, CARICOM must seek to harmonise economic policy instruments, as this relates to the incentive regimes and approaches towards the development of the agricultural, industrial and transportation sectors. A necessary first step in this regard, is the gender mapping of the institutions and agencies that influence the process of policy formulation and decision making at all levels.

2.3 The policy environment for Caribbean agriculture

Trade liberalization has, in fact, brought a new reality to Caribbean Agriculture. With the EU's traditionally preferential banana trading regime now being opened to competition and sugar markets also of questionable viability; the region's two principal export commodities – bananas and sugar - seem to be under siege. While the current process of trade liberalization poses a threat to the viability of the traditional agricultural sub-sector in the Caribbean, it also presents opportunities for the development of new and emerging commodities and markets.

In the face of these daunting economic and social challenges, the Caribbean region recognizes the need for a policy environment that supports the development and implementation of poverty reduction and growth with equity strategies. These initiatives undoubtedly serve to deepen the process of participatory democracy, particularly among the disproportionately poor segment of the population; most of whom live in the rural and interior²⁷ sections of these countries and are the least reliant on the cash economy for survival.

The provision of viable economic choices is perceived as the best option for reducing poverty, sustaining rural livelihoods and safeguarding the economies in the Caribbean region. In essence, the current situation calls for the integration of the rural and interior economies into the national socio-economic development framework. Success in this regard is therefore highly dependent on the growth and expansion of the “marginal” agricultural sub-sectors namely, non-traditional crops, fisheries and livestock. With the majority of the rural and agricultural population already experienced in the production and harvesting of non-traditional commodities, there exist tremendous potential for agricultural diversification and rural enterprise development.

The thrust towards the integration of the rural and interior economies with the national socio-economic developmental framework must capitalize on the strengths and endowments of the people in rural communities. Good practices that promote benefits for women and men from trade liberalization must start with trade and development co-operation programmes that have poverty alleviation and gender equity as explicit objectives. The mainstreaming of participatory and gender sensitive agricultural planning is indeed indispensable to the process of transforming

the sector in a manner that is compliant with the imperatives of globalization and trade liberalization.

As aforementioned, female gender roles and functions in agriculture and rural development are generally aligned to non-remunerative, non-economic, un-paid work and occur within the informal sector of the economy. The degree of dynamism in the informal sector is at variance with the situation in the formal or market segment of the economy. As such, the economic variables that measure progress and relative worth are derived from data sets that capture mainly male gender work. Consequently, the references that are used to guide the process of development are skewed in favour of the male gender in development and inadvertently negate the female gender.

The concept of agricultural development adopted by Caribbean governments has tended to equate development with industrial growth. Success in this regard is reflected in an increase in the rate of economic growth, measured in terms of changes in output or income per capita. Such economic modelling has guided Caribbean economies in the formulation and implementation of agricultural development initiatives. In this regard, major agricultural development policy instruments and strategies -which are considered to be essentially “green”- have tended to provide strong support for production and marketing, infrastructure development, capacity building among institutions and agencies, legislative reform and other related measures.

Such measures have, in the main, served to increase productivity, lower input costs and accelerate the accumulation of exchangeable surplus by externalizing the reproductive and regenerative costs inherent in these transactions. In this context, supremacy is given to the operations of the free market pricing system, with the presumption of efficient and effective resource allocation. However, in pursuing these policy initiatives, due attention has not been paid to the myriad of factors that affect the supply of, and demand for, women’s and men’s labour.

In the main, these economies remain dependent on the performance of the primary export sector. The overarching policy concern remains the extent to which Caribbean economies can meaningfully participate and reap sustained benefits in the mainstream of international economic relations. The failure to give adequate priority and resources to efforts at transforming the fundamental structure of import-intensive production is one of the major deficiencies of the policy environment for agricultural and rural development. With a tradition of special bilateral trading arrangements – bananas and sugar – the region is locked in a low-level trap; with limited value added agricultural products, restricted market growth and access, reliance on outdated imported technologies and limited skills development.

In a bid to increase international competitiveness, strategic policy measures, particularly those directed at productivity enhancement, have failed to adequately address the fundamentals of process innovation and product differentiation. Experience over the years has shown that foreign capital injection is not of itself the panacea for employment and trade in agriculture. It needs to be recognized and appreciated that social reproduction is the lifeblood of all economies. Women’s unpaid and undervalued labour in the household and community (national, regional or international), “is central to the process of accumulation and, along with natural resources, is the effective ingredient in the so-called ‘magic’ of the market,”²⁸

Caribbean economies have engaged in a limited way, programmes designed to increase investment and foreign exchange earnings within the agricultural sector. In many instances, the contribution of the informal sector or the subsistence mode of production to the sustenance of livelihoods has been negated. With due attention given to the quantification of the informal sector, the emergence of strategic and focused agricultural development initiatives will undoubtedly contribute to the design and implementation of gender-sensitive agricultural trade and investment policies in the region.

3. SOCIAL AND GENDER IMBALANCES

3.1 Modelling of economic development – *the missing female function*

The development strategy of the post colonial era effected the replacement of natural capital – land - by industrial capital, as the sine qua non for the advancement of Caribbean economies. Transformation of the plantation economy thus afforded the rural and agricultural sector a relatively passive role in the process of economic development. It needs to be argued however that industrialization has in effect poached on the rural and agricultural sector and the female function in the societies in order to flourish.

The process of industrialization has inevitably led to the erosion of the power base of women in agriculture and the economy at large. According to Lewis' Model - *Economic Development with Unlimited Labour Supply*, earnings in the subsistence sector sets the floor for wages in the capitalist sector. Ironically, the economic modelling in the growth through industrialization era - the immediate post-colonial period – presupposed subsistence agriculture.²⁹ Lewis' thesis was that the transfer of unlimited labour from the subsistence sector to the capitalist sector would facilitate expansion through the reinvestment of profits. Essentially the shift from land to capital as the prime resource base for development effected fundamental changes in the relations of production.

With the transforming of labour into a commodity that can be exchanged in the market place for another commodity – a wage, there emerged a differentiation of labour for use value and labour for exchange. Labour for use value is aligned to the subsistence mode of production and is fed back into the same system that produced it. The production and reproduction of the labour power required for the capitalist mode of production in the form of exchange value therefore relied on the subsistence mode of production for the “unlimited labour supply”; which provides the platform for Lewis' Model. In effect, the self sustaining capabilities of the rural and agricultural sector of the emerging economies were exploited in the pursuit of capital. In this process, the work associated with women and with reproduction – female gender work – was devalued as non-economic activity. It is argued that ideology and economics are the principal factors contributing to the devaluation of female gender work, which our societies have taken for granted, but cannot do without.

During the period of the green revolution in the 1960s, the technologies introduced into the agricultural sector served to further devalue the relevance and significant of female factor in rural and agricultural systems. It is documented that in most countries the Green Revolution would appear to have contributed to a lowering of the status of those women who are forced to seek

employment because the new techniques involve access to new expertise from which women are excluded [Ware, 1981, pp.22]³⁰. The thrust of the critique is the displacement of the female gender, with the introduction of new/improved technologies.

In the 1970s, with the review of the development experience of the previous two decades, one striking observation was that the benefits of development were not reaching the economically vulnerable and deprived segments of the society – particularly women. In fact the situation of particularly women in rural areas appeared to have worsened in most instances. Consequently in the 1970s, the development concept shifted to “growth with equity” rather than the previous focus on “economic growth and modernization. In this context the policy initiatives in agriculture were focused on integrated rural development. In the 1970s and 1980s attempts to redress the situation by way of a focus on women yielded limited benefits for the majority of women. Most of the benefits seemed to have accrued to women who assumed male gender roles, in the main. This highlights the viscous circle, wherein gender inequalities generates and perpetuates gender biases and asymmetries.

Export promotion, import liberalization and market access negotiations are the principal characteristics of the trade liberalization and agricultural policy reform process within the Caribbean. Such a process is associated with specific gender opportunities, constraints, challenges and threats around access to markets, capital, information, technology, labour and livelihood systems. Currently, in an effort to mitigate the negative economic impact of the WTO decision to dismantle preferential trading arrangements, the Caribbean countries have all embarked on the implementation of economic diversification measures which are viewed as gender blind in orientation and gender neutral in effect.

As a consequent of the diversion of scarce domestic and foreign resources to the emerging sectors of tourism and services, there is an increased level of competition for the countries' scarce resources of land, labour and capital. The expansion of the countries' economic base, principally in the areas of tourism, services and manufacturing, has contributed to the further de-capitalization of the agricultural sector and the instability of the rural economy. In this scenario, the phenomena of unemployment, poverty, urban sprawl, rural out-migration and crime escalate. These are indeed manifestations of the Caribbean societies' incapacity to cope effectively with emerging economic imperatives.

These negative impacts are the consequence of the region's inattentiveness to the social dimension of trade and investment mechanisms and pathways. Further, this reflects the inadequacy of the prevailing policy framework for trade liberalization and economic diversification in the region and the lack of the requisite institutional and infrastructural capacity to effectively cope with the emerging economic imperatives. It is generally assumed that these policies and programmes are gender neutral in formulation and impact. Consequently the importance placed of the unpaid (care) economy in the productive economy and in market activities continues to be underestimated. A clear picture of the linkages between trade liberalization, rural and agricultural transformation and gender can be seen through an analysis of the gender asymmetries, as regards the formal and informal segments of the market as well as the productive economy vis a vis the reproductive economy in Caribbean societies.

Essentially, the traditional approaches to the development of Caribbean economies have tended to negate the contribution of the informal sector or the subsistence mode of production to the process of socio-economic advancement. Evidently, the paths to economic advancement and social well-being in all of the Caribbean have and continue to be paved with the non-remunerative work of the “farm family labour”. According to Williams, “the starting point must be an understanding that it is the women’s unpaid, undervalued and unrecognized labour in social reproduction that is the lifeblood of all economies”.

In the Caribbean, as in other instances, the system of national accounts does not capture the non-economic work or unpaid work. In effect, there is a negation of the contribution of the subsistence mode to the process of capital formation and socio-economic development. The deep-seated ambiguity in the definition of economic and non-economic worth, which is ultimately reflected in the system of national accounting and the indicators of economic progress serve to obscure the real contribution of the rural and agricultural sector to the economy of the Caribbean countries. In consequence, women remain largely unrecognized in the mainstream of agricultural policy; because the references used to guide the process of policy formulation and implementation do not contain information on the reality of women’s lives.

In this regard, the “invisibility” of women contributes to the discrimination and marginalization of the female factor in development. The costs of such discrimination are borne not only by women, but also by their families and the by the wider economy. In order to enhance the productivity of the resource base available to agriculture, the link must be made between gender equity, trade liberalization and economic growth.

3.2 Gender asymmetries in Caribbean agriculture

Gender equity has, undeniably, registered legitimacy in all discourse on the growth and development of Caribbean economies. In the realm of agriculture, as with all other sectors, the customary refrain of gender neutrality bears little resemblance to the prevalence of gender injustice and social inequity. This shroud of equity and equal opportunity for all, irrespective of sex, prevails at the policy, institutional (public and private) as well as the household levels in Caribbean societies.

In order to overcome the divergence in the perception and practice of the gender disparities in agriculture, there must be an analysis of the gender relations that (re) produce the dialectic relationship between sexually differentiated labour in the production and marketing of exchangeable goods and services. The rationale for a gender-sensitive approach to the transformation of the agricultural sector in the Caribbean hinges on the discriminatory nature of the economic development models, in respect of rural and agricultural regions.

This discourse indicates that the process of agricultural transformation in the Caribbean is continually impacted by opposing forces which contribute to the formation of a hierarchy of asymmetric structures. At the international level, there is the distinction between the developed and developing countries. Preferential trading is driven to give way to free trade in the context of the WTO. At the national level there is the rural-urban dichotomy. As regards the market, there is the differentiation of the formal and the informal sector. The formal market is oriented towards the production of exchangeable goods and services and profit maximization.

Transactions in the formal market and the productive sector are generally recorded and reflected in national accounts. In contrast, the informal market place and the reproductive sector have a dynamism which is at variance with the formal and productive interface. In the informal, non-remunerated sphere of “economic” activity, satisfaction rather than profit maximization is the principal motive for the generation of exchangeable surplus. Figure 5 illustrates the observed connectivity between the sexual division of labour and the asymmetries in the agricultural sector. To quote Peter Berger³¹, this represents a “Pyramid of Sacrifice”, with female gender labour at the base of the disadvantaged (shaded) component of the socio-economic landscape in Caribbean agriculture.

Figure 5

Socio-economic Asymmetries

Low Technologically	Technologically Advanced
Preferential Trading	Liberalized Trade
Uncompetitive	Competitive
Marginal	Mainstream
Resource poor	Resource endowed
Internal / Domestic focus	Global / Export oriented
Informal / un-recorded	Formal / recorded
Care / Reproductive economy	Monetary Economy
Subsistence Mode of Production	Capitalist Mode of Production
Use value	Exchange value
Un-paid / non – economic work	Paid / economic work
Predominantly female gender work	Predominantly male gender work

Improved technology is arguably the most important factors influencing the agricultural transformation process in the Caribbean. However, Caribbean agriculture is structured for the production of export commodities on the best lands; while food production for domestic consumption is relegated to the “marginal” lands. Such disparity in the quality of the land resource base impacts on the efficiency of technology use as regards the production and marketing of export commodities vis a vis those for internal consumption. Information on the production and marketing of the principal export crops namely: bananas and sugar, point to male

dominance of the cash crop sector. For instance, a social audit of the sugar industry in St. Kitts and Nevis in 2002³² revealed a dominance of male workers in the sugar industry by a three to one ratio. In the absence of official data, it is generally recognized that the marketing of bananas is done by men.

In addition to gender differentiated access to technology, which bears relationship to the gender disparity in respect of subsistence vis a vis commercial production; there appears to be gender differences in not only the choice of markets but also the crops traded. Women are highly visible in the production and marketing of food for domestic consumption. The prevalence of women in the municipal markets throughout the region point to female dominance of domestic marketing. Women are also the principal operators of the regional export trade in food, known as the huckster trade³³. In many of the countries these hucksters (or higglers) export agricultural produce to neighbouring islands within the Caribbean archipelago. In Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the trade is primarily with Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. Traders from St. Vincent and the Grenadines travel as far north as St. Kitts and Nevis and other countries in the northern Lesser Antilles.

The domestic and regional sphere of agricultural marketing seems to be dominated by women in the Caribbean. However, it is generally the men who are actively engaged in the marketing of both the traditional and non-traditional agricultural commodities targeted at the extra-regional/international markets. As well, women seem to be involved with a wider range of crops than men. They also seek out more markets (domestically) than do men. Empirical evidence therefore show that women in the Caribbean are engaged in agricultural production and marketing activities that are generally more diversified than men.

As food producers, income earners, nurturers and managers of natural resources, the elasticity of female labour supply is inevitably constrained by rigidities in time and task allocation. As well, the ability of women to efficiently execute their varied roles is conditioned by the degree of entitlement to the principal factors of production namely: land, labour, capital and technology. In Jamaica, the majority of women farmers – who are principally engaged in food production for domestic consumption - are small holders, with average farm size significantly less than that of the men. It therefore follows that production constraints related to access to land will impact more heavily on women than men.

The pattern of land tenure in the Caribbean has its origin in the legacy of the colonialism. Among CARICOM countries, the share of arable land and land under permanent crops is less than 3 per cent of the total land area.³⁴ The capacity to access and/or control land, as well as other productive resources and the decisions regarding the utilization/maintenance of these resources are heavily influenced by culture and tradition. According to Williams,³⁵ “the ethos of the free market is epitomized in the mythic rational economic man (REM), driven by individual greed and the maximization of self-interest, is being imprinted on a society already locked into a pattern of outward orientation, an attenuated notion of citizenship and systematic in-attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable”.

The consequent dehumanization of especially the rural and agricultural sector has inevitably resulted from the practice of poor participatory democracy. Discussion of governance is often focused on the brokerage of power and influence in gaining access and control over the principal

factors of production and consumption. With the coming into being of the WTO, Caribbean negotiators have become preoccupied with issues of market access and competitive trading, in respect of the demand side of the market. In all of this, the issues of the supply side, as this relates to the comparative advantage and competitiveness of especially small producers – who are primarily women - are largely ignored.

Undoubtedly, regional and national level initiatives aimed at liberalizing agricultural trade have had tremendous impacts on the lives of women and men. However, gender inequalities in access to productive resources limit the scale of women's responses. Thus, notwithstanding significant progress in building productive capabilities among women, there remain significant gaps in assuring women's rights to natural and physical capital such as land, water, housing and transportation. Inevitably, there needs to be explicit recognition that the gender division of labour, in rural and agricultural systems in the Caribbean, has implications for women as primary caretakers at both the household and community levels. Relative to men, these impact directly on women's time, nutritional status, mobility and morbidity, as well as the capacity to capitalize on potential opportunities for social and economic advancement.

In the last decade, the findings of a number of Country Poverty Assessments conducted by Borrowing Member Countries of the CDB and the World Bank show that poverty in the Caribbean is substantially higher in rural than urban areas. These reports reveal that rural households, especially those headed by women, agricultural workers, fisher folks and indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable groups. The recognition that social development programmes must accompany economic adjustment measures has however not been sufficiently reinforced.

In the 1990s, the Governments of Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines acquired loan financings to implement rural revitalization projects. All of these projects were geared towards empowerment of small farmers and rural communities. The intention was to afford rural and agricultural systems increased flexibility to respond to the changing market demand. Essentially, these initiatives placed emphasis on rural household income diversification, by way of rural enterprise development and improved/sustainable livelihood systems. Inadvertently, such projects designed to facilitate agricultural transformation and rural enterprise development continue to externalize the social and environment cost of structural adjustment, at the household, community and national levels.

As the Caribbean's open and fragile economies grapple with the risks of financial crises and the imperatives for global economic viability, these transferred costs continue to weigh down on the "invisible" segment of the market, which is populated by women in the main. The evasion of gender imperative in a seemingly neutral market only serves to reinforce social biases and inequalities. Consequently, the resource base and regenerative capacity of agricultural and rural livelihood systems in the region continues to be eroded.

4. IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL TRADE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

4.1 Systems of agricultural production

The process of transforming the agricultural sector in the region has been oriented towards enhancing the production and productivity of exchangeable commodities and services. The relevance of environmental justice, social justice, as well as gender justice, in buffering and mitigating the negative impact of associated adjustments, risks and uncertainties have been grossly underestimated and suffer from benign neglect. In such circumstances, the social and environmental costs of consumption, production and reproduction are disproportionately transferred to women. Given women's concentration in subsistence/reproductive activity, this gender differentiated impact arises from the externalization of the social and environmental cost of profit maximization; accruing from accumulation of exchangeable surplus.

The over-distension of the buffering effect of the non-remunerated female function, as well as the generative capacity of ecosystems has limited the capacity for equitable and sustained market access and competitive trading in agricultural and services. In order to respond efficiently and effectively to the dictates of the market, the agricultural sector in the Caribbean will need to adopt, as appropriate, environmentally-friendly, as well as gender-sensitive technologies. In this regard, emphasis must be placed on low agricultural productivity, particularly in marginal ecological regions. A doubly green revolution is needed to: (1) enhance the productivity of the factors of production; and (2) improve environmental, social and gender justice.

In the Caribbean, the land use pattern has been determined principally by historical metropolitan demand for tropical, export crop commodities, rather than by the characteristics of climate, soils and natural vegetation. The resulting structure of agricultural production remains largely a dualistic system of: (1) "large" and capital intensive farms oriented towards the production of commodities for export; and (2) "small" and labour intensive farms that are engaged in production for domestic consumption, in the main. Export promotion strategies have, over time, altered domestic regulations and have forced a reallocation of not only land but also labour, capital and technology. Generally, women's access to and control over the factors of production have been negatively impacted by these resource re-allocation imperatives.

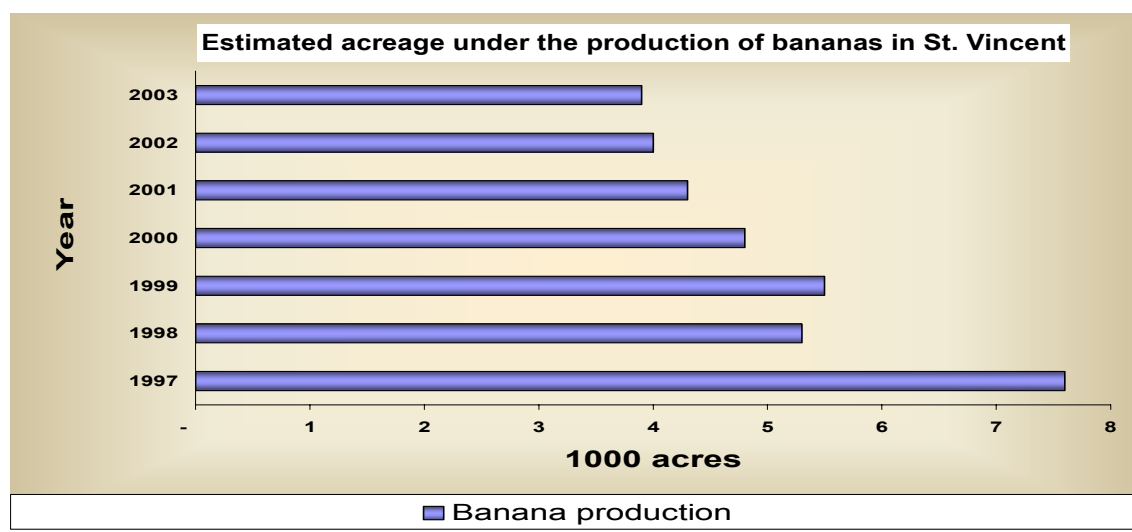
From the perspective of women farmers and other small farmers, market access is a dream from which they may never wake up. The broadening of the discourse on agricultural trade, to include non-trade concerns such as food security, poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods and rural development is a strategic entry point for gender-aware and gender-sensitive approaches to agricultural trade liberalization in the region. In this scenario, due attention must be paid to the social and reproductive adjustments in the lives of women and men.

The decline in the foreign exchange earning capacity of traditional exports such as banana, sugar, rice and spices have impacted on the structure of farming in all of the Caribbean countries. For instance, in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia, a significant portion of lands previously assigned to banana production have either been abandoned or converted into plots for the cultivation of crops for the domestic and regional markets. The restructuring of the banana industry in the Caribbean, has resulted in a significant reduction in the small banana production

units and the provision of domestic support is essentially directed at productivity enhancement. For instance, the Banana Emergency Recovery Unit (BERU) was established in 2001, to provide support to commercially viable banana producers in Saint Lucia.

The substantive investment in the irrigation of banana lands in Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia has begun to impact positively on the Banana Industry Restructuring programme in these respective countries. As well, the application of improved pre-and post-harvest technologies in Jamaica are among some of the public investments initiatives undertaken in response to the stringent market requirements for WTO compliance. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines (ref: Figure 6), the estimated area under banana production has declined from near 8000 acres in 1997 to just under 4000 acres in 2003. Despite the dramatic decline in the acreage under bananas, the productivity has in fact increased. The resources expended to enhance productivity of the export crop sub-sector may have left domestic food production at risk.

Figure 6

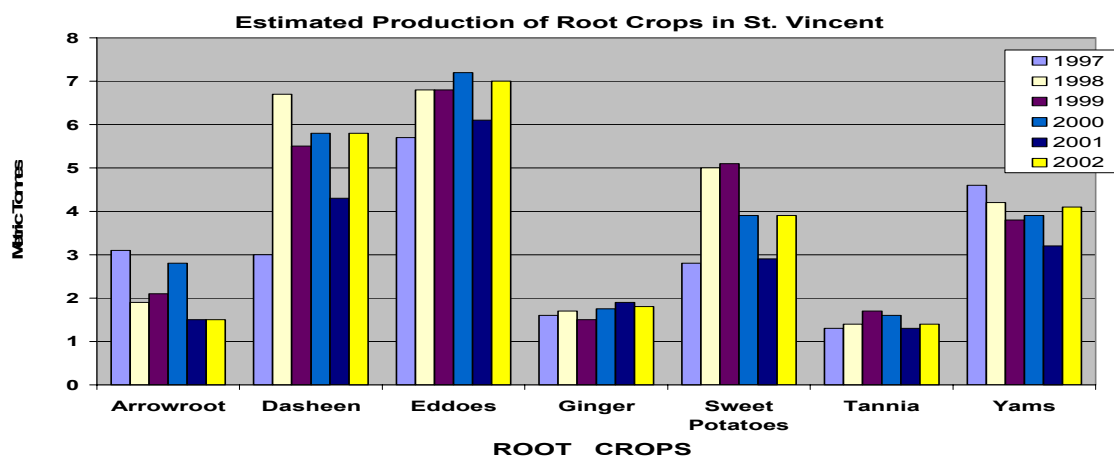


Source : Ministry of Agriculture, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The decline in the acreage under banana production has occasioned a focus on an industrial approach to agricultural development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In this content, emphasis is placed on the production and export of value-added products. In particular, root crops such as arrowroot and dasheen. It is envisaged that mostly women will be engaged in the preparation of these value-added commodities for export.

Product diversification is being given priority attention by sugar producing countries in the region. In Guyana and Barbados, the governments have committed to the provision of an enabling environment for the diversification of the use of cane. As a first step, emphasis is placed on the marketing of speciality sugar and other products for direct niche market consumption. Barbados is also focusing on the cultivation of a high-fibre variety of sugar-cane as an alternative energy source.

Figure 7



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Despite the traditional reliance on a singular crop for the generation of foreign exchange and economic buoyancy, agriculture in the Caribbean is very diverse. As such there exists considerable experience and knowledge in respect of the sustainability of the different farming systems. In order to effectively address the challenges posed by the increasingly liberalized and competitive trading environment, contemporary scientific and technical interventions that have the propensity to result in the wholesale disruption of social and cultural norms need to be avoided at all costs. Instead care must be taken to design and implement creative and participatory technological programmes that harness and make expert use of indigenous knowledge and technology systems

Enhanced factor productivity is indispensability to process of removing the comparative disadvantage within agricultural production and marketing systems in the Caribbean. Many of the current systems of agricultural production are generally considered unsustainable because of: (1) the high and inefficient use of inorganic inputs, (2) indiscriminate land use practices, (3) the irreversible effects on human health and biodiversity, among others. The infusion of new technological features in agriculture will place increased demands on the lives of women as well as men. However, there is the need for safeguards to preclude the stretching of women's time and effort beyond acceptable limit and consequently mitigate the further marginalization of women in agriculture in the region.

4.2 Agricultural labour market and employment

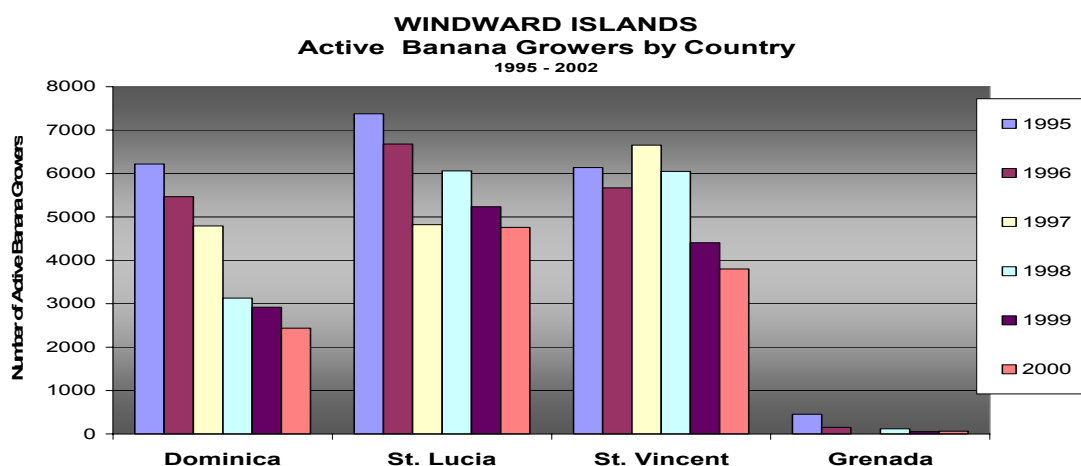
Women in Caribbean agriculture are engaged in a wide range of occupations. These include: farmer, farm worker, huckster or higgler, food processor, farm manager, extension officer, agricultural technician, agronomist, economist and business executive. The majority of women are employed in low skilled, low pay work as full time, part time or occasional farm workers. Overall, access to contractual employment and the achievement of job security is a significant ingredient in enhancing women's self-esteem and the capacity for self-actualization.

Generally, women are employed to perform non-mechanised and labour-intensive tasks. In crop production they are involved in all aspects, with the exception of land preparation. In livestock production, they are often responsible for all aspects of animal husbandry, with the exception of herding and marketing. However the female wage rate is often lower than the rate paid to males. According to an Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) report³⁶, gender differentiation in the sugar industry within the occupational categories is apparent in St. Kitts and Nevis. As well, the gap between male and female wages is significant and in some instances, the female wage is as little as 61 per cent of the male wage.³⁷ The report further states that this gap also increases with age.

It is generally argued that tasks performed by men required a greater expenditure of energy. Women however are usually employed on a longer term basis to perform time consuming tasks, such as hand weeding and harvesting, carrying, cleaning grading and packaging of produce. According to a United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)³⁸ report, many female dominated jobs are extensions of the work that they do at home and reflect employers' perception of female abilities. Employers often use women's socially assigned roles to justify further casualisation of women's work.

Despite a 3:1 ratio in respect of male dominance of the work force in the sugar industry in St. Kitts and Nevis, women comprise 47.6 per cent of all the persons employed in elementary occupations and practically all the female workers who have a different job are still engaged in elementary occupation compared with 63 per cent of the males in similar circumstances. Due to the marginal nature of female employment in the formal market, they are affected long before the men "begin to feel the pinch". In the banana industry for instances, it can be argued that the returns from bananas that accrued to women have always been inadequate. However, the conflicts in the industry emerged when the shrunken pay packet began to have a direct impact on the lifestyle and habits of the men. Figure 8 illustrates the dynamics of grower participation in the banana industry in the Windward Islands from the inception of the WTO in 1995, up to 2000.

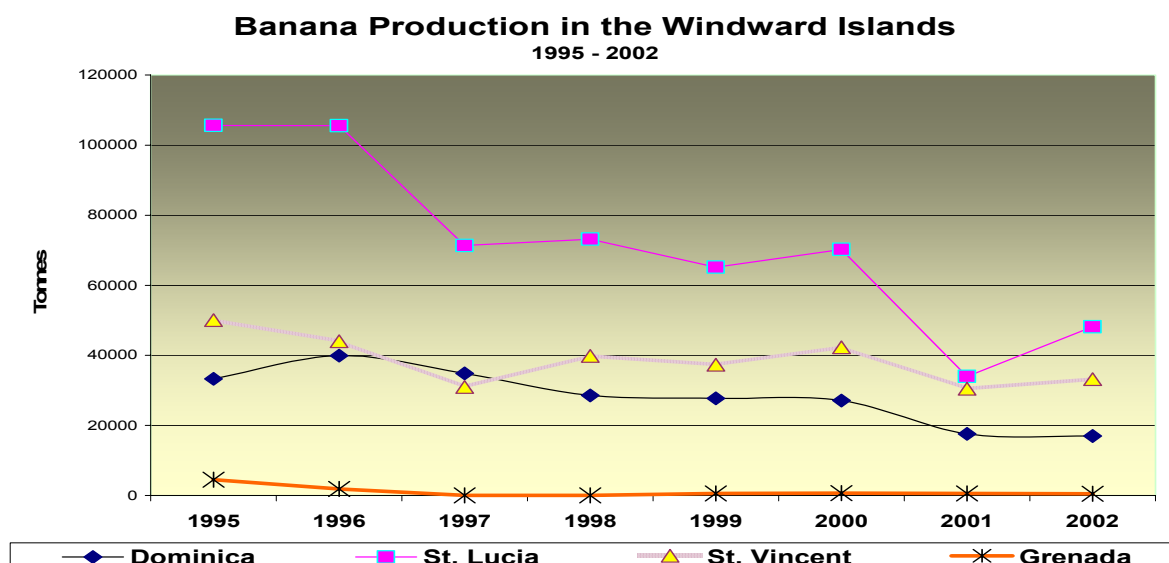
Figure 8



Source : Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company (WIBDECO)

The resulting level of banana production up to the year 2002 is represented as follows:

Figure 9



Source : Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company (WIBDECO)

In most Caribbean island States, there exist alternative employment opportunities which generate higher labour remuneration than agriculture. These opportunities, which exist in the tourism, construction and services sectors, make farming unattractive to young persons. The aging agricultural labour force is replete with risk averse and technologically stagnant employers and employees. The situation of low educational achievement is evident across the region and in this context, the poor are disadvantaged in their capacity to expand their human and technological capital.

The implications for employability and mobility in an increasing competitive environment, particularly on the supply-side of the labour market, are very significant. As an example, the labour force participation rate for the 15 -19 age-group is 16.1 percent among the poor in St. Kitts and Nevis, while for the non-poor the corresponding figure is 6.4 per cent.³⁹ The thrust of this critique is the eminent low productivity of labour and the problem of inefficiency and non-robustness of the human capital available for the repositioning of the agricultural sector and the national economies of Caribbean countries.

In spite of women's known participation in agricultural activity, there is a benign indifference to the need for the documentation of these contributions. Due to difficulties in respect of both measurement and definition, data on the labour force in agriculture is limited to the examination of the formal sector. According to the OECS Human Development Report 2002, the informal sector comprises 35 – 40 per cent of the persons employed in the OECS region. It is further noted that the informal sector expands as the job prospects in the formal sector deteriorates and contracts when formal employment prospects improve.

4.3 Rural and agricultural livelihood systems

The experience of the last decade has shown that trade liberalization impacts gender differentiated roles, gender-based constraints, women's and men's time, and control of and access to resources. These asymmetries impose tremendous challenges for women, many of whom are lacking in self-esteem, autonomy and bargaining power and are poor, unemployed, low skilled and of low educational status.

Caribbean women, especially those in rural areas are at a greater risk of bearing a disproportionate share of the costs associated with the conflicts and crises of the trade liberalization era. Empowering women by strengthening their control over a range of assets, in the areas of food security, food production, rural livelihoods, healthy lifestyles and other such imperatives, is critical to ensuring women's capacity for socio-economic advancement; in an increasing price and resource competitive world.

Restrictive investment measures have serious implications for the growth and development of micro-and small businesses, where women are concentrated. The unique characteristics of individual countries have generated different opportunities and threats for women in these settings. Some of the opportunities include education and training, housing, transportation, control over land through legal entitlement, improved production and marketing technology. The threats include violence, starvation, trafficking, disease, displacement and even death.

Many women who were traditionally confined to the unpaid household and subsistence realm have crossed over to the paid economy. While there is an increasing female share of employment, women continue to hold responsibility for the care economy and are the family welfare providers of last resort. In the context of trade and investment liberalization, the deregulation of labour and the commodity markets have implications for employment security, wages and workers' health and safety, as well as shelter and other basic needs.

There are indeed social and human development costs to trade liberalization, however there continues to be no significant official recognition, at the regional or national levels, of the differential impact of agricultural trade and investment on women's livelihoods relative to men. Misguidedly, it is assumed that trade liberalization policies and actions are gender blind in orientation and gender neutral in effect. As such, women and men are equally predisposed to taking advantage of market access initiatives that inevitably contribute to poverty alleviation and overall socio-economic prosperity.

It is undeniable that with globalization women are increasingly at risk of exploitation and unfair treatment. The interconnections between trade and other macro-level policies beg for fuller understanding. According to Williams, "trade liberalization is an intricate web of cross and behind the border provisions and social, fiscal and labour market policies. These policies impact on gender relations, human development and poverty dynamics in the economy through a complex set of transmission mechanisms that determine access to resources at all levels of the economy."

Import liberalization appears to be the dominant side of trade liberalization policies in the region. In this context, tariff reductions have an impact on domestic prices for food and in many

instances the increase in the cost of food imports outweighs the benefits of increased domestic food production and exports. As such, those whose livelihoods depend on strong prices for agricultural products are the most vulnerable to food insecurity. In effect trade, which is expected to enhance opportunities for increased economic livelihoods, may actually be a threat to those - particularly women - engaged in the production of food for domestic consumption and sustainability of rural livelihood systems in the region. .

4.4 Food security

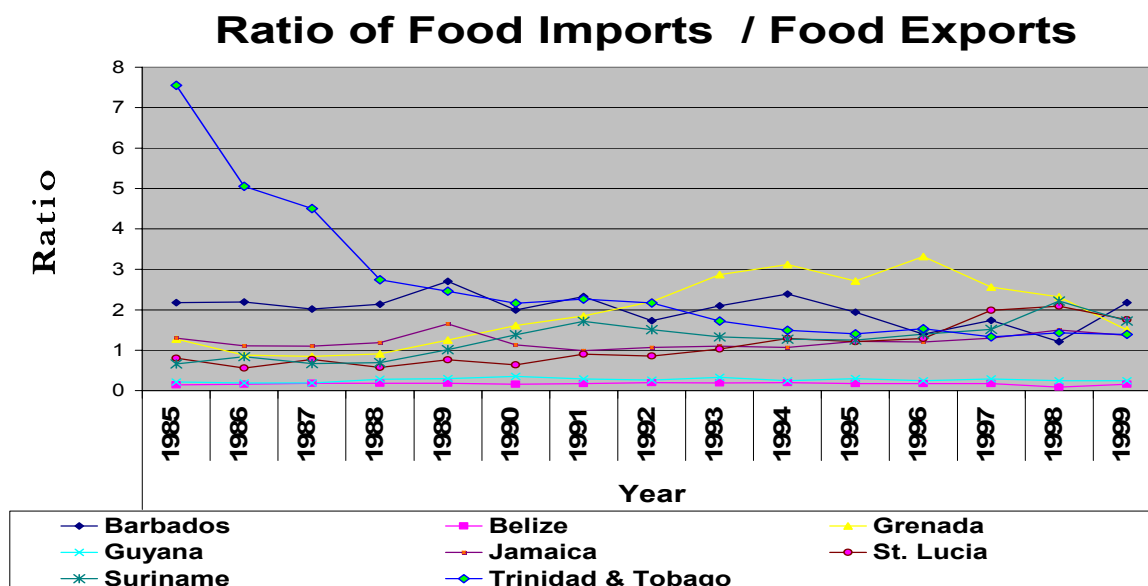
The provision of food is a highly sustainable feature of agriculture. As such, agriculture has contributed to improving the health status of the population of CARICOM States by the provision of food. During the last 25 years, protein-energy malnutrition has declined substantially in the region. Few countries still have serious problems of malnutrition. In the continental countries, this problem persists principally in the interior and among the indigenous population such as the Amerindians of Guyana, the Maroons of Suriname and the Mayan communities in the south of Belize.

In the region, households' access to food remains universally satisfied. Poverty, unemployment and food supply data indicate the presence of significant pockets of the population in the CARICOM countries that may not have access to sufficient food. This is very much the case for interior areas and indigenous communities in the mainland countries of Guyana, Suriname and Belize.⁴⁰ Throughout the region, access to food is not ensured either through own production of food or through earning sufficient income to purchase the food needed to satisfy the minimum calorie intake or Dietary Energy Supply (DES).⁴¹

The CARICOM region is now suffering from decreased food self-sufficiency, both in terms of the calorie intake⁴² and the value of food consumed. The growing incidence of nutrition deficiency related to illnesses such as obesity, hypertension, cancer and diabetes is being suggested to be associated with the excessive use of imported foods, some of which are suspected to be "dumped". It is generally recognized that women are at higher risk of nutrition deficiency than men. This has implications for women's health and consequently their (re)productive capacity to effect the social and economic adjustments that are necessary to guarantee the sustainability of their livelihoods in the face of trade liberalization imperatives.

Ostensibly in the 1980s, Caribbean countries were generally able to balance foreign expenditure on food with the foreign exchange earnings from food exports. An effect of the agricultural export-led economic development process in the majority of the Caribbean countries has been a heavy reliance on imported foods to feed the local population. Figure 10 illustrates the trend in respect of food imports versus food exports during the period 1985 – 1999. The major categories of imported food are cereals, rice, meats (particularly chicken), dairy products, oils and fats. Since the 1980s, Trinidad and Tobago has managed to significantly reduce its high food import dependence. In response to the oil crisis of that era and in an attempt to prevent the exacerbation of the country's balance of payment difficulties; many foreign exchange saving policy measures were initiated. Major among these was an exchange re-alignment which favourably impacted the agricultural sector and resulted in increased vegetable and fruit crop production.

Figure 10



Data Source : Regional Special Programme for Food Security (RSPFS) in Member Countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) CARIFORUM, FAO, 2002

Such re-alignment policy measures have dominated the regional thrust towards agricultural development in CARICOM. However, food imports have become a significant component of the total food supply in CARICOM and increasingly domestic food production is far from able to satisfy the national demand for food. Over the last decades, total food imports in CARICOM have increased significantly from US\$1,330 million in 1980 to US\$2,270 million 1996. Available statistics indicate that in 1999, Barbados⁴³ had the highest food import/export ratio of 2.18, followed by Saint Lucia and Suriname with ratios of 1.75 and 1.72, respectively.

The overall trade and current account balances, as well as the levels of indebtedness, are some of the salient factors that determine a country's capacity to sustain significant amounts of food imports. In the era of trade liberalization, member States in CARICOM, with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago (an oil exporter), Suriname and Guyana, have run up unmanageable levels of current account deficits. Such fiscal difficulties relate to the improbability of increasing agricultural export revenue and the inability of relatively inefficient agricultural production systems to compete in the face of import liberalization. The prevailing food insecurity in the Caribbean is the result of declines in the productivity of land, labour and management, as well as market access and food exports. Additionally, increases in population size, food demands and competition from varied and cheaper food substitutes have aggravated the net food-import status of Caribbean countries.

Small holders, most of whom are women, are the main producers of food crops such as vegetables, roots and tubers, fruits, as well as small ruminants and poultry meat. The majority of these farms cultivate between half and two acres and sometimes larger plots on low productivity, marginal lands using low input production technologies. The constraints faced by smallholders

relate to the inherent difficulties of subsistence agriculture as well as social, institutional and policy influences that militate against low technology, small holder development.

Given the similarity of the problems, among Caribbean countries, there is opportunity for a collective approach towards enhancing the productivity and reducing the comparative disadvantages within small holder enterprises. In the context of national and regional food security, opportunities are provided for a cross over from subsistence to exchangeable agricultural production. In many instances however female-run farms are less capitalized and virtually incapable of adopting improved technologies in the short to medium term. In the absence of an improved technological and infrastructural base for food production, the inefficient and erratic pattern of food supply poses serious market access difficulties. In this regard, the income earning capacity of the women so involved is ultimately impacted. Thus in order to guarantee the greater participation and fuller integration of women in agricultural production and marketing, the use of S&DT and policy flexibility must be ensured.

The first phase of the Regional Special Programme for Food Security in member countries of CARICOM, within the framework of CARIFORUM, is aimed at testing and demonstrating the technical and financial viability of new approaches to small scale farming systems. This regional initiative is based on the principles of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), which aims to assist developing countries to improve their national food security, through a multi-disciplinary and participatory approach that is economically and environmentally sustainable. The main types of activities proposed are: (1) Irrigation and Water Control and Management; (2) Crop Intensification and Optimization; (3) Small Livestock Development; (4) Fisheries and Aquaculture; and (5) Backyard Gardening and Post-Harvest Handling, Processing and Marketing. The success of these proposed technological improvements are highly dependent on a cadre of well trained, gender-aware and strategically located extension agents through the Caribbean.

4.5 Vulnerability and risk

Agriculture is characterised by a high degree of risk and uncertainty. This vulnerability is due in large measure to the sector's exposure to and reliance on natural processes and resources for production. In this context, wind damage and heavy rainfall are very significant causes of risk. Owing to the terrestrial layout of the Caribbean countries, which favour the Atlantic coast, each year hurricanes threaten the lives of Caribbean people. The reality was vividly demonstrated in September 2004 when Hurricane Ivan completely devastated the island of Grenada.

Natural disasters are chief among the factors that predispose Caribbean agriculture to insecure control of agricultural output volumes and quality. Vulnerability⁴⁴ to natural hazards such as hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions is often perceived as an obstacle to the sustainability. A very significant ecological impact of agriculture on the environment is the clearing of forest for crop cultivation. Throughout the Caribbean, land denudation⁴⁵ results from the inimical practice of indiscriminate land clearing. The absence of effective soil conservation measures in "fragile" areas, contribute to the problem of increased erosion and soil loss and the consequent degradation of the soil fertility status and the integrity of the land resource base.

Environmental vulnerability includes issues such as loss of biodiversity, declining soil fertility, increasing pollution of freshwater and the overexploitation of fish stocks. Over-exploitation of marine resources, as well as changes in environmental conditions such as the El Nino phenomenon has exacerbated the level of vulnerability within the agricultural sector. Through the various effects of agriculture, the biodiversity⁴⁶ in flora and fauna is slowly diminishing as well. Many endemic and indigenous species are threatened or have already been lost. In recent times attention has been focused on the development and implementation of biodiversity conservation plans.

The role of women in upholding biodiversity and their heavy reliance on natural and genetic resources is however given insufficient attention. The emerging trend in respect of intellectual property rights (IPR) and the patenting of agriculture is likely to have unfavourable gender outcomes when CARICOM member States seek to enforce IPR systems, in keeping with the requirements of the global trading agreements.

The situation of the continuing decline in the importance of the agricultural sector in the Caribbean is the result of a host of disabling factors, many of which are beyond the control of the countries. Apart from vulnerability related to environmental factors such as soil erosion, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, as well as air, water and soil pollution, the CARICOM countries are subject to sea level rise as a consequence of climate change. The flood situation in Guyana in January 2005 is testimony to this new reality.

The management of vulnerability and risk is critical to the process of building resilience to the negative effects of the trade liberalization process. The demand for replacement investments in the physical environment is projected to increase with the application of improved technologies in agriculture. Technologies such as irrigation, chemical fertilizers and pesticides as well as eco-tourism and agro-forestry, in especially the forest reserves and hinterland areas, contribute to increased environmental risk.

In order to facilitate the adjustment to the changing rules of trade, in an increasing liberalized and competitive international trading environment, Caribbean nations must pay due attention to the internal dynamics of social relation of production, consumption and marketing. In the face of decreased public revenue due to import liberalization, the domestic support mechanisms for production inputs such as land, water, planting material, machinery and fertilizers are being substantially reformed. In the absence of significant environmental policy discretion, such reform measures are likely to disadvantage the poor and vulnerable groups who have traditionally had unbridled access to resources such as land, water and seed material.

The heightened dependence on the market for access to both agricultural production inputs and outputs places women, in particular, at risk of resource deprivation and loss of control over their means of production. Such vulnerability is further exacerbated by women's low education levels and lack of collateral, such as land tenure. In this regard food security and traditional rural livelihood systems are threatened. With governments seeking to compensate for the loss of import duties through the imposition of new taxes and levies such as Value Added Tax (VAT), the majority of women and youth are likely to become further disadvantaged.

The recourse to the drug and sex trade, by increasing numbers of women and youth, has implications for health and security at both the community and household levels. These practices impact on the productivity of the labour force and, as such, incidents of crime and HIV/AIDS are receiving increased attention in all countries. Such measures however address the symptoms and not the cause of these social problems. Ideally, the deep seated ambiguities at the policy and institutional levels must be mapped from a gender perspective, in order to effectively address the social and economic fall-outs of the trade liberalization. The application of gender analysis and participatory methodologies provides scope for the vulnerable and at risk groups to own the change process. Such approaches will ultimately give effect to positive and sustained outcomes, especially with regard to natural resource conservation, food security, poverty alleviation and income generation through increased market access.

5. INSTITUTIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL GAPS

5.1 Labour, employment and income

Studies on the plight of women in the Caribbean have shown that much of women's work is in the informal sector. According to Lewis (1999)⁴⁷, this is attributable to gender discrimination in the formal sector and a low level of education and training. Undeniably, the majority of the economically active women in agriculture are in the informal sector and earnings in that sector are deemed to constitute a greater portion of the overall income of rural farm households in the Caribbean. The gender biases as regards labour employment and income mirrors the gender dichotomy between the care economy and the productive economy.

The correlation between rural women, unpaid work, reproductive activity, subsistence production, poverty and the informal sector remains to be audited and imputed in the system of national accounts. Greater accountability for the non-remunerated contribution of the subsistence mode of (re)production, which is driven by the desire for satisfaction rather than profit, will undoubtedly contribute to the explicit recognition of women's work burden. Evers⁴⁸ contends that this has implications for the effectiveness of trade liberalization in terms of supply response and for policy consistency in terms of food security.

Trade liberalization and agricultural transformation initiatives in the region continue to be guided by references that depict the realities of the market or formal sector of the economy. In effect, the economic variables that measure progress and relative worth are derived from data sets that capture mainly male gender work. Consequently, the references that are used to guide the process of development are skewed in favour of the male gender and inadvertently negate the invaluable contribution of the female gender.

Governments have all expressed a commitment to gender equity and gender mainstreaming, but there remains a gap between policy enunciations and the ensuing actions. In seeking to respond to the demands of the increasing competitive and liberalized global trading environment, there is the dire need for greater transparency and accountability as regards the gender-based disparities within the agricultural sector. Recognizing and, more importantly, accounting for women's

unpaid work would challenge our empirical understanding of not only the informal sector but the economy as a whole.

Women face a number of disadvantages in the labour market. The majority of the predominantly female-headed households must reconcile the dual roles as homemaker and money-maker; in addition to the task of coping with prevailing sexist prejudices. This often affects their bargaining power, their work status, the length and structure of their workday and their income level. An instructive note, however, is that females' inherent resilience and versatility may afford them the adaptability required for survival in an increasing competitive and liberalized international trading environment. Therefore, with such small populations, the region can ill-afford to keep women confined to livelihood systems which do not facilitate the realization of their full potential. The underestimation of women's work and their participation in national wealth creation only serves to undermine the economic health and social integrity of these countries.

The historically unequal distribution of income between women and men in agriculture has influenced the character of household capital assets (natural, physical, financial and social) and the social relations of (re)production. It is reported⁴⁹ that in Jamaica and Suriname these inequalities have increased even though the economic adjustments involved in the liberalization of the economy have generally been beneficial. Poor income distribution gives rise to poverty, unemployment and food insecurity, particularly in rural areas and among women. This malice is of itself a major impediment to the intensification of agricultural trade, by way of the proliferation of commercial agricultural enterprises in all of the Caribbean countries.

The lack of an appropriately skilled labour force in agriculture runs against current initiatives that are geared towards the commercialization of predominantly small scale agriculture in the region. The "labour for money" exchanges used to counteract the financial and human capital deficits within rural livelihood systems, that are being coerced to commercialise their operations, must be better understood and eventually quantified. Understanding and catering to the differences in the functionality of the female and male factor in the workforce will undoubtedly alter the set of policies instruments directed at improved labour efficiency and productive in the agricultural sector. The region therefore has no recourse but to expand opportunities for the deepening of the skills and knowledge base in the sector, especially with respect to women functionality.

Given the secular shift to import liberalization and export promotion, the potential impact of trade on wages, as well as occupational health and safety is generally debated in various trade union fora. In the context of the core labour standards, the fact that women face particular gender-related problems begs for specific treatment. As regards working conditions, gender equality concerns are generally focused on issues of exploitation and unfair treatment. In the region, the core labour standards take account of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions that have been ratified by all member countries in CARICOM. These are: freedom of association, effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, suppression of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour, combating discrimination in employment and occupation in all its forms and remuneration for work of equal value.

National labour codes in most, if not all, of the countries speak to the various rights and obligations of workers and employers, among these being the concept of “equal pay for equal work” and the equality of access to employment. The intention of these labour codes is to recognize and give effect to the constitutional right of women and men to work, as well as their legal equality to occupation and income. However there is often a divergence between the provisions of employment policies and labour legislation and in the application of prescribed enforcement mechanisms.

However, labour standards alone will not obviate problems related to labour productivity and output in the sector. Self-esteem, autonomy and influence over the forces and means of production greatly influence the disposition of workers in agriculture. Generally, workers’ seem to be motivated, not by the desire for optimal output but rather the need to acquire cash by doing the least possible amount of work. With this attitude, praedial larceny has become the employment of choice for especially young males and for many young women, the sex trade has become a more appetizing employment option.

5.2 Access to productive resources and services

Women's access to, and control over, productive resources such as land, labour, inputs and labour-saving technology, as well as support services such as credit, extension, training and markets is restricted. Limited access to land is still a major constraint to women's full participation in rural development. The Beijing Platform for Action underlined this aspect as a direct cause of female poverty. Among the options for eradicating poverty, it urged governments to implement policies to promote women's access to and control over land, and to reform legislation that deprived women of the right to own and inherit land.⁵⁰

Barbados is perhaps the only country that has land management policies that specifically benefit women. The Succession Act of 1975, the Property Act of 1979 and the Family Law Act of 1981 all provide scope for the entitlement by women who are in either formal or informal relationships with men. These laws reverse the discrimination that women previously suffered. Other advances in Barbados have been the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act of 1980 and the Agricultural Holdings Options to Purchase Act of 1982. These legal provisions have provided women with access to land titles. The 1996 International Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture/Inter-American Development Bank (IICA/IDB)⁵¹ publication reports that the majority of purchasers of tenantry lots have been women.

In Guyana the majority of farmers rent or lease lands from the Government. Widespread insecurity of land tenure has resulted from this predominant leasing system for land. In such circumstances, farmers lack the propensity to invest in long-term management practices. In a country that is at least seven feet below sea level such land management practices are vital⁵². Land reform policies have historically played a central role in agricultural development in Jamaica and under structural adjustment there has been a large divestment of Government lands. Although, in theory, Jamaican men and women have equal access to land, in practice there is considerable evidence of unequal access.⁵³ In Suriname, less than 1 per cent of women have title to land. According to the IICA/IDB publication, it was hoped that Legislation with Relation to Land Reform in Suriname, introduced in 1981, would have helped to reduce the skewed

distribution of land in rural areas. However, prevailing land tenure conditions precluded the expansion of production.

Over the last decade, a substantial amount of concessionary loans have been made available to farmers seeking to enhance the viability of their agricultural enterprises and diversification their income base. Throughout the Caribbean, the main formal credit institutions are the commercial banks, the credit unions, co-operatives and NGOs (to a lesser extent). In these instances, credit is accessible if collateral is provided and at interest rates that closely follow market rates. However, very few formal lending institutions are frequented by women in search of capital for agricultural production and marketing. This is mainly attributed to weak institutional outreach, traditional beliefs, illiteracy and poor education, as well as women's lack of collateral and related bargaining strength.

Generally, women seem reluctant to engage in formal credit arrangements and are uncomfortable with the associated economic risk. Thus although the barriers to access may be institutional, women themselves have limited their access. Even when women need credit, they use informal mechanisms to secure their needed resources. For instance, “sou sou” in Trinidad and Saint Lucia, “esu” in the Bahamas, “meeting turn” in Barbados and “partners” in Jamaica are some of the informal financing mechanisms used at the community level in all of the countries. These informal, but trusted, mechanisms assist, especially the rural poor, to gain access to capital and other resources to sustain and enhance their livelihoods.

Cooperation, sharing and bartering are among the other mechanisms used to counteract the lack of ready cash in many instances. “Swap labour” in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the “coup d’main” in Saint Lucia are two examples of “labour for money” exchanges used in the region to counteract labour scarcity at the household, farm and community levels. As such, the philosophy of community or group self-help has helped to make capital an elective variable in the lives of persons operating within the informal sector. A cautionary note however is that such practices diminish their commitment to becoming more fully integrated into the formal market. This may serve to further marginalize already disadvantaged segment of the population in many of the small and fragile economies in the region

In some circumstances the informal sector seems to have a greater capacity to provide employment and income. For instance, in Jamaica, the rate of unemployment among the poor is lower than among the non-poor⁵⁴. This is so because an extensive small farm, domestic agriculture sector and a well-developed informal sector provides employment opportunities for the poor. However, the unemployed poor females have higher rates than their male counterparts.

The incidence of poverty among female headed households (FH-H) is a striking phenomenon across the region. Brown⁵⁵ further contends that throughout the region, the unemployed poor tend to be youthful. Caribbean heritage is therefore under siege and in order to counteract the seeming trend towards the feminization and youthfulness of poverty in the region, the gender-based development context must of necessity be incorporated into the design and implementation of sectoral policies and programmes. Failure to act decisively and purposefully, particularly in respect of rural and agricultural policies and programmes, will smooth the progress of poverty becoming the heritage of the region.

A fuller appreciation and due accounting for the gender-based differences, in respect of access and control over the factors of agricultural production and marketing, will serve to enhance responses to the new challenges, opportunities and constraints faced by particularly resource-poor farmers and their families. In the absence of a gender-based approach, inadvertently, women will continue to experience discrimination with respect to access to the means of (re) production. In seeking to attend to the resource constraints in the sector, due attention must be paid to the relationship between subsistence agriculture, poverty and women. The strategy employed in this regard must map out the gender-bias structure at the institutional (meso) level as these relate to not only the extension delivery systems, but also transportation; input supply services; training programmes; financial services, among others.

The Ministries of Agriculture in all of the countries are the main providers of domestic support and service delivery systems. Notably, the institutional framework for the facilitation of delivery of support to the growth and development of the agricultural sector are essentially male dominated, with the majority of extension officers being male. There are a few qualified female extension workers, in all of the countries. Invariably, extension services oriented towards satisfying the felt needs of women farmers suffer from benign neglect. However, there is some small movement away from the tendency to provide women with training in traditional home-based activities such as childcare and home management.

Initiatives aimed at providing training and technical assistance in more entrepreneurial income-generating activities, such as crop and livestock production, agro-industries, is gaining momentum. Over the last three decades, there have been many interventions to engender, among extensionists, a greater appreciation for gender dimension in rural and agricultural development. Even so, there remains the need to tackle the problems related to women and extension in the region. In this regard, an appropriate share of budgetary allocations and extension resources must be explicitly dedicated to small farmer development and food security concerns.

5.3 Access to markets

Women continue to be the principal distributors of agricultural commodities on the domestic market. As well, market access, as engineered principally by women engaged in the huckster (higgler) trade, has contributed to the survival of the regional trade in agricultural products. The predominance of women in the domestic and regional informal food market reflects the history of social change in the formation of Caribbean societies during the feudal and post-feudal era. The sexual division of labour in the market place mirrors the separation evident at the base of the structure of economy and society in the region [ref: Figure 5 in Chapter 3].

In the absence of a gender-aware approach and as a consequent of the spiralling of women's engagement in economic activities outside the formal sector, the tendency for women to suffer from benign neglect is, inadvertently, intensified. Therefore, as Caribbean economies become immersed in a global pattern of trade that lays emphasis on removing preferences in the market place, there is the need to draw attention to the corporate cultural preferences that keep women "outside the market." It needs to be noted that women's increased access to markets will not result simply from the provision of appropriate physical, capital and technological resources.

In the Caribbean, the marketing infrastructure for agricultural trade is relatively underdeveloped. According to the IICA/IDB publication⁵⁶, with the exception of Barbados, no modern approaches have been taken to the marketing of agricultural produce and as such marketing is done in much the same way as has been for the last 400 years, without successful State intervention, save the construction of “habitable” markets. As regards regional trade, attempts at the establishment of a reliable and appropriate transportation system have been largely unsuccessful. Recognising that market access as engineered principally by women engaged in the huckster (higgler) trade has contributed to the survival of the regional trade in agricultural products, the situation of women and trade in the Caribbean begs for priority and exclusive attention. Much has been enunciated but little has been done in this regard.

The current thrust towards the establishment of WTO compliant marketing protocols for the hucksters, in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada, for example, are gender blind in orientation and presume gender neutrality. Due the lack of a participatory and gender sensitive approach, these intentions have been met with much resistance by women engaged in the informal agricultural trade in the region.. As CARICOM moves towards the establishment of a CSME, gender blind approaches will undoubtedly be ineffectual, since the social relations for trade facilitation, as pioneered by women, are distinctly different from the culture of trade in the formal sector. In recognition of this fact, in 2003, an FAO intervention sought to pilot a participatory agricultural marketing appraisal (PAMA) process in Grenada. Unfortunately, the scope for the strengthening and replication of these participatory and gender sensitive efforts may have vanquished with Hurricane Ivan. Renewed attempts must be made to take due account of the “culture of marketing” among women in the region. The approaches towards the regularization of trade must of necessity be gender-aware. Limiting the theorizing about free trade to issues of tariffication and related formal market access imperatives are largely unrealistic and will inevitably result in increased poverty for the already poor women in Caribbean agriculture.

5.4 Governance and social inclusion

The CET and WTO trade regimes appear to be interfering with social objectives and priorities within CARICOM countries. In many debates on the governance of the trading systems, issues of equity, rights, transparency and sustainability are considered critical values and objectives on which the trade system should be based. For CARICOM member countries, the elimination of poverty, food security and better income distribution are indeed major concerns. Therefore, in organizing for the transformation of the agricultural sector in the Caribbean, the change strategy must incorporate a mix of complementary policies that consider the long-term health of not only the market economy, but also the health of the people and the natural environment.

Throughout the region, trade liberalization measures have resulted in import growth. Market access difficulties and the non-application of S&DT have, in many instances, caused food imports to replaced domestic food production. The loss of traditional market domain has eroded a vital source of livelihood for a significant segment of the rural economy. The search for quick fixes and immediate gratification has prevented an understanding of the systemic nature of the crisis in the rural and agricultural economy.

Trade liberalization policies and programmes must emphasize poverty alleviation and gender equity as explicit objectives. The linkage between trade liberalization and the social dimensions of Caribbean economies cannot continue to haemorrhage while import liberalization and export promotion continue unabashed. Both sides of trade liberalization coin influence choices which have been argued to have differential impacts on the lives of women and men. The dynamics set in motion by trade intensification invariably challenge the prevailing decision-making structure for trade and development policy.

For most CARICOM countries, the disadvantages of smallness and extreme openness induce almost instantaneous impacts of external shocks on the micro-economy within households. In effect, the reconfiguration of imperatives in this regard impact, not only on the decision-making framework at the international, regional and national levels, but as importantly the community and household levels. In the face of trade liberalization, the application of good practices that promotes benefits for women and men must be appropriately pioneered, in order to guarantee the sustainability of rural and agricultural livelihood systems.

The Caribbean region is replete with organizations and groups, at all levels, enunciating missions targeted at improving the well-being of specified vulnerable or “at risk” groups within their respective societies. The process of social change in rural and agricultural systems in the Caribbean has a repertoire of policies and actions that have failed to yield the organization ethos conducive to equity and sustained growth. The degree of cohesion among social groups and community organizations has been largely influenced by benefits that the members perceive will be derived from such associations.

There is need to dig deep into the structure of power in social and economic institutions that shape patterns of behaviour and also to the interplay of implicit and explicit rules for compliance with the dictates of the free market. Right now, the rules of market access, competitive pricing, profit maximization, unrestrained capital flows and related economic imperatives place tremendous stress on the social institutions and ecological processes that human civilization in the Caribbean needs in order to survive. The continued externalization of the ecological and social cost of organizing for agricultural development serves to keep the system in a self-destruct mode.

Inevitably, institutional customs and governance procedures affect the flow of resources and the provision of basic needs such as safe, affordable food, water, transportation and health services; as well as, the protection of the environment and society from indiscriminate farming practices. The ideology that supports the cultivation the social relations that engender the capacity for farmers and agricultural workers to earn a *fair* income is therefore wanting.

The intellectual vacuum in the region needs to be filled with approaches that reflect an understanding and appreciation of the social forces and long-term patterns of power relations that have the capacity to bear permanent fruit. If this is not done the current entrepreneurial and market demand approach to change, which is dubbed “commercialization of agriculture”, will in the not too distant future find inclusion in the repertoire of failed policies and actions.

The only organizational approach that has generated the capacity to survive is that of customizing the rules of the international economic game. The Caribbean Community must

therefore change the rules of the game in attending to phenomena such as the feminization of subsistence agriculture, the feminization of informal (non-market) sector and feminization of poverty in the region. To be effective in this regard, CARICOM must break from the historical pattern of the agricultural development and assume creative and pro-active measures that are influenced by a gender-aware model of economic development that specifically incorporates the reproductive and informal sectors.

5.5 Small farm households

In spite of the imperative of globalization, small farm production continues to dominate the agricultural landscape in all of the Caribbean countries. The dynamic of the social relation of production in these households is driven by the consumption needs of its members. As such the motivation within these households is a quest for satisfaction, not profit. Invariably, many parcels of land which could be put into gainful cultivation are often left unattended because these households lack the thirst for surplus accumulation and remittances often play a critical role in satisfying the needs of these household.

The discourse in this paper indicates that the dichotomization of the farm household and socio-economic environment for agricultural production and marketing has essentially led to the subordination of the (re)productive work of the female function and the responsibility for the production of use value. With this separation, the male function has assumed responsibility for the production of exchange value in the market place.

A typical farm household has a pattern of income dynamics, whereby some members have market income, while others have to forego their earnings. Both earned and foregone incomes, which constitute full household income, contribute to the sustenance of the household. Strategies for the intensification of farm households' income hinge on the supposition that the assumptions of the market economy match the reality within these households.

The contradictions at the level of the household parallel the difference between subsistence and commercial agricultural production. The correlation between female gender work, forgone earning, subsistence agriculture, the informal sector and poverty begs for in-depth analysis and redress. The real contribution of the agricultural sector is obscured by the "invisibility" of the contribution of a significant partner.

The contrast between the persistent conceptualization of the male person as the head of household and the higher proportion of female-headed, resource-poor households is a striking manifestation of the divergence between the perception and application of gender-sensitive policy analysis and programming for agricultural transformation in the Caribbean. Available information indicates that in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 19 per cent of the total number of female-headed households (FH-H), as compared with 15.2 per cent male-headed household (MH-H), is estimated to be in absolute poverty.

According to the OECS 2002 Human Development Report⁵⁷, in rural areas, there is a greater proportion of households experiencing absolute as well as food only poverty. The proportion of FH-H in rural areas experiencing food only poverty is 29.8 per cent, as compared with a national and urban percentages of 25.3 and 18.9, respectively (OECS Human Development Report 2002,

pp206). In Jamaica, incidence of poverty among female-headed households was an average of 12.8 percentage points higher than the rate for male-headed households.⁵⁸ In the community of Grand Bay in Dominica, many working males have migrated in search of employment; leaving a female majority with the pattern of survival being “hand to mouth”. Very few have savings and the necessary collateral to obtain loans⁵⁹.

The organization of household production and the interaction with the market economy, as well as the contribution of household members to the generation and sustenance of human capital begs understanding. Decision-making at the farm household level is generally driven by priorities with respect to the well-being of the members of the household. In the Caribbean, significant percentages of households rely on the adult females for the sustenance of the household livelihood systems; even though most women depend on men for use rights to particularly land and housing.

Households, as differentiated micro-institutions, exert a significant influence on, particularly, the structure and character of the labour market. In transitional economies, the buffering effect of the household economy serves to absorb the impact of industry privatization and down-sizing, for example. The marginalization of the household economy inevitably limits the capacity to safeguard the integrity of the “unlimited labour supply” which feed the formal market segment.

6. INTEGRATING GENDER INTO AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND ACTION

6.1 Policy reform

A gender-blind and rapid assessment of the impact of the trade liberalization process on Caribbean economies points to opportunities for increased market access and export promotion, including for women. In the context of a level playing field, the globalization of trade and the liberalization of services provide scope for enhancing the efficiency and competitiveness of host economies. Notably, Caribbean economies continue to be dependent on the performance of the primary export sector. As such, the over-arching policy concern remains the extent to which these economies can meaningfully participate and reap sustained benefits in the mainstream of international economic and trade relations.

Agriculture is the lifeblood and a significant source of income and foreign exchange for the economies of CARICOM member States. However, this sector has not been treated with the same level of attention as tourism and manufacturing for instance. With a tradition of special bilateral trading arrangements – bananas and sugar – the region is locked in a low-level trap; with limited value added agricultural products, restricted market growth and access, reliance on outdated imported technologies and limited skills development. The failure of Caribbean Governments to give adequate priority and resources to efforts at transforming the fundamental structure of import-intensive production is one of the major deficiencies of the policy environment for agricultural and rural development in the region.

There is very little gender-specific data to substantiate claims regarding the impact of trade liberalization on the lives of women and men in the Caribbean. However, it is recognized that

women's limited access to requisite resources and their almost exclusive responsibility for social reproduction fetters their potential capacity to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the formal market. As such women are increasingly at risk of exploitation and unfair treatment, due to the negation of the contribution to the subsistence mode of production to sustainability of trade liberalization and market access initiatives.

Strategic policy measures, particularly those directed at productivity enhancement, have failed to adequately address the fundamentals of process innovation and product differentiation. In order for Caribbean Governments to increase international competitiveness, the decision-making structure and policy development mechanisms, at both the national and regional levels, need to be transformed with the active participation of those so affected. In this context, traditionally "top-down" and inherently elitist styles of development administration currently have little relevance. There is therefore the urgent need to formulate and implement social and institutional policies and programmes that are oriented towards the deepening of participatory democracy.

The sustainability crisis in agriculture, as in other sectors of the economy of Caribbean countries, relates to gender rigidities regarding decision-making, negotiating capabilities, purchasing power, resource mobilization, human capital and technology transfer. Trade liberalization programmes which usually favour agricultural exports, over the production of food crops, also run the risk of widening the equity gap between men and women, as regard access to basic resources and services. There is therefore the need for more rational and even-handed policy formulation and implementation processes that take due account of gender asymmetries within the economy and the need for fair returns to labour.

Fair returns imply due recognition of unpaid work, the care economy, the informal sector and subsistence production, which characterize the female gender in rural and agricultural systems throughout the Caribbean. The deep-seated ambiguity in the definition of economic and non-economic worth, which is ultimately reflected in the system of national accounting and the indicators of economic progress serve to obscure the real contribution of the rural and agricultural sector to the economy of the Caribbean countries.

The internalization of the concepts of equity and fairness is therefore fundamental to the process of gender-based planning for agricultural development in the Caribbean. The analysis of the social systems and the rights and responsibilities of individuals within the system is essential to the gender analysis approach. For gender responsive planning to become commonplace in agricultural policy development and implementation; sensitization and training in gender analysis methodologies need to take place at not only the field level, but also at the institutional and macro levels.

In this regard, capacity building needs to be done both vertically and horizontally in order to create a sustainable human resource base for development. A cautionary note however is that the training of line staff will become a frustration, if managers and supervisors are not responsive and supportive of their needs. Creating an environment supportive of such action is therefore a key part of building capacity for agricultural transformation and gender considerations in Caribbean economies. Finding entry points, building organizational capacity and developing confidence to act and assist with priority setting will undoubtedly allow all stakeholders to take ownership of the change process, as well as the management of the resources available to them.

6.2 Bridging diverse economies and data gaps

The path to economic advancement and social well-being in all of the Caribbean has and continues to be paved with the non-remunerative work of the small farm households. However, the system of national accounts, within Caribbean economies, does not capture non-economic work or un-paid work. In effect, there is a negation of the contribution of the subsistence mode and the care economy to the process of capital accumulation and the development of the market economy.

The development strategy of the post colonial era effected the replacement of natural capital – land - by industrial capital, as the sine qua non for the advancement of Caribbean economies. Transformation of the plantation economy thus afforded the rural and agricultural sector a relatively passive role in the process of economic development. It has been argued that industrialization has in effect poached on the rural and care economies in order to flourish.

As already indicated in chapter 3, Lewis' thesis⁶⁰ presupposes subsistence agriculture, in which labour and capital are united, in the production of commodities for use value. Earnings in the subsistence presumed to set the floor for wages in the capitalist sector. And the transfer of unlimited labour from the subsistence sector to the capitalist sector facilitates expansion through the reinvestment of profits. The proclivity for the compartmentalization of gender functionality within a dualistic economy has inadvertently contributed to the erosion of the power base of women in agriculture and the economy at large.

Essentially the shift from land to capital as the prime resource base for development effected fundamental changes in the relations of production. The self sustaining capabilities of the rural and agricultural sector within Caribbean economies are recognisably exploited in the pursuit of trade liberalization and market expansion. However there continues to be a struggle to recognize the value of the care economy, in the milieu of globalization which seeks out perfect competition and profit maximization. In the predominantly agrarian economies of the Caribbean, the dynamics of the rural and household economy are at variance with the principles of the “free market. Therefore for rational development to occur, the co-existence of diverse economies and modalities for transacting business within Caribbean economies must be reconciled and duly integrated.

It is argued that ideology and economics are the principal factors contributing to the devaluation of female gender work, which our societies have taken for granted, but cannot do without. The deep-seated ambiguity in the definition of economic and non-economic worth, which is ultimately reflected in the system of national accounting and the indicators of economic progress serve to obscure the real contribution of the rural and agricultural sector to the economy of the Caribbean countries. The internalization of the concepts of equity and fairness is therefore fundamental to the process of gender-based planning for agricultural development in the Caribbean. In this context, the prejudice and sexist mentalities, which uphold the gender-neutrality of globalization, must be replaced by a commitment to bridge the gender divide between the care economy and the market economy in Caribbean societies.

In seeking to bridge this diversity that is the economy of Caribbean countries, the main challenge is that of guaranteeing fair trade in a prevailing unfair trading environment. At the regional,

national, community and household levels, numerous ways and means are relentlessly employed to counteract the complexities of the situation and to derive solutions. Concerted efforts are needed now to ensure that the mix of approaches pay due attention to the value of social justice and gender justice above economic equity. In this regard, the data gaps that are of particular concern are the ideological and philosophical gaps in respect of “why to do”, “what to do”, “who to do”, “how to do”, “where to do” and “when to do”.

6.3 A gender responsive agricultural sector

Despite the efforts made to incorporate gender disaggregated data in agricultural census undertaken in the region in the past decade, there continues to be a lack of appropriate gender disaggregated data sets. In this scenario, the process of analyzing the gender dimensions of the current transformation of the agricultural sector and impending impacts of agricultural trade reforms on the lives of women and men in the Caribbean remains a very distressing experience.

The first step towards a gender-responsive developmental framework is the facilitation of an adequate information system to guide the development of policies and programmes within the sector. Such reconceptualization calls for the adoption of non-traditional information capture procedures namely: (1) time-budget analysis; (2) analysis of the relations of production; and (3) genderised logical framework approach to project cycle analysis.

1. ***Time budget analysis*** will facilitate the documentation of reality as regards:

- (a) Activities oriented towards the production of market goods and services; and
- (b) Activities oriented towards the (re)production of the farm household.

The approach as exemplified in the following matrix will allow for an understanding of:

- Who does what activities?
- How much time is spent on these activities?
- Where is the location of these activities?
- When do they take place?

Table 1

TIME BUDGETING - Activity Profile							
(Example)							
Activity	Person Responsible	Sex and Age		Orientation of Activity		Duration / Technology Utilised	Location
		Female	Male	Subsistence	Market		
Breast feeding	Jane	17		Child Care			Home
Land clearing	Matthew		45		Melon production	3 hours Hand tools	Farm

According to a UNIFEM publication,⁶¹ time use budget surveys have revealed the failure of conventional labour statistics to capture the extent, range and complexity of activities in which individuals engage. This is particularly so in developing countries, such as

CARICOM member States and among women, for whom multitasking is common. Time use studies therefore provide scope for the capture of invaluable information as regards the dynamics of the care economy and the informal market segment of the economy. Such approaches will undoubtedly serve to better inform the process of reforming and commercializing the agricultural sector in the Caribbean, in compliance with CSME and WTO imperatives.

2. ***Analysis of the relations of production*** will provide insights into the nature of the relationship between the persons engaged in particular activities and the means used to accomplish such tasks. In this context, it is necessary to differentiate between access and control over the means of production. Such analysis will contribute to an understanding of both the resources required and the benefits so derived. The example presented in Table 1 relates to resource mobilization and Table 2 relates to benefits.

Table 2

ACCESS AND CONTROL PROFILE (Example)						
R E S O U R C E Mobilization	ACCESS		CONTROL		Limiting Factors	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Land	-	-	-	X	Lack of entitlement	Poor soils
Credit	X	-	-	-	Lack of collateral	Risk averse
Farm Tools	-	-	X	X	Cost of replacement	In-appropriate tools
Training	X	-	-	-	Transportation cost	Illiteracy

The template in Table 2 can be used to facilitate comparative benefit analyses, as a component of a gender-aware framework for the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of various policy interventions, programmes and projects that geared towards the export promotion, import liberalization, food security, poverty alleviation, market access and related trade liberalization imperatives in the Caribbean region.

Table 3

ACCESS AND CONTROL PROFILE (Example)						
B E N E F I T S	ACCESS		CONTROL		Limiting Factors	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Secure land tenure	X	X	-	X	Family land	Poor credit
Increased income	X	X	-	X	No discretionary income	management
Increased crop yields	X	X	-	-	Praedial larceny	Alcoholism / Poor health
Improved water supply	X	X	-	-	Water users' conflict	Post harvest spoilage High cost of irrigation

Such analyses make it possible to discern the relative capacity of a target group to either mobilize resources or to generate the required output. It also becomes possible to very early identify the salient feature of the system that encourage or militate against

achievement of the desired outputs. Some of these limiting factors are: land tenure patterns, access to capital (e.g. credit schemes), the market distribution network and the transportation system, institutional capacity of service organizations (e.g. farmers group), demographic factors, socio-cultural norms, national policy conflicts (e.g. in relation to land use), international trade and foreign aid protocols.

3. **Project cycle analysis** facilitates adherence to logic and rationality in programme/project planning, implementation and evaluation. Without a doubt, the clearly articulated and logical framework provides scope for the implementation of approaches that can yield a balance between inflows and outflows. These relate in the main to balancing growth with expenditure restraint, exports with imports, savings and investments, taxation and incentives, as well as earned income and foregone income.

The logical framework commonly used in project analysis can be utilized in a manner that allows for the incorporation of “verifiable indicators” and “means of verification” that reflect occurrences in the lives of women and men in both the economic and non-economic spheres of activity. Consequently, scope is provided the inclusion of references that allow for a full appreciation of the dynamics of (re)production in the realm of rural and agricultural activity in the region.

The incorporation of gender-sensitive and participatory planning methods will enhance the content and coverage of information in respect of constraints and opportunities for the intensification and diversification of agricultural enterprises in the region. Inevitably, the adoption of holistic policy design approaches and the establishment of supporting institutional and regulatory mechanisms will provide safeguards against the distortion of reality within the rural and agricultural economy. Within the context of a re-conceptualized and gender-aware agricultural development framework, Caribbean economies will gain the elasticity and resilience necessary for prosperity in an increasingly liberalized and competitive international trading environment.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

The paper has sought to examine the links between gender, agricultural transformation and the trade liberalization process within Caribbean economies. Figure 5 in Chapter 3 aptly illustrates the gender asymmetries that result from and/or influence the outcomes of the various economic policies pursuant to import liberalization, export promotion or market access expansion imperatives in the Caribbean.

It has been argued that gender equity and growth are mutually supportive and that international and regional trade regimes can influence the agricultural transformation process and gender equity in the region in multiple ways. The paper concludes that the neglect of gender consideration in trade policy formulation and implementation eventually leads to market failures. The trade-driven market failures within the Caribbean have been due in large measure to the countries’ lack of preparedness to undertake the reforms necessary for improved agricultural production and marketing efficiencies in the short to medium term.

Over the years, domestic deficiencies, a feeble agricultural policy framework and poor institutional arrangements have constrained the capacity of the rural and agricultural sector to respond appropriately to the challenges of globalization. Ostensibly, for Caribbean economies to assume a competitive posture the agricultural sector must replace its predominantly low-input, low productivity and high cost systems of production with technologically appropriate and trade-efficient mechanisms.

Though women constitute a vulnerable social group in the region, the sustainability of rural livelihood systems as well as domestic food production hinges on their ability to engage indigenous knowledge, skills and wisdom to supply the capacity to counteract adverse economic shocks and excessive adjustment costs. Against this backdrop, although women are becoming increasingly engaged in the productive economy, they continue to hold principal responsibility for the care economy. In this milieu, gender inequity persists under the guise of poor conditions of work, long work days, low pay, difficulties in accessing resources and services. A call is therefore made for the “invisible” though significant contribution of women to the accumulation of national wealth to be duly accounted for and taken in consideration.

7.2 Recommendations

Throughout the Caribbean region, good practices that foster gender equity, fair trade and the rationale agricultural development in the region must be rooted in trade and development cooperation policies that are explicitly concerned with food security and poverty alleviation.

Trade liberalization in Caribbean economies needs to be centred on principles of social justice, over and above economic prosperity. In this regard, concerted efforts are needed to ensure that policy; legislative and institutional reforms (compliant with CSME and WTO regimes) do not disadvantage women, as well as the youth and the elderly.

The Caribbean needs to invest more in its rural economy. According to the World Bank,⁶² “investments in agriculture and other rural industries stimulate much more economic activity than commonly thought” and further concludes that countries had under-estimated both the size and importance of the rural sector on overall growth in the region recovering from a series of financial crises that choked growth and worsened poverty in past years.

The process of trade liberalization needs to be tempered by gender mainstreaming processes which will inevitably lead to the fuller integration of the reproductive/care economy and the informal sector. Thus, in keeping with the most recent pronouncement by the World Bank, Caribbean Governments must design and implement a plan of action that is oriented towards the revitalization of the rural and agricultural sector within their respective economies.

Regional and national level research needs to be undertaken to provide empirical information on the extent of women’s involvement in trade expansions. Case studies directed at the quantification of the magnitude of the impact of agricultural trade liberalization on women’s entitlement /rights, responsibilities and status require specific focus as well.

Given women's concentration in the sphere of domestic food production and the care economy, the adjustments brought on by trade liberalization inevitably place more burdens on them and the care economy. As such, a facet of the gender mainstreaming process must be the continuous assessments of the vulnerability of rural household, and women in particular.

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Endnotes

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1. Between 1945 and 1980, there were seven (7) successive multinational negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) resulting in reductions in the tariffs and some non-tariffs barriers to trade among industrial countries. In 1955, the US succeeded in getting GATT to exclude agriculture from international trade negotiations. By the mid-1980s, GATT was no longer capable of addressing the new realities of an integrated global economy.
 2. The Lomé Agreement was an international economic co-operation agreement that provided Caribbean countries with preferential trading arrangements in the European market.
 3. Preferential trading arrangements, huge trade imbalances and disagreements among GATT members on placing rules in areas such as services, agricultural policy and intellectual property rights, threatened the functionality of the GATT. In 1986, negotiations ensued on the eighth round – the Uruguay Round (UR). The UR marked the first time in the history of GATT that agriculture was included in these negotiations. The negotiations ended on December 15, 1993 and a new set of international trading agreements were signed in Marrakech on April 15, 1994 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) was created in January 1995.
 4. The AoA presupposes that the liberalization of trade in agricultural products will improve and widen access to markets, expand global trade and contribute to higher income growth.
 5. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) is the forum for global business leaders comprising the presidents, chairs and CEOs of 100 of the world's leading companies. It represents the private sector in Travel and Tourism worldwide and its mission is to raise awareness of the full economic impact its sector.
 6. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) was established by an Agreement which was signed on 18 October 1969, in Kingston, Jamaica. Its purpose is to contribute to the harmonious economic growth and development of the member countries in the Caribbean and promote economic cooperation and integration among them.
 7. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) was established in 1959 as a development institution with lending and technical cooperation programs for economic and social development projects. The IDB later became a model on which all other regional and sub-regional multilateral development banks were created.
 8. Women play a central role in the producing, storing, packaging and marketing of food for domestic and foreign markets. Yet compared to their male counterparts they face disadvantages in access to credit, income, training, transport and technology. Additionally they have little say on agricultural research, priorities and decision making.
 9. Agriculture is important to the Caribbean mainly because of its percentage contribution to national income and for the share of labour it employs. The percentage contribution of agriculture to other national income indicators varies widely among countries in the Caribbean: from over 20% for Haiti, Guyana and Dominica to less than 5% for Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua, Barbuda and Barbados.

10. According to the FAO, agriculture is still the principle activity of rural households in developing countries. A study covering three regions of the developing world showed that 84-99 percent of rural households participate in agricultural activities.
11. Fifteen acres is considered small in the case of Guyana and other mainland countries. In the Windward Islands a small farm is less than or equal to five acres.
12. According to FAO, agriculture plays an important role in Guyana's economy. The major contributions come from the sugar and rice industry. In fact, the sugar sector (including molasses) generally accounts for approximately 10% of GDP and rice is estimated to be around 8% of GDP and together they account for over three quarters of agriculture exports/export earnings.
13. Guyana is the largest of the sugar producing nations in the Caribbean. Jamaica and Belize are the also large producers.
14. Output of sugarcane in St. Kitts and Nevis was 7.6 percent above the total in 2001; however sugar output was lower due to the sucrose level of the cane produced.
15. For the Caribbean region in 2002, output rose noticeably in the agricultural sector due to favourable weather and improvements in productivity in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Belize. However, sugar output declined in Barbados due to late start to harvest and reduction of acreage planted, while mechanical problems and severe flooding reduced production levels in St Kitts and Nevis and Jamaica respectively.
16. This increased output was the result of a successful banana productivity enhancement initiative that included replanting efforts, irrigation and improved field drainage.
17. The OECS consist of the countries within the ECCU plus the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Anguilla and the BVI (both British colonies) are associated member states of the OECS. However, Montserrat (though a British colony) is a regular member.
18. According to CDB reports, the OECS region is characterized by a relatively large number of small scale artisan fishermen and this, coupled with the lack of storage facilities and poor marketing systems, limits the extent to which the increased potential can be exploited.
19. The OECS estimated that EC\$90million is the cost to the Dominican economy as a result of the earthquake on 21 November 2004 and the subsequent landslides. This figure includes the cost of repairs, reconstruction and disaster mitigation (seismic retrofitting and loss of agricultural output).
20. India is beginning to pose competition for Grenada, as a new entrant to the international nutmeg market.
21. In addition to nutmeg the principal crop, the other traditional crops will include cocoa, banana and citrus.
22. The "July package" is the name given to a new target date for reaching agreements (July 30th), following a deadlock at the September 2003 Cancun Ministerial Conference. The deadlock was primarily caused by disagreements in agriculture.
23. Managed floating rates in four countries and fixed exchange rates in the others.

24. The Treaty of Chaguaramas, established the CARICOM Common Market in 1973. The revised Treaty was signed by CARICOM Heads of Government in 2001. The Protocol of Provisional Application, which allows countries to apply the revised Treaty on a phased basis, was signed in February 2002.
25. It is expected that the implementation process for trade in services will be completed by 2005. The process began in March 1, 2002. Goods of CARICOM origin can now be traded anywhere in the region without duties or other barriers.
26. Most countries have in place legislation, which covers the free movement of graduates of tertiary institutions, but not all have legislation to cover the other categories.
27. In the case of mainland countries, namely Belize, Guyana and Suriname
28. Social reproduction can be defined as the set of activities that guarantee the care and the “essence of human life”. It is largely unpaid and therefore unrecognized in national accounting. Trinidad & Tobago in their drive for gender equality has become one of the first countries in the world to enact a Counting Unremunerated Work Act in 1996, which involved the country’s central statistical office surveying the extent of unremunerated work including that of housework and childcare.
29. Subsistence agriculture is a process in which labour and capital are united, in the production of commodities for use value.
30. The green revolution of the 1960s and 1970s included aspects of improved seeds, farm technology, better irrigation and chemical fertilizers. Its benefit of increased yields and food supplies was mitigated by the negative impacts these changes had on rural women in particular. These negative effects included the displacing of women wage earning opportunities through mechanization and increasing female labour burden as they were forced to become agricultural labourers.
31. Gender asymmetries are the gender inequalities and imbalances between women and men in age composition, social status, educational levels, employment and other economic opportunities, and participation in decision-making.
Ref 31 Women's work mostly as planters and harvesters, normally with very primitive tools.
32. The Government of St Kitts and Nevis commissioned the Subregional Office of ECLAC for the Caribbean, to conduct a social audit of the sugar industry incorporating recommendations and scenarios in the context of the scaling down of the sugar industry. The output is the ECLAC (2002) Social Audit of the Sugar Industry in St. Kitts and Nevis (Restricted LC/CAR/R.66).
33. The huckster trade describes a system of trading among Caribbean women who move from one country to the next to sell agricultural products.
34. Land under permanent crops are land areas cultivated with crops that occupy the land for long periods and need not be replanted after each harvest, such as cocoa, coffee and rubber. It also includes land under flowering shrubs, fruit trees, nut trees and vines but excludes land under trees grown for wood or timber.
35. The “ethos” of the free market describes the market economy in which the production of goods and services takes place through a mechanism of free markets guided by a free price system.

36. Gender differentiation refers to the division of labour, in terms of the distinctive roles and responsibilities of men and women in the labour force. In the sugar industry, men tend to dominate those roles requiring more “skills” and therefore earn more money than women, who tend to occupy less skilled positions. In some instances the mechanization of the sugar industry, as in the case of Barbados led to the displacement of female labour.
37. A real gap persists between men and women- the women receive lower wages for the same type of work as men especially in rural villages. In rural areas, women are much more likely to work as farm labourers than men with the same level of educational attainment. The seasonal nature of farm labour leads to low and unstable earnings, which affects women predominantly.
38. UNIFEM is the United Nations Development Fund for Women. It was established in 1976 as the United Nations Voluntary Fund and was the first UN agency to provide support for the development work of women.
39. Labour force participation rates tend to undergo systematic change in line with economic development. During transition stages, women’s labour force participation rate tends to decline and is often caused by the increasing significance of the non-agricultural sector.
40. Indigenous communities are found mainly in Guyana, Suriname and Belize which are located in South America, but remain part of the grouping included in CARICOM.
41. Dietary Energy Supply is defined by the UN as the food available for human consumption, expressed in kilocalories per person per day (kcal./person/day). At a country level it is calculated as the food remaining for human use after deduction of all non-food consumption (exports, animal feed, industrial use, seed and waste).
42. An average of 2700 kcal per caput per day is estimated to be needed to satisfy an individual’s food needs.
43. Food constituted 72 per cent of total imports into Barbados in 1999.
44. Anthropogenic factors, such a population density and socio-economic factors also impact on the vulnerability index of respective Caribbean economies. Based on the computation of the composite vulnerability index for respective countries, Antigua with a reported⁴⁴ vulnerability index (VI) of 2 is most exposed economy within the Caribbean. The volatility of demand in the tourism sector contributes to the Antigua’s economic vulnerability. Barbados, though heavily dependent on tourism is less vulnerable than Guyana (VI=13), Jamaica (VI=18), Belize (VI=23). A composite vulnerability of 38, points to an economy that has established mechanisms to buffer external shocks.
45. Land denudation has taken place at different rates in CARICOM countries. For example, in Barbados more than 300 years ago, all the forest was cleared over a 39 year period from 1627 to 1666. In the continental states of Belize, Guyana and Suriname, forest still occupy more than 90 percent of the vegetative cover. In the OECS forest accounts for roughly 40 percent of vegetative cover.
46. The Caribbean region shares biological diversity with the Amazon region and Central America and, as such, it is a rich and strategic area biologically.

47. The “informal sector” covers the unorganized spectrum of economic activities in commerce, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, transportation and services. In the informal sector there are no job-related benefits, and those in this sector are excluded from legal protections including access to basic benefits enjoyed by those in the formal economy. This sector accounts for a large segment of agricultural labour which tends to be dominated by women.
48. Barbara Evers of Manchester University and Women Working Worldwide (WWW) made the case that women are over-utilized in every country with significant contribution to food production (50-80% of food grown worldwide). These realities can have serious implication for food security in the context of trade liberalisation if women’s unremunerated contributions are ignored.
49. Refer to note 37.
50. Legal and customary barriers to women’s inheritance, ownership and management of land and other factors had contributed to their continued economic subordination. Although there are no conventions specifically securing women’s’ right to land ownership, there are conventions relating to the elimination of all forms of discrimination-including land rights.
51. The provisions of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act Cap239B grants the rights to qualified tenants (those renting for periods of over five years) to purchase the house lots. The Government provides financial support to qualified tenants to enable them to purchase tenantry lands.
52. The is vividly illustrated by the flooding situation in Guyana in January 2005.
53. Disparities in male/female access to land are virtually universal. In the Caribbean, women's access to land and to other property generally takes place through a male relative. Women are often “temporary custodians of land passing from father to male heir”, even when they are in fact heads of households.
54. See note 47.
55. Youth unemployment rates are substantially above national averages. An estimated 15% of the Region’s labour force is unemployed with over 51% or 204,000 between the ages of 15 -24.
56. Poor marketing infrastructure is one of the many problems for the agricultural sector of most Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Domestic marketing systems are generally poorly developed and efficient marketing systems are difficult to establish due to remoteness of farms, poor infrastructure and high transport costs, lack of investment in market research, and rudimentary market information systems. Knowledge of the market place, on the part of both producers and exporters, is limited. Additionally, marketing economies of scale, or the bargaining power possessed by larger entrepreneurs, are not available to small-volume producers and exporters.
57. The OECS Human Development Report dated 20th September, 2002 is the first ever sub-regional human development report for the OECS region. This report was done in collaboration with the UNDP and reported on the human development status of the nine small-island developing States that constitute the OECS.
58. In Jamaica (and elsewhere) women-headed households are more vulnerable to poverty and have lower average consumption than male-headed households. Female-headed households also suffer greater time poverty—on average contributing 69 percent of all household hours of labor.

59. Problems with women accessing credit are almost universal.
60. In Arthur Lewis' thesis, *Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour*, he posits that in many economies an unlimited supply of labour is available as subsistence wage. The main sources of labour are subsistence agriculture, casual labour, petty trade, domestic service, wives and daughters in the household, and the increase of population.
61. Time use surveys are utilized to provide information on the difference in time spent by women and men on paid work, unpaid household work, child care, recreation and commuting. Through the use of time budget surveys researchers have been able to identify the hours and type of work that women and men do-UNDP (1995) estimates that women work longer hours than men in every country- an average of 13 percent more in developing countries. Additionally, in developing countries, it was found that two thirds of women's total work is spent in unpaid labour.
62. The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. Investments in agriculture are deemed by the Bank to provide high payoffs although they can take decades to fully materialize. These investments in agriculture are also considered necessary to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) which is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.