The Thirty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean will be convened in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 9 to 11 October 2001.

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is a permanent subsidiary organ of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Presiding Officers are selected at the Regional Conference. The Conference is convened at intervals of no more than three years, the last being the Eighth Regional Conference convened in Lima, Peru, 5 to 7 February 2000. The Presiding Officers meet twice yearly.

The representative of Peru is the current chair of the meetings and Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Netherlands Antilles and Suriname represent the Caribbean on the Board. The other Board members are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

At the Eighth Regional Conference in Lima, Peru it was agreed that one of the two yearly meetings of the Presiding Officers would be open to all member countries of the Conference and would address a substantive theme. In the case of this thirty-third meeting the focus will be on gender mainstreaming. The meeting will include a high-level seminar on gender mainstreaming in public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, with particular focus on, gender equity and the economic context; poverty eradication and social protection policies; policies for health and gender equity; human rights and gender justice; the judicial system and human rights; and gender mainstreaming strategies.

It is expected that a number of ministers from the member countries will present best practices in gender mainstreaming and address the conceptual and practical challenges in inserting gender analysis into governmental policies. Mr. Reynaldo F. Bajraj, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECLAC, will be in attendance and Ms. Angela E.V. King, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women of the United Nations, will deliver the keynote address.

Given the scope of the issues to be addressed, the meeting promises to be a productive one. It will allow ministers and participants to speak frankly of the difficulties inherent in ensuring that gender differentials are taken into account, as well as mark the advances made in attaining gender equity in policy formulation and implementation.

According to Sonia Montano, Head of the Women and Development Unit, ECLAC, the anticipated presence of a number of ministers and other high-level officials from a cross-section of ministries will be a clear indication of the growing governmental commitment to gender mainstreaming. The fact that these initiatives are occurring throughout the public sector, also suggests a deepening of the negotiation capacity of women’s bureaux.

The convening of this meeting in Port of Spain is reflective of ECLAC’s concern to ensure the greatest possible participation of ECLAC/CDCC member countries.
August 2001
Issue No. 4

Review of domestic violence legislation

As part of its technical assistance to the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court project on Family and Domestic Violence Legislative Reform, ECLAC has recently completed an evaluation of the implementation of the Acts in its four partner countries, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The law though enacted in St. Kitts and Nevis is not yet in force.

Unstructured interviews were conducted with representatives of agencies involved in the implementation of the Acts as well as persons who had made applications under the legislation. The interviews sought to elicit both factual information on the usage of the Acts, and opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the legislative framework as well as the social service delivery supportive of the legislation.

Through the review of the legislation, a number of shortcomings and omissions have been identified both by the users and implementers of the legislation. Chiefly, the legislation needs to be more comprehensive in a number of areas, including a) definition of domestic violence; b) the eligibility of abused persons; c) nature of the orders granted; and d) enforcement mechanisms.

The definitions of domestic violence given ensure in a clear manner the inclusion of sexual violence, threats of violence, threats to damage property and the damage of property. Many people still associate domestic violence only with physical assault, and therefore, it would be both explanatory and educative to list examples of what constitutes “behaving in a manner of such a degree and nature as to cause annoyance”.

The Acts do not fully capture the reality of Caribbean family forms failing as they do to take account, particularly, of that large grouping of men and women whose primary relationships are of a visiting nature. The study therefore recommends that protection coverage should be extended to persons in visiting unions whether or not there are children of that union. Further, and in keeping with the fact of extended families sharing one residence, any member of a household should be able to make an application for protection, in the event of violence, on their own behalf.

The study found that there was an unevenness in the enforcement of orders given by the court as a result of inadequate and unclear provisions as well as police inaction. Court orders are made in a cultural context which, though changing, continue to trivialise or ignore acts of violence perpetrated against women by their partners. The system of protection offered by the civil justice system is severely compromised when court orders are ignored or not enforced. The protection can be ignored with impunity or, at least, with little fear of serious consequence. To ensure respect for the rule of law and for the administration of justice, all court orders should be enforceable and all breaches attended by what would amount to criminal contempt proceedings.

Apart from legislative reform, the research highlighted the need for continued training for police, judicial officers and lawyers on the nature, extent and consequences of domestic violence; sensitivity to gender bias and sexual issues; and the role of the actors within the justice system. At the heart of the legal response to domestic violence are the actions expected of police officers, as enforcers of the law, as peace officers and as protectors of victims. Police are generally not equipped and should not be expected to act as social workers, though there must exist a baseline understanding of the sociology/psychology of domestic violence. The social work role has increasingly been expected of police reproduced to some extent the notion that domestic violence, while a wrong, is not quite a crime. The medical role of police officers as law enforcers has to be reinforced even while back up support is given to police departments which must work closely with social services as well as the courts.

Police officers need to understand that protection orders are not and were never intended to be a substitute for enforcement of the criminal law. Domestic violence is a crime and police have a responsibility not only to the individual complainant but to the community to ensure the prevention of future violence. Leaving the decision of prosecution to the individual complainant means that domestic violence is not quite a crime.

In this regard greater community consideration needs to be given to the issue of mandatory arrest and prosecution for violent offenders, in some countries in the region, a domestic violence unit within the police force has been set up. Such a unit would provide a coordinated police response and consistent approach to domestic violence cases, including the provision of training to other police officers, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the police response and data collection.

The policy goals of the legal institutions which deal with domestic violence are at one and the same time, the punishment of offenders and the protection of victims. These are policy goals which are meant to coexist, to be reciprocal and mutually reinforcing. However, the dominant philosophy behind the domestic violence legislation can be discerned most readily from the attitudes which are charged with administering and implementing its provisions. The continued lack of criminal prosecutions of domestic violence on the part of the police is indicative of attitudes which see violence not as a crime but as a social problem requiring social service intervention.

For all their shortcomings however, there can be no denying that the Acts have made a huge difference because people now have an avenue to resort to and they are fairly confident of receiving justice.
This Women And Development Bibliography is the third in a series of bibliographies which have been produced by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat.

The first Women in Development Bibliography was produced in 1990 and contained some 862 references. The second produced in 1992 listed 367 references of works published between 1990 and 1992.

This third volume lists 1753 references published during the period 1990-2000 from the collection of libraries in CARISPLAN, a regional documentation/library network for which the Caribbean Documentation Centre at ECLAC, Port-of-Spain, is the coordinator.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Women in Development (WID) framework dominated the policy response to inequality between women and men. This framework identified women's lack of resources as the determinant of their subordination and responded to this problem by focusing on the development of resources for improving women's economic opportunities. Thus the first two issues were named ‘Women In Development Bibliography’.

By the 1990s, the WID framework gave way to a discourse which examined the ways in which gender relations and the lack of economic opportunities intersected to reinforce women's subordination and inequality. Closer theoretical and policy attention was paid to analysing unequal power relations between women and men, on one hand, and on the other, to economic structures which impeded socio-economic equity and development. In the context of gender equity, it is now recognised that development requires more than the creation of opportunities for people to earn sustainable livelihoods. It also requires the creation of a conducive environment for women and men to access these opportunities.

This discursive shift from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) is partly reflected in the adjustment in the name of this bibliography from “Women in Development” to “Women and Development” (WAD). The change reflects the evolving understanding of how material and ideological relations between women and men at the close of the twentieth century impact on issues of gender equity and gender equality.

The rationale for this bibliography remains the same as it was for the for two bibliographies:

- To facilitate project preparations and implementation by governmental and non-governmental organizations served by the programme;
- To improve the quality and raise the standards of research in the subregion, and
- To contribute to the establishment of a database on women in the subregion.

It is also available online at http://uneclacpos.org.

On a related note, the Commonwealth Secretariat has added two more publications to their Gender Management Systems Series. They are, ‘Gender Mainstreaming in Agriculture and Rural Development: A Reference manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders’ and ‘Gender Mainstreaming in Legal and Constitutional Affairs’.

There are 10 other publications in this series namely, ‘Concept and Methodology of the GMS’; ‘Using Gender Sensitive Indicators’; ‘Development Planning’; ‘Finance’; ‘The Public Service’; ‘Education’; ‘Information and Communications’; ‘Trade and Industry’; ‘Science and Technology’; and ‘Health and HIV/AIDS’. These reference manuals offer guidelines for mainstreaming gender in the respective areas.
Why domestic violence legislation is not enough

by Trent Rechin

In its region, the next legislation on domestic violence is likely one of the most important pieces of social legislation over the last decade and the most important legal reform yet to be made in the Caribbean. Although the use of lethal violence in the Caribbean, particularly against women, is not new, the recent increase in the public's awareness of the issue, and of the need for social legislation to address it, has made it clear that the need for social legislation is not enough. The most recent legislation in the Caribbean is in a frontal challenge to commonly held assumptions about domestic violence. It must challenge, and vigorously, each such measure and activity in society that has not consistently, honestly and rationally, demonstrated an understanding of the violence women continue to experience, and that has supported and promoted an understanding of the violence women continue to experience. Domestic violence legislation is not enough. We all bear a responsibility to deal with domestic violence: to protect both the rights of everyone not to be subjected to torture in any way and the defence of everyone not to be subject to torture in any way. The State, law, legal functionaries and culture have all been complicit in legitimising and perpetuating domestic violence. None of us can afford to be complacent or self-satisfied just because we have passed legislation dealing with the issue. Domestic violence legislation is not enough. We all bear a responsibility to deal with the issue.

In the case of domestic violence, legislation is one of the most common means of addressing the issue. Dominica and Barbados have passed new sexual offences legislation that limits the circumstances in which a husband can be guilty of raping his wife. This is limited to situations in which the husband has denied consent, either by coercion or force, and in situations in which the husband has had intercourse with his wife without consent, whatever the circumstances, it is rape. However, the mere fact that Caribbean states such as Barbados and Dominica have passed new sexual offences legislation that limits the circumstances in which a husband can be guilty of raping his wife is not necessarily the wrong route. It is not necessarily the wrong route to take to deal with domestic violence. The Caribbean has failed in the Caribbean to demonstrate through developments in our legal and human rights systems that women are entitled to have their rights respected, and that the State is responsible for ensuring that those rights are respected. The Caribbean has failed in the Caribbean to demonstrate through developments in our legal and human rights systems that women are entitled to have their rights respected, and that the State is responsible for ensuring that those rights are respected. The Caribbean has failed in the Caribbean to demonstrate through developments in our legal and human rights systems that women are entitled to have their rights respected, and that the State is responsible for ensuring that those rights are respected. The Caribbean has failed in the Caribbean to demonstrate through developments in our legal and human rights systems that women are entitled to have their rights respected, and that the State is responsible for ensuring that those rights are respected.
Gender and Macroeconomic Policy

Towards bringing gender out of the annex and into the main building

Traditionally, government attempts to incorporate a gender perspective into macroeconomic policymaking have been limited to taking account of women’s needs in sectors such as welfare and health. They seldom incorporated a perspective of gender differences in macroeconomic outcomes such as growth, productivity or public investment. In the last decade, gender mainstreaming has become widely accepted as an effective bureaucratic strategy for institutionalising gender concerns within the public sector.

Mainstreaming gender represents a significant policy advance on the outdated reform model, which added women’s issues to the margins of development and remained silent on men and their gender concerns altogether. Emphasising the role of central planning agencies such as finance ministries in mainstreaming gender analysis has been shown to be inappropriate to achieve the goals that could be accrued from incorporating gender.

From adding women to mainstreaming gender

For over three decades, development planners have progressively refined their efforts to reduce gender inequalities at the macro level. Most recently gender specialists have stressed the need for policy to move beyond bringing women into economic policy in instrumental ways that may enhance economic growth and human development, especially within poor households, but that do not challenge the subordination of women to men.

In conceptual terms, the move from “women” to “gender” marks a shift from a focus solely on women to a framework that examines unequal social relations between women and men. The introduction of an empowerment perspective makes it superior to those that attempt to reduce differences in economic outcomes to incorporate aspects of a woman’s life not normally considered in economic analysis, such as women’s unpaid work and female subordination. Before they are able to produce economic models that guide gender-sensitive policy-making; act as leaders within government on gender mainstreaming; and share and before they are able to produce economic models that guide gender-sensitive policy-making; act as leaders within government on gender mainstreaming; and share

The second approach is the development of transformatory policy measures to provide for these practical gender needs. The majority of existing policy, which by analyzing sex patterns that arise out of gender roles and restrictions and by providing resources so that men can adequately perform their child-care responsibilities is a transformatory policy to equalize relationships between men and women. The introduction of an empowerment perspective makes it superior to those that solely focus on men to a focus that examines unequal social relations between women and men.

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Data collection protocols for domestic violence

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat is holding a working group meeting to consider and comment on a data collection protocol for domestic violence. This follows a working group meeting hosted by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in February 2001 to consider the development of a data collection system for domestic violence. At that meeting, the participants endorsed the ECLAC/CDCC proposal to engage a consultant to undertake this task. Dr. Godfrey St. Bernard of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), UWI, agreed to undertake the consultancy and will be presenting his findings.

Date: 12-14 September 2001
Organizer: ECLAC/CDCC, Port of Spain, Trinidad
Place: ECLAC/CDCC Conference Room, Port of Spain

Workshop on gender, peace and development

The workshop on gender, peace and development is the culmination of a project financed by UNESCO in which the Center for Gender and Development Studies was asked to identify young professionals to act as consultants to conduct research in order to gather information on organizations working to promote a culture of peace in the region. The main purpose of the workshop is to present the findings of the research to stakeholders involved in similar endeavours, and to agree on a programme of activities on Gender, Peace and Development.

Date: 19-20 September 2001
Organizer: The Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, St. Augustine in collaboration with the UNESCO Office for the Northern Caribbean, Jamaica.
Place: Room 101, Faculty of Engineering, UWI, St. Augustine.

Thirty-third Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

Date: 9-11 October 2001
Organizer: ECLAC, Women and Development Unit
Place: Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Caricom Ministerial Policy Roundtable on Gender and Development

Arising out of meetings and discussions between a task force of the Women's /Gender Bureaux and Gender Specialists and the CARICOM Secretariat, a framework for mainstreaming gender in the areas of education, health, HIV/AIDS and labour will be presented at this ministerial roundtable.

Date: 2 October 2001
Organizer: The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat
Place: CARICOM Headquarters, Georgetown, Guyana.