Meeting held on engendering macroeconomic policy

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat remains guided by the critical areas of concern identified by the region, and more recently, the Port of Spain Consensus adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference on Women has focused our work on the three broad areas: poverty and the economy; violence against women and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

Despite calls for social equity, there is continuing concern that the macroeconomic policies developed and pursued by the region’s governments may be worsening social and gender inequality. In this regard, the Port of Spain Consensus calls upon governments to engage in gender impact assessments of macroeconomic and budgetary policies.

In reviewing macroeconomic policies through the prism of equity, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat held an Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting in Trinidad on 16-17 October 2000. The meeting was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Gender Equality Fund, and was attended by economists and social planners from regional institutions; the governmental sector; international organizations; the NGO sector; and ECLAC staff from the Economic and Social Affairs Units.

The meeting drew on the expertise of Dr. Nilüfer Çagatay, an economist working on gender and macroeconomic policies internationally. The work of Dr. Çagatay on this topic is presented in this issue of Gender Dialogue.

In their discussions, the participants agreed that commitment to gender mainstreaming within the finance and economic planning sectors would be enhanced through empirical studies which analyzed and/or demonstrated gender-differences in the distributive relations of the macroeconomic framework. To date, these studies are non-existent. The meeting also considered the need for economic literacy to strengthen gender mainstreaming in economic planning processes. In this regard, participants agreed to consider and define the core elements of a project for the development and dissemination of economic literacy materials.

In other related activities, the ECLAC/CDCC study on gender mainstreaming had highlighted, among other things, the continuing need for gender analysis and gender planning training in the region. In the first issue of “Gender Dialogue” we reported on the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat/Commonwealth Secretariat Regional Training Workshop on Gender mainstreaming. Since then, ECLAC has received a number of requests for technical assistance and we were pleased to participate at a National Symposium on “The Journey from Women and Development to Gender Mainstreaming” convened by the Women’s Bureau, Dominica.

In 2001, the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat intends to address the root causes of violence against women through gender-specific research and the development of data collection protocols. We will also be examining the construction of undesirable forms of masculinity and the ways in which violence against men and boys, in educational and penal institutions, for example, contributes to such construction. We welcome your input as we develop this area of work.
Gender Neutral Policies

institutions and regional organisations and Gender Focal Points in Family Law and Domestic Legislative reform project on marginalisation of females are victims of planning in the Caribbean macroeconomic development gender-responsive UNDP support for a Women, Men and Poverty gender neutral? Are macroeconomic policies HOME

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Gender-analysis can play an important role, by ensuring that:

1. Labour time
2. User fees. This list includes questions about the effects of such measures on various groups

A similar checklist is prepared with regard to revenue raising measures, such as taxes and fines. These are also gender-neutral exercises that require gender analysis before implementation. It is worth noting that gender analysis can be used to assess the impact of macroeconomic policies on the well-being of different groups, including women and men. For example, gender analysis can be used to assess the impact of tax policies on women and men, and to identify ways to ensure that these policies are gender-neutral.

Gender-neutral policies are often seen as an objective of reforms in the public sector. However, gender-neutral policies are not necessarily the same as gender-equal policies. Gender-neutral policies are those that do not discriminate against any group of people on the basis of gender, while gender-equal policies aim to ensure that women and men have equal rights and opportunities. In practice, gender-neutral policies may be used to achieve gender equality, but they are not the same as gender-equal policies.

Macroeconomic policies are generally gender-biased in their effects, and do not always benefit from fiscal policies and whether biases against women, poor people or other groups are increased or decreased. For example, some tax policies may benefit men more than women, or vice versa. In order to ensure that macroeconomic policies are gender-neutral, it is necessary to conduct gender analysis before implementing these policies.

In pursuing these objectives, policy makers can make use of three traditional instruments: Full employment, and price stability. The attainment of price stability, (i.e., keeping inflation or deflation under control), makes it possible to build models that can capture these relations at varying degrees of detail functionally specify the connections and the nature of the interaction between “productive” and “reproductive” activities. Productive activities refer to income generating activities, generally linked to the market. Reproductive activities refer to activities generating activities, generally linked to the market. Reproductive activities refer to activities that are involved in the care of people.

The cost of reproducing and maintaining the labour force in a given society remains unpaid work. This is in contrast to “productive” work that finds remuneration for the care and development of people. Whatever their exact composition, in most societies women bear a higher share of the cost of reproduction of the labour force than men do. Gender relations play an important role in the division of labour, the distribution of responsibilities and the social reproduction of society. Gender biases in the economic system are reflected and reinforced by gender inequalities.

In the analysis of household activities, a detailed view of questions is to be related to the level of unpaid work. Who will benefit in terms of public sector employment? How much is to be spent and on what? How will services be delivered? How will the programme be monitored? How will the programme be evaluated? Gender analysis can play an important role, by ensuring that:

- The programme is formulated in a way that is sensitive to gender differences.
- Women and men are included in the decision-making process.
- The programme is monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is gender-neutral.

Policy design of the programme takes into account the specific needs and preferences of women and men. This can be achieved through gender analysis, which involves collecting and analysing data on the gender distribution of economic activity, and identifying any gender biases in the economic system.

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Efforts to mobilize new resources take into account the fact that women's labour is an over-utilized resource. This means that, because households do not necessarily pool all available resources, women's labour is not fully utilized. Efficiency in the use of resources is properly defined. Macroeconomic policies which seem to increase efficiency in the formal economy might simply be an artifact caused by the underutilization of women's labour. The ability to mobilize new resources is not only important for economic growth, but also for reducing poverty and inequality. In order to ensure that macroeconomic policies are gender-neutral, it is necessary to conduct gender analysis before implementing these policies.
Women, Men and Poverty

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One goal is to ensure poverty and to understand the links between poverty and gender is to examine the ways in which gender influences poverty. Although both men's and women's lives are affected by poverty, women are particularly vulnerable. The needs of men and women for economic, social, cultural, and political rights are different, and efforts to eradicate poverty must be gender-responsive.

Recent poverty assessments conducted in several countries used in focus group discussions and interviews to examine the links between poverty and gender. These assessments found that women and girls are more vulnerable to poverty than men and boys because of traditional gender roles and power relations. Women's work and income are generally undervalued and unremunerated.

The poverty of poor women is greater than that of poor men. Women in many countries are more likely to be poor than men because they are often the heads of households or because they are single parents. Women are also more likely to be unemployed and to have lower wages than men.

In many countries, women are more likely to be poor than men because of gender discrimination and violence. Women are often excluded from decision-making processes and from access to resources such as land, water, and credit. Women are also more likely to be affected by natural disasters and to be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

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The UNDPs support to the Ad Hoc Experts Group Meeting on Gender & Macroeconomic Policies: Planning in the Caribbean organized by ECLAC, 16-17 October 2000, was part of the Regional Gender Mainstreaming Programme coordinated by UNDP Headquarters. As the first of its kind in the region, the meeting provided an avenue for moving beyond the traditional issues of gender affairs. It also shed light on new ways to refine measures and reduce inequities in the area of social and economic justice since inequities do affect growth. Distorted budget allocations based on such inequities reduce the positive impacts of social investments.

The meeting confirmed that it is possible to pursue gender-sensitive planning even when dealing with ostensibly neutral fiscal and monetary instruments and that gender analysis brings to macroeconomic policy planning a new perspective on how gender inequalities affect growth.

UNDP has been at the forefront in promoting the mainstreaming of gender equality goals in programme areas. It has also been responsible for fostering new perspectives on institutional strengthening, facilitating the development of tools and methodologies to ensure that Sustainable Human Development is tailored-made to gender equality goals and in strategic areas of a gender mainstreaming (training, advocacy, planning).

What is now needed in this very ambitious forward-looking task is renewed solid partnerships. The research agenda developed at the meeting represents an opportunity for UNDP to contribute to the development agenda of the Caribbean region and to participate in increasing the availability of studies on gender differentials in economic behaviour and economic literacy advocacy.
I have read Dr. Eudine Barriteau's article “Re-examining Issues of Male Marginalization and Masculinity in the Caribbean” with interest, and while I understand the angle of truth on which she bases her discourse, my reality raises questions on a number of issues. In spite of my pursuit to resolve these questions raised, I have remained without answers. As a result, I am forced to enter this discourse.

Barriteau raised the issue of patriarchal dominance within the society as foundational to her understanding that given such male privilege, to think of male marginalisation borders on the absurd, since it does not exist. This is the gist of what I have interpreted from Barriteau’s article.

Permit me to regress to antecedent memory (history) when the colour “white” was perceived as an absolute and when the lack of its adjectival use, in race talk, was a statement of power and privilege. Bell Hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* observed that the refusal to recognize “white” as a colour made it possible for white women to act as if alliances did exist between themselves and non-white women when in reality, it did not (1984: 140). Sojourner Truth in her famous nineteenth century presentation “Ain’t I A Woman”, made in 1851, at a women’s convention in Akron, Ohio, demonstrated that “woman” as a statement of homogeneity does not exist. Women mediate their environment differently, are victims of different kinds and degrees of marginalisation, some of it perpetrated and perpetuated by other women.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* offered the term “kyriarchy-kyriocentrism” (from the Greek words kyria and kyrios for lord and lady) because she felt that feminism must not only be concerned with gender inequities and gender marginalisation but that it should also address other forms of marginalisation and domination such as “racism, poverty, religious exclusion, heterosexism and colonialism, all of which are inflicted by gender and inflict gender” (1999: 5). Why I disagree with Barriteau (not that I totally accept Errol Miller either) is because I see her argument being articulated from the perspective of male/female dualism instead of from a wholistic perspective (e.g. race, culture, age, sex etc.). If in her discourse, I see the pursuance of an inter-linking of domination and marginalisation that exist in society, I am sure that the conclusion of the discourse will be different.

Just as I have bought into the idea of multiple feminism which academia would support, I hold on to the concept of multiple “masculinities”. In our homophobic societies, we see how males of alternative sexual orientation are marginalised. In our pluricultural societies, we see how physically challenged males are marginalised. While I hold that females too are marginalised in the said ways, refusing to recognize the plight of the males is unfortunate. Those are just two variables, but other divides such as race, status, religion, to name a few, are other boundaries which provide challenges for both male and female. Marginalisation is a scourge of which both males and females are victims.
### Legislative Reform Project: Family Law & Domestic Violence

The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC), based in Saint Lucia, is currently implementing the Family Law and Domestic Violence Legislative Reform Project. The project’s primary purpose is to reform the Justice System in the Eastern Caribbean to deal with domestic violence and family issues.

The project, which is being championed by Sir Dennis Byron, Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, evolved simultaneously with the concern to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system, thereby improving access to justice for all members of the society. It also builds on previous reviews of family law undertaken by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) in some member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

In determining the direction of legislative reform, the project uses, as a guide, the obligations elaborated in several conventions and treaties that have been signed and ratified by OECS member countries.

Under the Women’s Convention, particularly articles 5 and 16, State parties are required to take all appropriate steps to ensure the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing of their children. States are also required to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters related to marriage and family relations.

At their thirteenth session held in 1994, the treaty-based body known as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), also called upon State parties to ensure protection of the rights of persons in common-law unions. This recommendation is of significance for Caribbean States given that common-law unions are at least equal in number to legal unions and more children are born out of wedlock than to married persons.

The concern for shared family responsibilities is also to be found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC elaborates the obligations of States to protect children from physical and mental violence, abuse, neglect, negligent treatment or maltreatment.

Domestic violence legislation has since been enacted in Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. However, in the area of family and children’s law, law reform is still a priority, and a number of new concerns have emerged. These include the treatment of juvenile offenders and of children in difficult circumstances and the need for a regulatory framework to deal with care facilities for the elderly.

In order to identify the reforms needed, the project calls for a review of the existing legal provisions in order to identify gaps and/or areas that are inconsistent with the human rights treaties.

Throughout the process, researchers will engage in a wide-ranging consultative process with the stakeholders and actors within the legal system, (including litigants), to ascertain the inadequacies as well as the good laws and practices in the areas identified.

The research at national level is to be presented to a consultative workshop at which input can be made towards recommendations for legal reform. This research, together with recommendations, will be compiled into a regional report and forwarded to legislative drafters for the development of model legislation in the areas identified as requiring reform.

The ECSC project, which has been endorsed by the member countries of the OECS, has wide ranging support from international agencies including the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, UNICEF, CIDA and Commonwealth Secretariat.
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