



# G . e . n . d . e . r . DIALOGUE

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Since the initiation of the Women and Development programme within the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat in 1979, our goal has always been to define the work programme so that it responds to the articulated needs of our member countries. A major component of this work is the provision of information and technical assistance.

Research is another important aspect of our work here at ECLAC. The idea is that it should add to the critical thinking that informs social and economic policy, effective for advancing women's rights and gender justice. Our current research agenda includes a focus on gender mainstreaming, gender issues in natural disaster; the impact of macro-economic policies on women and violence against women.

In the Social Affairs Unit, of which women and development is one programme area, we are also embarking on a project aimed at improving the region's capacity to collect fully sex and gender disaggregated social statistics.

'**Gender Dialogue**' is a response to calls from participants at the Third Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Women held in Trinidad in October, 1999 for a more systematic sharing of information and dialogue around policies and programmes for women. At the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat, we too have felt the need for a medium through which we could routinely share our work.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat will therefore be producing this newsletter twice a year and it will be available both in printed form and on the ECLAC website. Additionally we are exploring the creation of a chat room to expand the possibilities for dynamic dialogue.

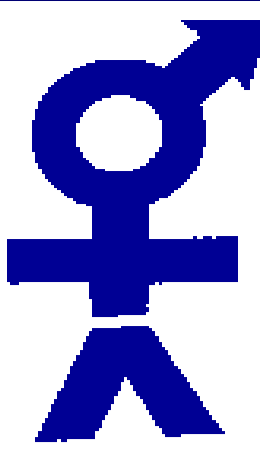
Through **Gender Dialogue**, we will be paying particular attention to sharing research and thinking on emerging issues with regard to gender and social equity. In this first issue, we therefore share a summary of the recently concluded ECLAC study on "Gender Mainstreaming in the Caribbean".

The issue of male marginalisation which can be traced back to Professor Errol Miller's provocative book "Men at Risk" has captured the attention of policy makers throughout 1999 and this continues. In Barbados, a debate rages on the impact of co-education on the performance of boys in school. Elsewhere, the sociological meaning and consequence of the apparent dominance of girls in educational attendance and certification, particularly at tertiary level, dominates the discourse on gender equality. In this our first edition of **Gender Dialogue**, we share an excerpt of a paper prepared by Dr. Eudine Barriteau for the Sixth meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs in which she reviews the theorizing of male marginalisation.

We will be using this newsletter also to share information and we look forward to your responses and to suggestions which will help us fashion a newsletter that is interesting, relevant and useful.

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## Gender Mainstreaming... Achievements, Obstacles and The Way Forward

Governments in the Caribbean have attempted in various ways to advance gender equity not only through substantive policy but also through administrative reform. Through these attempts, governments have both made progress and confronted conceptual and operational difficulties.

A review of gender mainstreaming initiatives was conducted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. The research was done in 10 countries, namely, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago and was funded and supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Equity Fund.

The study describes and analyzes how the countries under study have sought to institutionalise or routinise the responsibility for gender equity throughout government activities, both administratively and in policy and programmes. The study also examines the effectiveness and impact of such gender mainstreaming initiatives.

The mandate to governments to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programmes was emphasized in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Beijing Platform for Action recognized that the primary institutional response for the promotion of the advancement of women had been the establishment of national machineries for women which by and large were hampered by unclear mandates, lack of adequate staff, training, data and inadequate support from the national political leadership. The Platform specifies the actions necessary to integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects and the responsibilities of the national machineries. These include the facilitation and implementation of government policies on equality; the development of appropriate strategies and methodologies; and the coordination and cooperation within the central government in order to ensure mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policy-making processes. Elemental, therefore, to gender mainstreaming is the 'routined' incorporation of a regard for gender differentials at all levels of public policy development and implementation.

A national machinery for women exists in all the countries in the study, save for Montserrat. In most cases these machineries have been located within ministries of social affairs or social welfare. The location of the women's machineries within the social sector has been the subject of continued observation within the gender and development literature. It has been advanced that a fundamental contradiction exists between the objective of the full integration of women into national life and the welfarist objectives of the social welfare ministries within which the women's machineries are located.

Themes which emerged during the research are the chronic underresourcing (staff and funding) of the administrative units; the ill-defined mandates of the units; the tension between resource allocation to policy analysis and formulation as opposed to servicing the "constituency"; the lack of awareness of and commitment to gender issues generally; the growing perception that men are the victims of unequal opportunities; the location of departments and low levels of power and authority associated with the machineries; the isolation from sectoral and planning ministries because of service orientation; and the ghettoisation and stigmatization of women's issues.

Notwithstanding resource limitations, gender mainstreaming initiatives are evident throughout the region and three broad approaches to gender mainstreaming can be discerned:

1. Gender-sensitization training;
2. Institutional mechanisms; and
3. Planning instruments and processes.

Through gender training, public sector personnel are expected to recognize the importance of an analytical approach which looks at gender as a variable to be taken into account in the formulation and implementation of governmental policy. Gender training has tended to focus on building the awareness of public sector workers to gender dynamics in society. While the research process did not elicit any systematic evaluation of the training programmes, these programmes last mere days and can hardly be expected to ensure competency in gender analysis or planning. This is so, particularly in an absence of commitment to understanding gender bias in the home, at work and in the society at large. One area in which gender training continues to be institutionalized to practical effect is in the area of police training on violence against women.

The technical personnel charged with coordinating gender mainstreaming should be technically proficient in gender analysis and planning. In this regard, it is significant that a number of countries cited the absence of gender training and the lack of clarity of gender mainstreaming goals as impediments to the institutional advancement of women.

### Institutional mechanisms

National commissions or councils for women have been established in Barbados, Belize, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. A Commission on Gender and Social Equity now awaits an independent review in Jamaica.

In all countries, the main function of the Commissions is an advisory one. The Commissions also have responsibility for the monitoring of the status and progress of women. Interministerial committees have been established in Jamaica, Guyana, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. It would appear that in no country has this mechanism been particularly useful in advancing gender mainstreaming. The committees tend to be comprised of persons with insufficient gender expertise who do not possess the authority for decision-making within the public sector. Similarly, gender focal points tend to be individuals (and not units) who hold junior positions within the public sector, without decision-making authority and without institutional support for the responsibility assigned to them.

The commitment to collaborative planning and analysis within sectoral divisions of government appears to be imperative in the full decentralization of the concern for gender equity within the public sector. Intersectoral linkages between planning units and national machineries which emphasize strategic thinking need to be strengthened. Such strategic thinking could be enhanced by, and at the same time, support a joint systemic data management system.

The promotion of women's interests within the governmental sector has also been addressed through the formulation of gender action plans by the national machineries themselves. Generally, it would also appear that the plans have been developed without effective participation and accountability from sectoral or planning ministries. To move beyond symbolic implementation, adequate budgetary allocations and human resources are necessary to sustain implementation of gender action plans. These human and financial resources should be maintained not only within the national machineries but also within the sectoral ministries.

Political will, understanding and commitment are necessary for achieving concrete results in mainstreaming gender analysis and planning throughout the public sector. This political commitment has to exist both within the political directorate as well as within the national machineries for women. The manifestations of political commitment would include the formulation of policy statements with respect to gender-sensitive social and economic justice; clear institutional directives rather than discretionary guidelines for gender mainstreaming; resource allocation and concrete and measurable goals and benchmarks.

Political will at the technical level of the national machineries is also required. Effectiveness in implementing the mandate of the national machineries seems to be enhanced by strategic understanding of gender power relations and structures within the public sector and an understanding or vision of equity in society. Political will, at the technical level, will also be advanced by a clear appreciation of the constituency of the machineries.

The task for governments is to firstly articulate a philosophy of social equity in which gender equity is a necessary and integral component and secondly to ensure system wide responsibility for the attainment of clearly defined targets.

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## Training Seminar on Gender Mainstreaming

The ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretariat collaborated to host a three-day training workshop on gender mainstreaming for technical officers from national machinery for women. This workshop which was facilitated by the Directorate of Gender Affairs, took place at the Royal Antiguan Hotel on May 2-4 2000 and was attended by 30 participants from Anguilla, Antigua, Barbados, Saint Lucia, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Jamaica, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The need for gender training was highlighted at the Second and Third Caribbean Ministerial Conferences on Women. The Port-of-Spain Consensus, which was adopted at the Third Ministerial conference held on 5-7 October 1999, called on ECLAC/CDCC member States to strengthen the machinery for women through the provision of training to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender mainstreaming. In addition, the consensus called on countries to provide the necessary technical, material and financial resources to empower the national machinery for women to implement the various plans of action. The mandate to governments to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programmes, including development policies and programmes at all levels was also stated in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

In its review of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the region, an ECLAC study on "Gender Mainstreaming in the Caribbean" concluded that while governments in the Caribbean have attempted in various ways to implement the mandate of gender mainstreaming, these attempts have been plagued by conceptual and operational difficulties.

The workshop drew on the expertise of consultants Sonja Harris, Eudine Barriteau and Denise DeBique of CIDA's Gender Equity Fund.

The workshop focused on:

1. an evaluation of best practices in gender mainstreaming in the region;
2. a clarification of the definition of gender and the use of the concept of gender as an analytical tool in public policy and planning;
3. evaluation and planning of mechanisms for gender mainstreaming.

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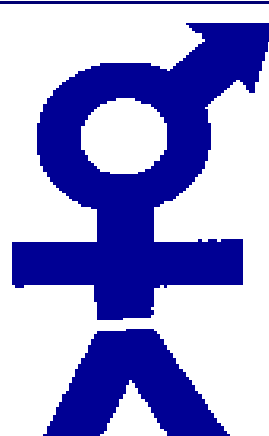
**what  
participants  
had to say...**

"It was useful to hear the experiences of the other countries and understand the various stages at which they had arrived..."

"Given the new debates on male marginalization in the Caribbean at this time, the workshop could have provided some information to help us deal with the new challenges emerging in our respective countries..."

"My conceptual understanding of gender and gender mainstreaming was broadened..."

"Financial and technical support needed to promote relevant programmes and conduct gender training..."



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## Male marginalisation in the Caribbean

The concerns and perceptions of Prime Minister Basdeo Panday and Minister Walters, evident in the news articles (excerpted at right), are increasingly shared by some policy makers throughout the region. These concerns inform a controversial discourse over the indicators of gender equity and the significance of formal education in facilitating women's and men's economic empowerment.

Errol Miller, Professor of Teacher Education at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, coined the terms 'male marginalization' and 'men at risk', in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In his book "Men at Risk" he stated:

"The description of Caribbean societies points to lower-strata men's marginal positions in the family, role reversal in a small but increasing number of households, boys' declining participation and performance in the educational system, the greater prospect of men inheriting their fathers' position in the social structure, the decline in the proportions of men in the highest-paying and most prestigious occupations and the decrease in men's earning power relative to women's especially in white collar occupations" (Miller, 1991:97).

'How does one measure male marginalization?' is the question posed by Dr. Eudine Barriteau in her paper on "Re-examining Issues of Male Marginalization and Masculinity in the Caribbean: The Need for a New Policy Approach" which was presented at the Sixth Meeting of the Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs.

Dr. Barriteau, Head of the Centre for Gender Studies, UWI, Cave Hill Campus, argues that answering this question is essential to the proper analysis of the hypothesis that is forwarded by Miller. She posits that very important to the concept of marginalization is the lack of conditions of justice. In an unjust gender system there is unequal access to and distribution of material resources and power. Accordingly, the thesis of male marginalization implies that Caribbean gender systems are unjust for men.

In her examination of the discourse on male marginalization, Dr. Barriteau focuses on two dimensions of the gender system. These are:

1. The material dimension which exposes how men or women gain access to or are allocated material and non-material resources within a state system or society; and
2. The ideological dimension, which indicates how Caribbean societies construct and maintain notions of masculinity and femininity. Her analysis of gender indicate that there are no State policies or legislation that currently deny or previously denied men access; there are no State- sponsored types of discrimination against men and men, like women, have equality of access to the educational resources of the State.

Barriteau argues that much of the anxiety associated with 'men in crisis' and 'marginalization of the black male' emerged due to fear that Caribbean States had gone too far and had surrendered too much to the interests of women at the expense of men. So strong is the ideology of male dominance and privilege in the Caribbean, Barriteau argues, that Miller's own thesis implicitly supports this ideology. He attributes the emergence of the women's movement to the process that marginalizes the black male, rather than as a genuine and legitimate response to the adverse circumstances of their lives. In so doing, she argues that Miller's underlying assumption is that men have an a priori right to the resources of the State above women and, by necessary implication, any attempt to correct the inequalities that presently deny women access is really designed to punish men. Miller's arguments have therefore been construed in popular discussion to mean that women are to blame for all the problems that men are facing.

Barriteau reviews the critiques of Miller's theory by Mark Figueroa, Keisha Lindsay, Barry Chevannes and Marlene Hamilton which challenge his understanding of the reality of the Caribbean male. For **Mark Figueroa**, the problem that men currently face is related to the history of male privilege that fosters gender inequalities and results in negative outcomes for men and women, boys and girls. **Keisha Lindsay**, also argues that by using inadequate and selective data, Miller's thesis systematically invalidates women and women's experiences. **Barry Chevannes**, also rejects the hypothesis of marginalization of the black or any other male and points to the continued dominance of men in positions of power and authority throughout most institutions.

This conclusion by Chevannes is supported by **Marlene Hamilton** who concludes in her study of women's access to the University of the West Indies as academic and administrative staff, that during the academic year 1998/1999, there were no female deans. She also pointed out that in the 50-year history of the University, of the 68 heads of department, seven are women, and of the 115 professors, 12 were women.

Responding to the popular beliefs about male performance and underachievement in education, Barriteau cites findings from Chevannes which reveal that while more females than males sat the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) exams in 1997, young men performed slightly or clearly better than young women in 19 out of 35 subjects at the grades 1 and 2 levels. These were primarily science and technology type subjects. Chevannes also reports that in the 1990s, "men have been graduating with consistently higher rates of first-class honours but consistently lower rates of upper and lower second class honours". The Chevannes study shows that deeply rooted gender biases observed in subject selection at the secondary level continue at the tertiary level, where males pursue the more technologically and vocationally based subjects, while women pursue those in liberal arts and the humanities.

Barriteau therefore warns that we should be careful about moving from particular disadvantages and prejudices that may exist, to a generalized position that boys and men are doomed to conditions of marginality and irrelevance in Caribbean societies. She argues that there are no State policies that deny men access to resources or opportunities for economic and social advancement. In this regard she points out that there are proportionately more unemployed young women than there are unemployed young men. Unemployed young women however, do not hang out on the block or town squares, neither do young men spend free time working in their yards or around the homes in which they live.

She explains that males receive many conflicting messages in constructing masculinity and gender identity. It is therefore not surprising that "while many public commentators bemoan the fact that girls are taking over academic performance, none of them say to young men that they need to put in 100% effort in school." Also, because the prevailing gender ideologies define femininity as less valuable than masculinity, then the popular perception is that women have everything to gain by acquiring characteristics associated with the masculine, while men have everything to lose. These beliefs are significant because there are material outcomes which cumulatively either impede or facilitate societal change. After centuries of denial and exclusion, Caribbean women are gaining entry into the public sphere and are acquiring skills that were once legally or culturally out of bounds. As a group, women already have the skills to perform effectively in the domestic sphere. Boys and men must now learn to value those skills and to see them as necessary for the organization of life.

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**Men belittled in Dominica – Minister**

**"CONCERNED about what it see as a deterioration in the lot of men in Dominican society, government plans changing the name of one ministry so it can look into the affairs of males. Minister of Community Development and Women's Affairs, Matthew Walters, said yesterday the term "women" will be struck off the name of his ministry and replaced with "Gender" so it can accommodate men. "Men over the years have been marginalised. They have been belittled, and also they have been abused. But they do not come out to tell the nation, to tell the region, to tell the world that they are abused. Literally men are emotionally abused, men are sexually abused, and men are even physically abused," he said. He said there are organizations like the women's bureau looking into the affairs of women and his ministry has to take the lead in catering into the needs of men. "They are losing their sense of belonging, their sense of responsibility. As a result of that we have an escalation in social problems in Dominica. What I want to do is take men on board."**

**Taken from the Trinidad Guardian, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2000**

**"Prime Minister Basdeo Panday said yesterday that female graduates were gaining dominance in the better positions in Caribbean job markets. And, he noted, the social implications of this "phenomenal gender development" posed a serious challenge to Caribbean societies. "I can't help remarking that it will also pose serious challenges to our political parties as well."**

**Excerpt from story: Women dominance posing serious challenge, says PM  
Written by Ria Taitt, Trinidad Express, Tuesday 21 March, 2000  
Written by Ria Taitt, Trinidad Express, Tuesday 21 March, 2000**



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Five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, governmental delegations and NGOs from around the world convened in New York at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) to review the achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. More importantly, this global review focused on building a consensus on further actions necessary to accelerate the attainment of gender equality, development and peace.

Delegations from the ECLAC/CDCC member countries of Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, the Netherlands Antilles, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago attended and participated in the Special Session. These delegations reported on the progress made in advancing gender equity in areas such as violence against women, education, poverty eradication and health. With technical assistance from representatives of the ECLAC/CDCC and CARICOM secretariats, Caribbean delegations were also able to make vital interventions, which assisted in bridging the ideological and cultural gaps among countries.

At the end of the Special Session, the plenary adopted what came to be known as the "Outcomes Document" entitled "Further Actions and Initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action". This document acknowledges that the objective of the Beijing Platform for Action is the empowerment of all women and speaks to the achievements made since 1995. It also points to the continuing obstacles.

In the area of health, the document reflects that a shortage of financial and human resources as well as the increasing trend to privatization of health care systems has resulted in poor quality, as well as reduced and insufficient health care services. Consistent with the concerns of the Caribbean region, the lack of a comprehensive programme dealing with perpetrators of violence against women was seen as a persistent obstacle to the elimination of violence against women. In the area of the economy, the gender wage gap that also exists in the Caribbean region to the disadvantage of women was highlighted as an impediment to women's economic advancement.

In light of the economic obstacles to women's progress and the persistent exclusion of women from decision-making, the world's governments agreed to use a gender perspective to review macroeconomic and social policies and programmes to ensure equitable access to social services and economic resources.

Global consensus was finally achieved that reproductive health implied that people were able to have a satisfying and safe sex life. It was therefore agreed that both men and women had the right to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice.

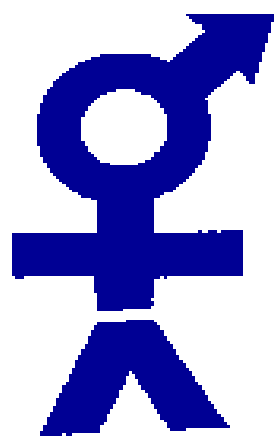
Beyond the prosecution of perpetrators of all forms of violence against women and girls, the Outcomes Document also calls for the introduction of actions aimed at helping and motivating perpetrators to break the cycle of violence and to take measures to provide avenues for redress to victims. Special attention was given to the trafficking of women and the international sex trade. States agreed to intensify cooperation with each other to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in women and children.

Despite extended negotiations which went one day beyond the end of the Special Session on 9 June, 2000, no progress was made on controversial issues on access to safe abortion, sexual rights for women, non-discrimination against homosexuals and inheritance rights. Still the importance of the United Nations human rights system as a framework for further actions to be taken was evident throughout the Special Session.

Reflecting the Caribbean concerns for accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Sports for Jamaica Portia Simpson-Miller called on governments to move from commitment to action and to aggressively implement the recommendations. Only then, she opined, could it be said confidently, in the words of Bob Marley "No Woman, Nuh Cry.... everything is gonna be alright"

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### **ECLAC/CDCC**

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### **PAHO/WHO**

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### **UNDP**

Barbados  
Doreen Boyd  
246 437 8874

### **UNDP**

Cuba  
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### **UNDP**

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### **UNDP**

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### **UNDP**

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### **UNDP**

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Ritu Chhatwal  
876 906 8591

### **UNICEF**

Bridgetown,  
Barbados  
Elaine King  
246 436 2119; 2810-1

### **UNIFEM**

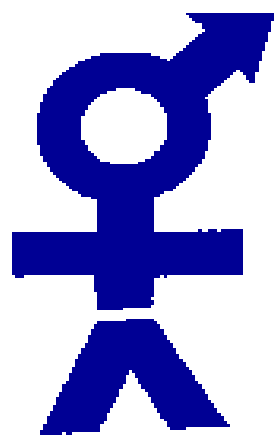
Bridgetown,  
Barbados  
Jocelyn Massiah  
246 437 3970

### **ILO**

Port of Spain,  
Trinidad & Tobago  
Michelle Jankanish  
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LC/CAR/G.583

**The Caribbean Subregional Review and Appraisal Report on the  
Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action**

LC/CAR/G.607

**Study of Gender Mainstreaming on the Caribbean**

Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) –  
Gender Equity Fund.

**Progress Report on Social Integration in the Caribbean: 1994 - 1999**

Prepared by Dr. Neville C. Duncan, Reader in Caribbean Policy Issues,  
University of the West Indies, Barbados, for the Caribbean Subregional  
Review of WSSD+5 and the Status of the Older Person.

**Poverty in the Caribbean**

Prepared by Dr. Edward Greene, PAHO/WHO, Washington, D.C., USA,  
for the Caribbean Subregional Review of WSSD+5 and the Status of the  
Older Person.

**Globalization and Governance**

Prepared by Ms Judith Wedderburn and Ms Bridgette Levy for the  
Caribbean Subregional Review of WSSD+5 and the Status of the Older  
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